

“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 **Monday, September 22nd**. Please provide me with two copies of your work, as we will be working in groups on a further exercise that will combine both peer review and research interview techniques. Include both copies in a thin, two-pocket folder, with your name written on the front. 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:

With your original viewing notes at hand, please revisit the film *Vers Nancy (Toward Nancy)*, which was directed by Claire Denis, taking additional notes when necessary. When you have finished, please write a **three page essay** discussing the film. In this essay, please devote at least one paragraph to each of the following:

1. A brief, yet complete summary of the film (narrative?)
2. A description of the film’s setting, a detailed account of the character interaction within this setting, and a few words regarding how these two elements of the film may be related and especially appropriate for this particular work, with its central themes and concerns (description?)
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 (definition?)
4. Some comments about the important role played by interview in this film, how Nancy’s student engages in this important activity to learn about her teacher’s ideas, and why she seems to be so effective in her mode of questioning in this regard (example?)
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 (process analysis?)
6. What this discussion has taught you about assimilating the ideas of others, especially in light of Nancy’s statements regarding what might remain foreign to us in the thoughts and experiences of others, regardless of how open we are to these phenomena (paraphrase?)
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 and in your personal life. You may want to refer to specific research activities in particular (analogy?)