

# The New Criterion

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## Week in review

by Hannah Niemeier

### Recent links of note:

“At Hudson Yards, Stunning View From on High”

Michael J. Lewis, *The Wall Street Journal*

Since construction began on the 101-story 30 Hudson Yards in 2012, New Yorkers have been eyeing the new skyscraper in town with skepticism. Critics accuse the third-tallest building in New York of offering little more than another chilling shadow across Manhattan long before sunset. Michael J. Lewis sympathizes with these reservations and also considers the building’s outdoor areas, which opened to the public today, little more than “residual space.” But he believes that Kohn Pedersen Fox’s sleek design and the building’s unparalleled view of the city and its surroundings will eventually lead New Yorkers to “come to accept” the transformation of the old train yards at Thirty-third Street and Tenth Avenue. The site was once a candidate for the 2012 Olympics; things could have been worse.

“Critical correctness”

Bruce Robbins, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*

For latter-day New Critics and others weary of decades of misreadings of literature through the lenses of gender, feminist, race theories, and more, saying the words “politics” and “literature” in the same sentence may cause wrinkled noses. They’d prefer to stick to the text, thank you. But in this thought-provoking essay, Bruce Robbins, a professor at Columbia University, explores the opposite extreme in literature studies: a trend toward avoiding not only the politics of authors and their works, but also criticism of the text itself. To explain the rise of “postcritique,” Robbins calls out neoliberalism, which avoids difficult questions of human interaction (politics in its most basic sense) by abandoning works of literature to the market as objects of consumption to be either enjoyed or rejected, producing “a criticism that is closer to fandom.”

“A Certain Idea of France”

Peter Hitchens, *First Things*

Peter Hitchens’s review of Julian Jackson’s *De Gaulle* presents a French president who can’t be dismissed as “the head of some French committee,” or as the embodiment of “old fascist regimes,” as the New Left student protester Daniel Cohn-Bendit called him. Jackson’s Charles de Gaulle (1890–1970) is somewhat of a tragic hero, an Old World leader in love with a France that died—or was murdered, in the post–World War II reconstruction and in the revolt of 1968—before he left power.

“Who was the real St Patrick: an evangelist or a tax dodger?”

Mary Kenny, *Spectator usa*

In anticipation of World Guinness Day—sorry, St. Patrick’s Day—on March 17, read about the man who saved Ireland from snakes and the whole world from sobriety on his feast day.

**From our pages**

“Enrico Riley’s cycled histories”

Andrew L. Shea

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