

Adler, Renata (1938-) Encyclopedia Article

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Renata Adler achieved a controversial success and notoriety in the New York literary scene. Her film reviews for the *New York Times* (collected in *A Year in the Dark*, 1969) appeared refreshingly honest, insightful, and iconoclastic to some, opinionated and uninformed to others. But her essay collection *Towards a Radical Middle* (1970), a highly critical as well as high-profile review of the *New Yorker's* venerable film critic Pauline Kael, and a 1986 exposé of the media's "reckless disregard" for "truth and accuracy" confirmed her role as gadfly. Adler's two novels, *Speedboat* (1976) and *Pitch Dark* (1983), defined her as a decidedly New York author with her distinctive, detached, anonymous voice; shallow characters; minimalist plot; and sparse, cinematic style. Her style garnered criticism from some but resonated with others, especially women of Adler's (and Joan Didion's) pre-feminist generation and class, similarly caught between romantic yearning and postmodern irony.

Further Reading:

Epstein, Joseph. "The Sunshine Girls." *Commentary*. June 1984, 62-67.

Kornbluth, Jesse. "The Quirky Brilliance of Renata Adler." *New York*. December 12, 1983, 34-40.