

Preliminary Research Exercise
Due: Tuesday, February 18th, 2014

"One day, when I was asked to write something about foreignness, the fact of being a foreigner, my first reaction was to distance myself from convention, the welcoming of foreigners. We agree it's necessary to welcome foreigners. That's what we want, but there's something about the way we impose, normalize, standardize this welcome, the welcome of differences, respect for others, etcetera, that means we end up ignoring their foreignness. It's like pretending that a black person isn't black. And so I decided that I wanted to specify what must remain foreign in a foreigner and what makes him foreign."

- Jean-Luc Nancy

The following is a preliminary research exercise, to be completed and turned in on **Tuesday, February 18th**. Please provide me with two copies of your work, as on Wednesday, we will be working in groups on an exercise that will combine both peer review and research interview techniques.

In your essay, please pay a great deal of attention to your choice of active verbs. Choose verbs which will most accurately and effectively convey your ideas, drawing heavily upon the example of this sort of language provided by the film that you will be both addressing and discussing. In addition, choose appropriate transitional language to give unity to your essay as a whole. Please devote a good deal of thought to this important element of communication at every stage of this assignment, as doing so will help you a great deal. Finally, please avoid using the second person in your writing (you, your, yours).

Essay Instructions:

Once again watch *Vers Nancy (Towards Nancy)*, taking copious notes as you do so. Feel free to stop the film as necessary. When you have finished, please write a **three page essay** discussing the film, which was directed by Claire Denis. In this essay, please devote at least one paragraph to each of the following:

1. A brief, yet complete summary of the film.
2. A description of the film's setting, a detailed account of character interaction within this setting, and how these two elements of the film may be related and especially appropriate for this particular work, and its central themes and concerns.
3. A brief discussion of the related themes of difference, intrusion, foreigners, strangeness, and otherness as addressed throughout the film, and a few words about why Nancy discusses these terms in the context of personal identity, knowledge, and human interaction.
4. Some comments about the central role played by interview in this film, how Nancy's student engages in this important activity to learn about Nancy's ideas, and why she seems to be so effective in her mode of questioning in this regard.
5. A discussion of what you would still like to learn about these subjects from Jean-Luc Nancy, and how you would go about interviewing him in this regard if given the chance.
6. What this discussion has taught you about assimilating the ideas of others, especially in light of Nancy's statements regarding what might possibly remain foreign to us in the thoughts and experiences of others, regardless of how open we are to these phenomena.
7. Some final thoughts about how any of the things which you have addressed above will help you in your own approach to new people, experiences, and ideas in the future, both academically in in your personal life. You may want to make a comment or two here about research in particular.