



UCD Humanities Institute presents:

“Signing, Sealing, Sailing: The Life and Work of J. Hillis Miller”

Organized by Éamonn Dunne and Michael O’Rourke



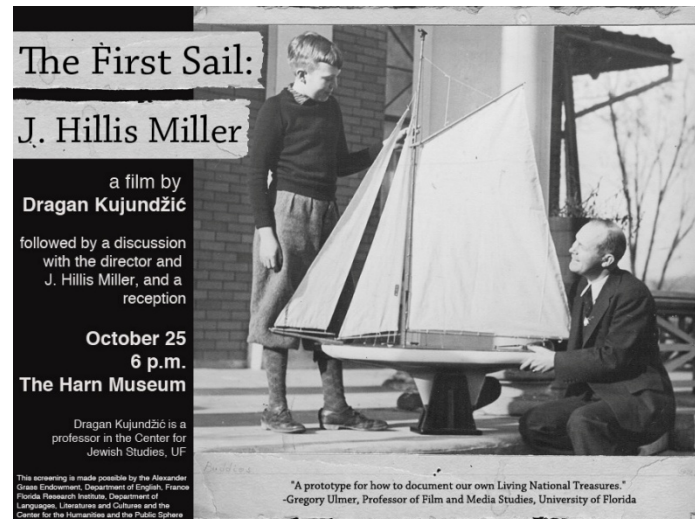
Saturday 2 June 2012, 10am to 5.30pm

Room 204, UCD Humanities Institute of Ireland Seminar Room, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland (<http://www.ucd.ie/hii>)

Directions to the venue: See point 30 on the UCD Belfield Campus Map:
<http://www.ucd.ie/maps>

J. Hillis Miller’s professional career as a teacher and scholar of literature, philosophy and critical theory has spanned well over fifty years now. He is, according to Edinburgh University Press, “the single most significant North American literary critic of the twentieth century.” He has published twenty-seven books and countless articles, edited collections and book chapters. Hillis holds honorary degrees as Doctor of Letters from the University of Florida, Doctor of Humane Letters at Bucknell University, and Doctor Honoris Cause at the University of Zaragoza. He is also Honorary Professor of Peking University and past president of

the Modern Language Association. He has taught at The Johns Hopkins University, Yale University and University of California, Irvine. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the American Philosophical Society and currently Distinguished Research Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of California, Irvine.



The First Sail: J. Hillis Miller (2012) is the first feature length film to catalogue the life and work of J. Hillis Miller. Through archive footage and interviews at the President's House at the University of Florida, Miller's homes at Deer Isle and Sedgwick, Maine, Dragan Kujundžić (Director) documents what Gregory Ulmer has referred to as "our own Living National Treasure." Here Hillis reminisces about his childhood and the great contribution of his family to the University of Florida, where his father was president, as well as about his own career at Yale University, Johns Hopkins, and the University of California. Edited from over thirty hours of interviews, the film contains exclusive footage of Jacques Derrida, as well as Miller's reflections on some of the most urgent political issues of our time: climate change, higher education, and the global financial crisis. This screening will be the Irish premiere of *The First Sail*, an exclusive and rare insight into one of the most distinguished critical intelligences of our time.

Dragan Kujundžić, the director of the film and editor of the book (forthcoming with Open Humanities Press, featuring the transcript, essays, interviews and other materials) which accompanies the film will be in attendance to introduce his film. There will also be a seminar with two panels featuring responses to the documentary as well as discussions of Miller's life and work more generally. The event will conclude with an exclusive interview between Hillis Miller and the conference organizers.

