

After'16 Short Film Collection Worksheet

Mr Yeats and the Beastly Coins

Recommended age: 12+

Suggested Class: TY Film, Senior History, English, Politics & Society

Themes: Currency, the Foundation of the State, National Identity, the Role of the Artist, Culture vs Commerce

1. Before viewing

What do you think the film is about? Discuss in groups. Look at the coins in your pocket. What information do they give you?

2. After viewing

What is the subject of the film?
What does the film tell you about Ireland after the Foundation of the State?
What was WB Yeats role?

3. Watch the film again

Describe three different pieces of evidence that the filmmakers use to support their narrative.
What is the tone of the film?
What evidence do you have for this?

4. The coins

What kind of person was Yeats, according to the film?
What was the main aim of introducing the new coins?
What does this mean: 'The silent ambassadors of national taste.'
What decision was made regarding images on the coins?
What do you think of this decision?

5. W.B. Yeats and the Designers

Look up Yeats' poem, Sailing to Byzantium. Can you connect the poem with the coinage discussions? Whose designs won the competition? Were there any problems with this result? How do the filmmakers emphasize this?
What do you think Yeats meant with these lines:
"Is every modern nation like the tower,
Half dead at the top?"

6. Art

What do you think of the coins as shown in the film? Imagine you have to design coins for Ireland today. Brainstorm in your group and agree on some symbolic images of Ireland for the new coins. Present to your class and make your case.