Literary Analysis Assignment *Elephant Run*

**Directions:** Compose an essay (**1.5 pages, double-spaced**) in response to one of the following prompts. Essays must have a thesis and should be supported by the text. Successful papers will be well organized and remain focused on the thesis. Don’t panic about the complexity of the prompts. This is just to get you used to seeing prompts like this in the future. I will help you with the interpretation of the prompts and the planning phase of the paper. **Due: June 2, 2014.**

1. Nature is a powerful force, one that can both sustain humanity and destroy it. Many

works of literature explore the relationship between humanity and the surrounding

natural world. In the novel *Elephant Run* identify the central message communicated by the author about this relationship.

2. Authors often use descriptive details to develop a setting for several purposes. In an essay, explain how the setting of your book creates suspense and affects the plot and characters.

3. Often in literature, cultural, physical, or geographical surroundings shape psychological or moral traits in a character. Analyze how surroundings affect a character in *Elephant Run* and illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole.

4. Works of literature often depict acts of betrayal. Friends and even family may betray a protagonist; main characters may likewise be guilty of treachery or may betray their own values. Analyze the nature of the betrayal and show how it contributes to the meaning of the work as a whole.

5. One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Discuss how a character in a novel or a drama struggles to free himself or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.

6. Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures -- national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character's sense of identity into question. Select a novel or play in which a character responds to such a cultural collision. Then write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character's response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.

7. Morally ambiguous characters -- characters whose behavior discourages readers from identifying them as purely evil or purely good -- are at the heart of many works of literature. Explain how the character can be viewed as morally ambiguous and why his or her moral ambiguity is significant to the work as a whole.

8. A bildungsroman, or coming-of-age novel, recounts the psychological or moral development of its protagonist from youth to maturity when this character recognizes his or her place in the world. Select a single pivotal moment in the psychological or moral development of the protagonist of a bildungsroman. Then write a well-organized essay that analyzes how that single moment shapes the meaning of the work as a whole.

9. In great literature, no scene of violence exists for its own sake. Choose a work of literary merit that confronts the reader with a scene or scenes of violence. Explain how the scene or scenes contribute to the meaning of the complete work.