

# The New Criterion

## Notebook

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### Peddler's diary

by [Mordecai Richler](#)

On the author's recent book tour

Vaudeville isn't dead. But the traditional song-and-dance men, jugglers, animal acts, and stand-up comics have been displaced by jet-lagged authors, a far less entertaining bunch, who will read from their works in bookshops on the circuit, wherever at least eight potential customers can be found. On a typical week in Los Angeles, the *Los Angeles Times Book Review* (October 29, 1997) lists no less than eighty peddlers reading in various locations. These include Peter J. Harris, author of *The Vampire Who Drinks Gospel Music*; Mollie Katzen, who has written *Mollie Katzen's Vegetable Heaven*; Terry Berland, who will discuss his very own *Breaking Into Commercials*; Jared Diamond, author of *Why Sex Is Fun*; and a highly suspect "writers' workshop for teenage girls" in Beyond Baroque, out there on Venice Boulevard. To be fair, the same week there are also some better-known scribblers working t ...

Mordecai Richler

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