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| Robert Altman (1925-2006) |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
| Robert Bernard Altman was an American director of television, theatre, and, most famously, films, including *MASH*, *Nashville*, *The Player* and *Gosford Park*. Altman’s films are characterized by satire, social criticism, fragmented storylines, and indefinite endings, which encourage consideration of Altman as a modernist (or postmodernist) auteur. Robert T. Self (2002) argues that Altman was among those American filmmakers who in the 1960s and 1970s applied ‘a modernist sensibility’ to genres such as romance *(A Perfect Couple (1979))*, westerns (*McCabe & Mrs Miller (1971)),* and science fiction (*Quintet (1979))*. These films demonstrate modernism’s taste for ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox. They reject the tendency toward resolution and closure typical of genre films. Similarly, *The Long Goodbye (1973)*, Altman’s adaptation of Raymond Chandler’s hard-boiled detective novel of the same name, re-imagines film noir (arguably a modernist mode) and thus raises questions about the stability of genres and the endurance of modernist styles past their historical period. According to Self, Altman’s films of the 1980s and 1990s cease his interrogation of genre but remain committed to ‘the modernist impulses of irony, experimentation, reflexivity, and social critique’ (Self 2002, 103). |
| Robert Bernard Altman was an American director of television, theatre, and, most famously, films, including *MASH*, *Nashville*, *The Player* and *Gosford Park*. Altman’s films are characterized by satire, social criticism, fragmented storylines, and indefinite endings, which encourage consideration of Altman as a modernist (or postmodernist) auteur. Robert T. Self (2002) argues that Altman was among those American filmmakers who in the 1960s and 1970s applied ‘a modernist sensibility’ to genres such as romance *(A Perfect Couple (1979))*, westerns (*McCabe & Mrs Miller (1971)),* and science fiction (*Quintet (1979))*. These films demonstrate modernism’s taste for ambiguity, contradiction, and paradox. They reject the tendency toward resolution and closure typical of genre films. Similarly, *The Long Goodbye (1973)*, Altman’s adaptation of Raymond Chandler’s hard-boiled detective novel of the same name, re-imagines film noir (arguably a modernist mode) and thus raises questions about the stability of genres and the endurance of modernist styles past their historical period. According to Self, Altman’s films of the 1980s and 1990s cease his interrogation of genre but remain committed to ‘the modernist impulses of irony, experimentation, reflexivity, and social critique’ (Self 2002, 103).  File: altman1.jpg  Figure 1 Original: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8f/Robert\_Altman\_Cannes\_%28extract%29.png  Link: http://www.criterion.com/explore/82-robert-altman  Figure 3 Criterion collection Altman page  Link: http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6520822  Figure 4 NPR Obituary of Robert Altman (with audio clip)  Link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcp8xjaFfb8  Figure 5 Lily Tomlin and Meryl Streep Present Robert Altman's Honorary Academy Award, 2005 Selected Works: Countdown (1968) That Cold Day in the Park (1969) MASH (1970) Brewster McCloud (1970) McCabe and Mrs. Miller (1971) Images (1972) The Long Goodbye (1973) Thieves Like Us (1974) California Split (1974) Nashville (1975) Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull’s History Lesson (1976) 3 Women (1977) A Wedding (1978) Quintet (1979) A Perfect Couple (1979) Health (1980) Popeye (1980) Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (1982) Streamers (1983) Secret Honor (1984) O.C. & Stiggs (1985) Fool for Love (1985) Aria (1987) (‘Les Boréades’ segment) Beyond Therapy (1987)  Tanner ’88 (1988) (television miniseries) Vincent and Theo (1990) The Player (1992) Short Cuts (1993) Prêt-à-Porter (1994) Kansas City (1996) The Gingerbread Man (1998) Cookie’s Fortune (1999) Dr. T and the Women (2000) Gosford Park (2001) The Company (2003)  Tanner on Tanner (2004) (television miniseries)  A Prairie Home Companion (2006) |
| Further reading:  (Armstrong)  (Ferncase)  (Keyssar)  (Robert Altman’s Early Career)  (R. Self)  (R. Self)  (Thompson)  (Zuckoff) |