To watch the trailer of *The First Sail* on YouTube go to:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dUX68PMAbpk>

Registration: The event is free but places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. To reserve a place please email Michael (tranquilised_icon@yahoo.com) and Éamonn (epdunne27@yahoo.co.uk)

Event Schedule:

10.00-10.05 Opening Remarks by **Anne Mulhall** (School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin, Ireland)

10.05-10.15 Introduction: “The Sea Legs of J Hillis Miller” by **Éamonn Dunne** (Colaiste Chraobh Abhann, Ireland) and **Michael O'Rourke** (Independent Colleges, Dublin, Ireland)

10.15-10.30 Director's introduction to screening of *The First Sail: J. Hillis Miller* by **Dragan Kujundžić** (Department of Jewish Studies, Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures, University of Florida, USA)

10.30-12.00 Irish premiere screening of *The First Sail: J. Hillis Miller* (dir. Dragan Kujundžić)

12.00-13.00 Lunch

13.00-14.30 Panel 1 of responses to the film:

Chair: **Jonathan Mitchell** (Department of American Studies, University of East Anglia, UK)

Nicholas Royle (Department of English, University of Sussex, UK), “Up”

Éamonn Dunne and Michael O'Rourke, “Miller's Idle Tears”

Followed by Q & A with J. Hillis Miller (University of California, Irvine, USA) and Dragan Kujundžić

14.30-16.00 Panel 2 of responses to the film:

Chair: **Graham Price** (School of English, Drama and Film, University College Dublin, Ireland)

Martin McQuillan (Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Kingston University, London, UK), “Celluloid Philosophy”

Graham Allen (Department of English, University College Cork), “*The Triumph of Life* and the Reversibility of Art”

Followed by Q & A with J. Hillis Miller and Dragan Kujundžić

16.00-16.15 Tea and coffee

16.15-17.30 An interview with **J. Hillis Miller** conducted by Graham Allen, Éamonn Dunne, Dragan Kujundžić, Martin McQuillan, Michael O'Rourke and Nicholas Royle

17.30 Close

Participants:

Graham Allen is Professor in English at University College, Cork, Ireland. He is currently Vice-Head of the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences. His books include *Harold Bloom: Towards a Poetics of Conflict* (1994); *Intertextuality* (2000; 2nd edition 2011); *Roland Barthes* (2003); *The Salt Companion to Harold Bloom*, co-editor with Roy Sellars (2007); *Mary Shelley* (2008), *The Reader's Guide to 'Frankenstein'* (2008) and *Readings on Audience and Textual Materiality*, co-edited with Carrie Griffin and Mary O'Connell (2011). He edited a special number of *parallax*, entitled *The pupils of the university* (2007) and, with David Coughlan, is co-editing a number of *Derrida Today*, entitled *where ghosts live*, for publication in the latter part of 2012. He has published extensively on literary and cultural theory and on Romantic literature; his work has been translated into Japanese, Korean, French, Portuguese and Persian. Professor Allen has published poetry in numerous journals and was the winner of the 2010 Listowel Poetry Prize.

Éamonn Dunne is a teacher of English at Coláiste Chraobh Abhann school in Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow, Ireland. He is the author of *J. Hillis Miller and the Possibilities of Reading: Literature After Deconstruction* (2010) and has research interests in pedagogy, popular culture, queer theory and narratology. He is currently revising a second monograph entitled *The ABC of Good Reading* and co-writing a third book, *The Pervert's Guide to Reading*, with Michael O'Rourke.

Dragan Kujundžić is a Professor of Film and Media Studies, Jewish, Germanic and Slavic Studies, at the University of Florida. He is the author of numerous articles in critical theory, deconstruction and literary criticism. He has edited "Deconstruction, A Merry Science" (1985), "*Khoraographies for Jacques Derrida on July 15, 2000*" (2000), "Who or What—Jacques Derrida" (2008) and two volumes on J. Hillis Miller, "J" (2005) and "Provocations to Reading" (co-edited with Barbara Cohen, 2005). His other publications include monographs "Critical Exercises" (1983), "The Returns of History" (1997) and "Tongue in Heat" (2003). He has also edited volumes on Walter Benjamin, and Mikhail Bakhtin. He is currently working on the new monograph, "Ghost Scriptum," and on a book based on his recent film (2011) "The First Sail: J. Hillis Miller."

Martin McQuillan is Professor of Literary Theory and Cultural Analysis and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Kingston University, London. His recent publications include *Deconstruction After 9/11* (London: Routledge, 2008) and *Roland Barthes, or, The Profession of Cultural Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). He is the editor of *The Politics of Deconstruction: Jacques Derrida and the Other of Philosophy* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), *Deconstruction Reading Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and *The Origins of Deconstruction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), and is also series editor for 'The Frontiers of Theory' list published by Edinburgh University Press. He works in the spaces between literary theory, art theory, cultural studies and continental philosophy, and writes on the work of Jacques Derrida, Hélène Cixous and Paul de Man.

