

# Politics and Symbols



Micheal Farrell (1940-2000)

Black '47, 1997-98

Hillier's medium and acrylic on canvas, 118 x 177in (299.72x 449.58cm)

*Micheal Farrell's large painting was based on Britain's responsibility for millions of Irish deaths and emigration of two million others. It is the trial of Charles Trevelyan, the British official who was in charge of Famine relief. Trevelyan stands confidently in the spotlight, the man who called the Famine "the direct stroke of an all-wise Providence" and a "mechanism for reducing surplus population".*

What does the beam of light remind you of?

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Why is it an important element in the painting?

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Describe Farrell's use of colour? What are the main colours? Why do you think some areas are in black and white?

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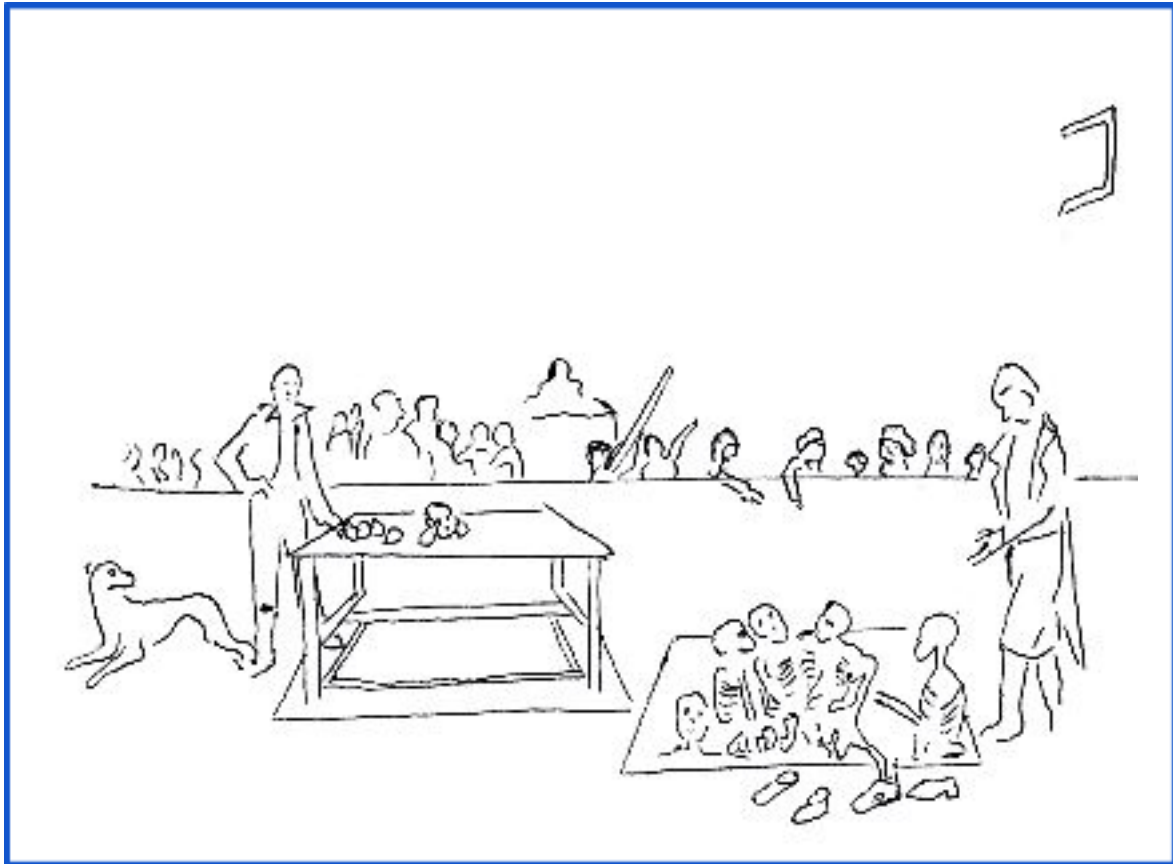
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Colour the image below in colours you think would work well.



Why do you think there is a skull among the potatoes on the table in front of Trevelyan?

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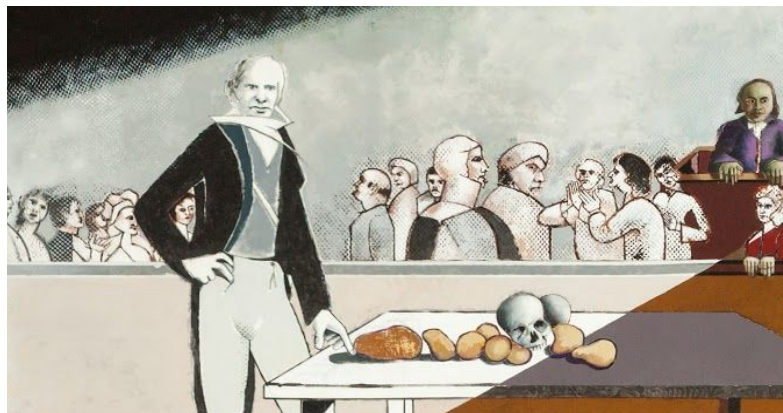
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Who are the skeleton's meant to represent? Why do you think they are coming up out of the hole? What might they want to say to Trevelyan?



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What do you think the wolfhound symbolises?



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Choose two figures from opposing sides of a conflict today. Make a drawing, painting or collage of them interacting.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to create their drawing, painting, or collage.

