

## Area of Study – Response Sheet

**Title:** The Ivory Trail

**Form:** Book Cover

**Composer:** Victor Kelleher

**Date:** 2001

### **Context & Values:**

The author of the novel itself, Victor Kelleher was born in Great Britain in 1939 but moved to South Africa with his parents when he was fifteen. He spent twenty years in South Africa mainly travelling.

He married in South Africa and moved to Australia in 1976 where he took up writing full time. A passion of his has always been travelling and journeys which is evident in the novel as the main character journeys all over the world following the 'Ivory Trail.'

### **Concepts or Ideas Conveyed about Journeys:**

The predominant idea conveyed about journeys is illustrated by the written text, "Not all Journeys have an ending", suggesting the idea that the 'Ivory Trail' may not end and may be continuous.

The idea that journeys are on a large scale is also conveyed on the cover with the placing of numerous landmarks from all over the world. This shows that the journey is stretched out over a large area, in this case, all across the world. The cover gives off a very mysterious aura, and supports the theme that journeys can be intriguing, threatening, exotic, fantastic and exiting.

### **Journey – Describe the nature of the journey; imaginative, physical or inner:**

There are two themes concerning the nature of the journey conveyed on the cover of the book. The first of these is the slightly more obvious link to physical journeys; the title of the book, 'The Ivory Trail' lends itself to a more physical interpretation. The fact that physical landmarks are used also indicates the 'realness' of the journey which influences the responder to assume the journey is a physical one.

The other link to journeys on the cover is the link to Inner Journeys. The human face in the bottom left of the cover, highlights the eyes looking up in ponder. A look associated with searching inside oneself.

These two links shown on the cover direct the responder to assume the nature of the journey to be both physical and inner.

**Language/filmic/visual/aural features:**

**Discuss how the composer conveyed the inner or physical or imaginative journey. Identify the feature, exemplify and explain how it conveys or creates the journey and extrapolate by discussing its impact on the responder. Draw comparisons/contrasts between this text and other texts you are discussing in your response. Include quotes from the text.**

There are many features which help to convey the idea of both physical and inner journeys.

The first such feature is the use of colour employed by the designer. The dominant colours on the cover are mostly red, orange, purple and black. For example, red is used throughout the cover on the face, pyramid and sunset. The colour conveys the emotions of anger, passion, blood and heat which gives the journey more of it's mystique.

Another feature that helps to convey the journey theme is the written text "Not all journeys have an ending." This quote gives a clue as to the theme in the novel and also adds to the mysterious nature of the cover. It's placement also adds to the effect. It is located in the top right of the cover, right on the border between the sunset and black darkness. This combination of the text and black is effective as black is notoriously associated with death and finality. By contrasting the mortal black with the phrase "Not all journeys have an ending" it also adds to the mystique. Another startling use of contrast is that of the font colour of white and sand, with the background colour of red and purple. This once again adds to the mysterious nature of the cover and allows the text to stand out.

Another feature that lends itself to the physical journey is the font of the author's name. By using an eroded font, it gives the impression that the author himself has been a part of the journey, and that he too has been worn away over time.

There are also visual features that help associate the cover with a physical journey. The visual images of a human face, the pyramid and sphinx and the Eastern Asian prayer towers blended together give the impression of many stages of a physical journey blending together into one massive quest.

Vectors and lines are also used to direct the readers gaze and to add to the idea of a flowing journey. The sand lines that run across the face flow from the bottom right up along the face and merge into a desert surrounding the pyramid. This conveys the theme of the journey moving from one place to another around the world.

The eyes themselves also help to direct the reader's attention. The eyes are aimed directly at the title and author's name, helping to direct the reader's gaze in the same direction as the sand lines. This shows how the different stages of the journey are linked together by a common idea.

The eyes don't just restrict themselves to supporting the physical journey theme, but also the inner journey theme. The eyes are aiming up, as if looking for answers, and are opened fully. This in a combination with the prayer towers and pyramids, both relics of religious significance, help to convey the theme of enlightenment.

This once again leads back to the theme of an inner journey.

So it is clear that the cover has many features that support both physical and inner journeys.

**Describe the journey and the consequences of the journey:**

The journey is both literal and metaphorical.

It is literal in the sense that it follows 'The Ivory Trail', a physical trail that will lead its follower all across the world. However, as stated on the cover, the journey may not necessarily have an ending. As a result of this, a consequence of this journey may be that it consumes your entire life. After all, if there is no way of choosing when to end the journey, you are trapped in that journey for your entire life.

However, if the end is found, as ivory is a prized substance, riches, fame and wealth could be waiting.

In the metaphorical sense, a positive consequence of this journey is that 'enlightenment' will be found. In that sense, 'The Ivory Trail' could imply a journey for the riches in our own mind.

Overall, the journey is surrounding a man who ventures across the world on 'The Ivory Trail' in a search for the end of the trail but also for inner enlightenment.

**Linking & Synthesising: Discuss what you have discovered or learned about physical, inner or imaginative journeys from the texts. Compare and contrast the texts.**

Through the text, 'The Ivory Trail', it has been discovered that a journey does not necessarily have to be just physical, inner or imaginative but can be a mixture of two or more. In 'The Ivory Trail', both the themes of physical and inner journeys are explored.

This is similar to Robert Frost's poem, 'The Road Not Taken' in which both physical and inner journeys are conveyed in the text. Whilst in 'The Road Not Taken', the physical journey is represented as a road, in 'The Ivory Trail', the physical journey is actually a round-the-world quest. 'The Road Not Taken', if taken literally, is simply the journey of man who is travelling and comes to crossroads. These crossroads will ultimately decide where his journey leads. In 'The Ivory Trail' however, the main character's journey flows from one sequence of events to the next.

This text has also shown that journey's do not necessarily have to have an ending, as stated on the cover but can be continuous.

This is also prevalent in Margaret Atwood's poem, 'Journey to the Interior', in which she asks herself "have I been walking around in circles again?" This quote also gives off the impression of a never-ending journey. There is a difference though, in 'The Ivory Trail', the never-ending side to the theme is more concerned with physical journeys. However, in 'Journey to the Interior', the never-ending experience is dealing with an inner journey.

This text has used many features to develop an understanding of journeys.