

Culturally valuing landscapes – Artistic expression in poetry and film

The Blue Mountains by Henry Lawson

Above the ashes straight and tall,
Through ferns with moisture dripping,
I climb beneath the sandstone wall,
My feet on mosses slipping.

Like ramparts round the valley's edge
The tinted cliffs are standing,
With many a broken wall and ledge,
And many a rocky landing.

And round about their rugged feet
Deep ferny dells are hidden
In shadowed depths, whence dust and heat
Are banished and forbidden.

The stream that, crooning to itself,
Comes down a tireless rover,
Flows calmly to the rocky shelf,
And there leaps bravely over.

Now pouring down, now lost in spray
When mountain breezes sally,
The water strikes the rock midway,
And leaps into the valley.

Now in the west the colours change,
The blue with crimson blending;
Behind the far Dividing Range,
The sun is fast descending.

And mellowed day comes o'er the place,
And softens ragged edges;
The rising moon's great placid face
Looks gravely o'er the ledges.

Interpretation Questions

1. Highlight all of the words that are examples of the landforms within mountain landscapes.
2. How does Lawson use our senses to create an image of the Blue Mountains?
3. Why do you think Lawson wrote this poem about the Blue Mountains? What is he trying to tell us about their value?

Poem Source: <https://www.poetryverse.com/henry-lawson-poems/the-blue-mountains>

Do You Know The Tales Of Our Forefathers? By Dhi Lhaden

To my niece Gangzum,
Before the sun's rays hit the smiling peaks
You are ready to hit the road.

Following the hooves of yak singing a sad song
With the day's provisions stored in the fold of
your chupa,

This is when my heart turns weak like the tunes of your
song.If you have to spend your life
On the plateau like animals in the wild,
I never want to say "Farewell" and leave.
Instead if I can turn you into a student holding a book
and a pen

Will you be a girl in the service of our country?
Will you be a woman who loves her people?

Let me ask you:
Do you know the troubled tales of your forefathers?
Did you see their footprints in the mountains you roam?
Do you recognise the mountain peak
Where your forefathers' vital blood dissolved?

Write this single word called "Freedom"
On the mountain peak where your forefathers have
Shed tears for livelihood and
Sacrificed their lives for their rights.
This will be your first proof to be with the people
of the world
On an equal footing.

Interpretation Questions:

1. Highlight all of the words that related to landforms within mountain landscapes
2. What is the connection between mountains and family/ancestors that Dhi Laden describes in this poem?
3. Where do we see evidence that the poem is about the Tibetan people fighting and struggling for independence?

Poem Source: <https://highpeakspureearth.com/new-poetry-in-translation-from-detained-tibetan-writer-dhi-lhaden/>

Depicting mountain landscapes in films

In Western cultures, films and other popular media have represented mountain landscapes as something to conquer, overcome or dominate. They are often described as harsh, unforgiving and treacherous. Humans in these landscapes compete against nature. This differs from the deeper and intrinsic connection that indigenous groups across the world have with these landscapes.



Watch the trailer for Vertical Limit (2000)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GM-1V1VFcVk>

1. Describe the physical characteristics of the mountain landscape in the trailer.
2. Why do you think they used The Himalayas to film this movie?

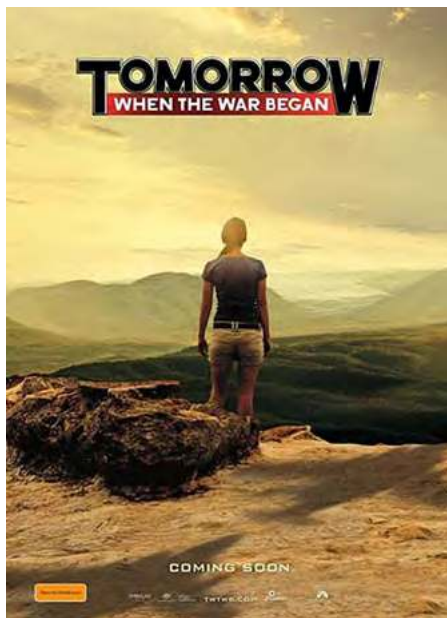


Watch the trailer for Everest (2015)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=79Q2rrQIPW4>

3. Describe the physical characteristics of the mountain landscape in the trailer.
4. Why do you think they made a movie about people climbing Mt. Everest?

Images of mountain landscapes in film were sources from Google Images



Watch the trailer for Tomorrow When the War Began (2010) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9KaX0F8GojI>

5. Describe the physical characteristics of the mountain landscape in the trailer.
 6. Why do you think they used The Blue Mountains to film this movie?
7. Overall, how does our culture think about the relationship between humans and mountains? What is the purpose of mountain landscapes?

Aesthetic Value – Persuasive Writing to keep our case studies on the World Heritage List

Both the Blue Mountains and The Himalayas are deemed World Heritage Sites by UNESCO – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value.

Hypothetical Scenario

The Head of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay, has suggested that these sites will be removed from the list in favour of other sites.

But you feel otherwise! You will compose a persuasive piece of writing to be sent to Ms. Azoulay that argues for these sites to remain on the World Heritage List.

Tasks

1. Research/Data Collection

Use these links to collect information on the aesthetic value of The Blue Mountains and The Himalayas.

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1406/>

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/blue-mountains-national-park>

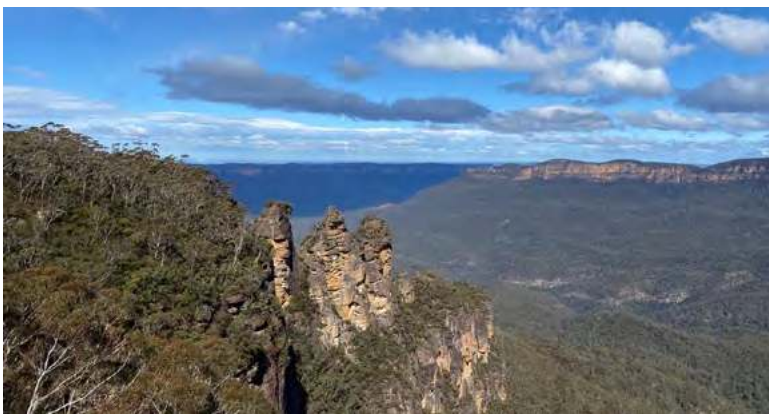
2. How would you describe the Blue Mountains and Himalayas?

3. How do people use these landscapes?

4. What benefits do the landscapes provide people with?

5. Why are they great examples of mountain landscapes?

6. Compose your persuasive writing piece (1 page approximately)



The Three Sisters – Blue Mountains, NSW Australia
Image source: Katerina Stojanovski

The Himalayas – Image source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/zPlt1BhBEJI>

