

## Interview questions for J. Hillis Miller

UCD Humanities Institute, Saturday 2 June 2012

### Reading

**Eamonn Dunne:** What are you reading now?

**Nicholas Royle:** If you were sailing to a desert island and could only take six poems with you, what would they be?

If you were sailing to a desert island and could only take six novels with you, what would they be?

Is there any single author whose work you have not yet read and would like to take along on the same trip?

**Martin McQuillan:** Have you ever thought about writing a novel?

### New Media and Telepathic Technologies

**Dragan Kujundzic:** How can understanding contemporary media help us re-read literary tradition? I am specifically thinking reading the mediatic in the literary.

Was it always there, and if so how?

**Martin McQuillan:** What does a deconstructive film look like?

Literature is an invention of the C18th, film is an invention of the C20th century, how can we think that difference beyond the epochal?

**Graham Allen:** You have written frequently about the new digital media that is shaping our society. Do you think, as many have asserted, that our culture has become an essentially visual rather than literary one? And if the answer is yes what are the consequences for us?

**Eamonn Dunne:** You've been speaking recently about the New Humanities. Could you elaborate a little on what you think they might be and if they can be achieved in what you call "these bad days"?

### Influences

**Michael O'Rourke:** As you are introduced in the film Pamela Gilbert lists Queer Theory among your many interests. Even in your most recent book on George Eliot we can find a concerted critique of phallogocentrism but there is a sense that this turn to queer modes of thinking only happens in your "later" work. Are you ambivalent about your commitments to this field? Maybe you could say a little about the belated (if it is) interest in a domain of inquiry which your own writing actually helped to foster (I'm thinking particularly here of the work of Eve Sedgwick and Judith Butler)?

**Graham Allen:** Have you any words on the legacy of the work of Barbara Johnson, who passed away a few years ago?

**Michael O'Rourke:** In their movie *Derrida* Kofman and Dick ask him: "if you had a choice what philosopher would you like to have been your mother?" He responds by saying this would be impossible because the figure of the philosopher is always a "masculine figure" for him. I want to put the same question to you slightly reframed: firstly, if it were possible for you what philosopher would you like to have been your mother? And, since we know so much about your relationship with your father, can you tell us a little about your mother and whether she in any way influenced the shape of your thinking?