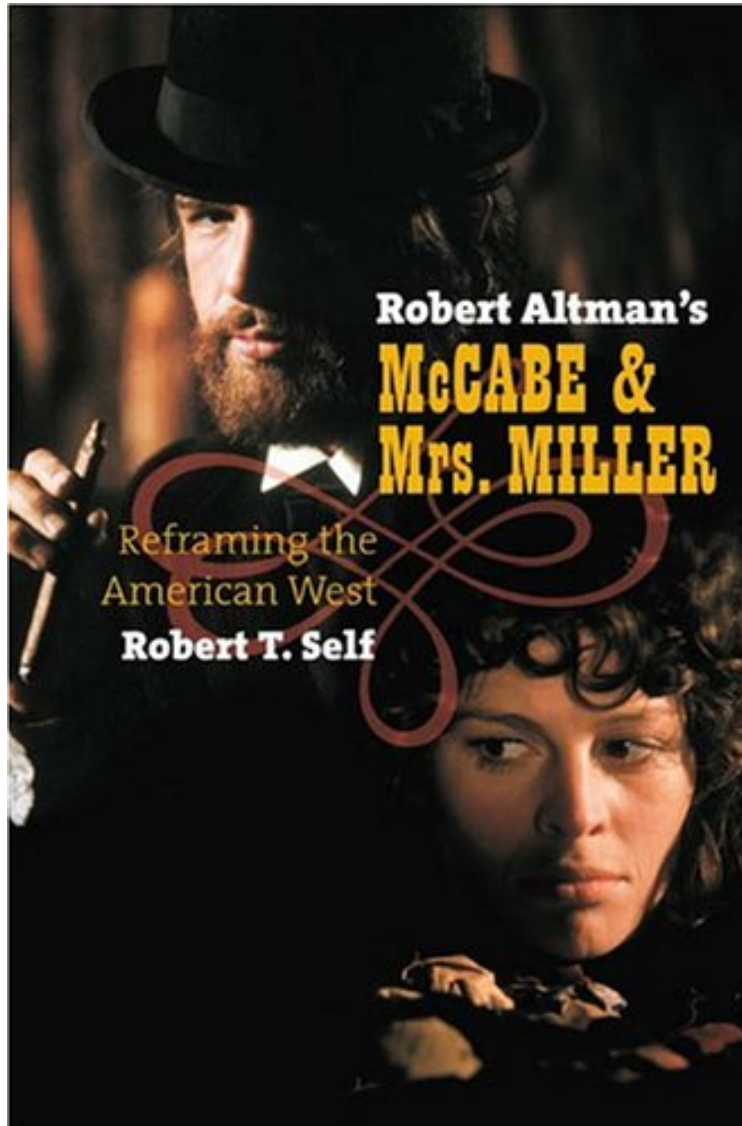


Robert Altman's McCabe Mrs. Miller: Reframing the American West

Robert T. Self

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Robert T. Self : Robert Altman's McCabe Mrs. Miller: Reframing the American West before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Robert Altman's McCabe Mrs. Miller: Reframing the American West:

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By tomasExcellent book about Altman's masterwork, a true modern American classic, with brilliant performances by ALL concerned--acting, script, music, cinematography, and especially direction. A paperback would be most appreciated.

Robert Altman has made a dozen films that can be called great in one way or another, but one of them is perfect, and that one is McCabe Mrs. Miller. Roger Ebert in *The Great Movies* When he died in 2006, director Robert Altman left a rich legacy of films, from *MASH*, his breakthrough black comedy, through masterpieces like *Nashville*, *Short Cuts*, and *Gosford Park*. But many would agree that his crowning achievement was *McCabe Mrs. Miller*, a daring downbeat film about a gambler and a prostitute. Robert Self now provides an illuminating new look at this long neglected classic. A snowbound version of *High Noon*, Altman's film has been described as a revisionist western, an antiwestern, and even a hippie western. Featuring cinematic icons Warren Beatty and Julie Christie at the zenith of their careers and a haunting soundtrack from legendary troubadour Leonard Cohen, it provided a new way of looking at the western and the West. Placing the film within the contexts of Altman's career, its critical and popular reception, and the history of American cinema, Self shows how Altman's idiosyncratic interplay between story and style reframed the American West for a new generation. Viewing *McCabe* as a kind of precursor to the New Western History, he argues that it both embraces and revises the conventions associated with the Western movie genre, especially with its antiheroic protagonist. He also highlights the film's portrayal of the contemporary counterculture, pitting the loner against corporate power and mainstream religion and granting women a newfound voice. In addition, Self sheds light on the film's production, showing how its rare sequential filming reflected the seamless collaborative efforts of director, actors, cinematographer, and set designer. Here, too, are Altman's trademark overlapping dialogue, painterly visuals, signature pan and zoom shots, crowded and communal *mise-en-scenes*, and a musical soundtrack mirroring the narrative all in the service of Altman's inimitable storytelling and indelible gallery of fascinating characters. Self's beautifully written, admiring, and insightful study of this great film should significantly enhance its reputation and reinforce Altman's place in the pantheon of American filmmakers.

Written with intellectual passion, Self's book embraces and illuminates Altman's angry, funny, moving elegy to the Western film. Robert Kolker, author of *A Cinema of Loneliness* Opens a window onto both the West that was and the turbulent years around Altman's neglected masterpiece. Elliott West, author of *The Contested Plains* A wonderful and compelling work that locates Altman and his movie amidst changes in the genre of the Western, American society, and historical interpretations of the American West. Richard White, author of *It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own: A New History of the American West* From the Back Cover "Written with intellectual passion, Self's book embraces and illuminates Altman's angry, funny, moving elegy to the Western film."--Robert Kolker, author of *A Cinema of Loneliness* "Opens a window onto both the West that was and the turbulent years around Altman's neglected masterpiece."--Elliott West, author of *The Contested Plains* "A wonderful and compelling work that locates Altman and his movie amidst changes in the genre of the Western, American society, and historical interpretations of the American West."--Richard White, author of *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* About the Author Robert T. Self is professor emeritus in the Department of English at Northern Illinois University and author of *Robert Altman's Subliminal Reality*.