

Excerpt from Richard Kearney script "Twinsome Minds"

One of my questions here this evening is how to distinguish between good and bad commemorating? Between remembering backwards, where we become addicted to repetition compulsion and melancholy, and remembering forwards, where we try to reanimate rich potencies of the past? In short, **how do we tell the difference between memories that incarcerate and memories that emancipate? How do we reclaim the proclamations of 1916?**

In his contemporary 1916 novel, *A Star called Henry*, Roddy Doyle says that we tell stories in order to fill the hole inside us. In our presentation tonight, we will be trying to fill in the gaps of certain micro-histories by supplementing memory with imagination, fact with fiction, telling it both *as* it happened and *as-if* it happened in this way or that. For it is in crossing story and history that one may give a future to the past.

Lets begin at the beginning.

From the time Cuchalain battled with his frère-enemi, Ferdia, on the planes of Ulster, the tale of two siblings in arms has been a leitmotif of Irish cultural imagination. Our mythology and literature – in both Irish and English - teem with such stories of conflict and crossing, right down to the icon of the suffering hero standing in the GPO today: a statue famously commemorated in Yeats' verse:

'When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side, what stalked through the post office?'

Was it ghost or god, hero or martyr, or just ordinary complex conflicted human beings? I shall hazard a guess by telling tales of some twinsome minds caught on opposite sides at that threshold moment of history. Tales - oral as much as written - that rarely make it into the canons of Official Commemoration.