J. Hillis Miller taught for many years at the Johns Hopkins University and then at Yale University, before going to the University of California at Irvine in 1986, where he is now UCI Distinguished Research Professor of English and Comparative Literature. He is the author of many books and essays on nineteenth- and twentieth-century English, European, and American literature, and on literary theory. His most recent books are *For Derrida* (2009), *The Medium is the Maker: Browning, Freud, Derrida and the New Telepathic Ecotechnologies* (2009), *The Conflagration of Community: Fiction Before and After Auschwitz* (2011) and *Reading for Our Time: Adam Bede and Middlemarch Revisited* (2012).

Jonathan Mitchell is a lecturer in American Studies at the University of East Anglia. Jon's research interests include: US masculinity and national identity; Vietnam War and its literature; US literature and culture of the 50s and 60s; anti-racism/whiteness studies; psychoanalytic theory (Lacan and Žižek); queer theory; narrative theory (narratology and post-narratology); 'Christian Identity' and fundamentalism; and methodology in American Studies. His publications include: *Revisions of the American Adam: Innocence, Identity and Masculinity in the Twentieth Century*; and with Michael O'Rourke, 'Quempire: A Loiterly Journey into

the Heart of Darkness.’ In Aydemir, M. ed., *Indiscretions: at the Intersection of Queer and Postcolonial Theory*.

Anne Mulhall is a lecturer in the School of English, Drama and Film at UCD, where she teaches and researches in gender, queer and psychoanalytic theory, gender and sexuality studies and 20th century and contemporary Irish literature and culture and coordinates the MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture. She has published extensively on queer, feminist and psychoanalytic theory and on 20th century and contemporary Irish writing and visual culture. She co-edited *Irish Postmodernism and Popular Culture* (Palgrave, 2007) with Moynagh Sullivan and Wanda Balzano and, with Noreen Giffney and Michael O’Rourke, special features on the work of Bracha Ettinger and Lisa Baraitser for *Studies in the Maternal* and *Studies in Gender and Sexuality*. A co-edited issue of the *Irish University Review*, ‘Queer Studies and Ireland’, is forthcoming in Spring 2013. She is currently working on two monographs: *Anne Enright: Excavating the Present* and *Intimate States: The Biopolitics of Ireland 1970-2012*.

Michael O’Rourke lectures in the School of Psychotherapy at Independent Colleges, Dublin, Ireland and works mostly at the intersections between Queer Theory and continental philosophy. He is currently writing two books, one on speculative realism and object oriented ontology and *The Pervert’s Guide to Reading* with Éamonn Dunne. Some of his many publications can be found here: <http://independentcolleges.academia.edu/MichaelORourke>

Graham Price lectures in the School of English, Drama and Film and Irish Studies at University College Dublin. He also tutors part time in St. Patrick’s College Drumcondra. Graham has taught courses on Irish Literature, Critical Theory, Twentieth Century Drama and Children’s Literature. Graham completed his doctoral dissertation in 2008 which examined the influence of Oscar Wilde on twentieth century Irish writers. He has published articles on Oscar Wilde, Brian Friel and John McGahern and is currently working on a monograph examining Oscar Wilde’s influence on contemporary Irish drama.

Nicholas Royle is Professor of English at the University of Sussex. He is the author of many books, including *Veering: A Theory of Literature* (2011), *How to Read Shakespeare* (2005), *The Uncanny* (2003), *E. M. Forster* (1999) and *Telepathy and Literature* (1990). He is co-author (with Andrew Bennett) of *Elizabeth Bowen and the Dissolution of the Novel* (1995) and *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* (4th edition, 2009). He published his first novel, *Quilt*, in 2010.

We are both very grateful for the assistance of John Schad and Arthur Bradley from the University of Lancaster and for the generous and enthusiastic support of Gerardine Meaney, Anne Mulhall, Valerie Norton and the Humanities Institute of Ireland at University College Dublin.