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Inviting Twenty-First Century Students to the Eighteenth-Century Party

Kathryn Strong Hansen
The Citadel, kathryn.hansen@citadel.edu

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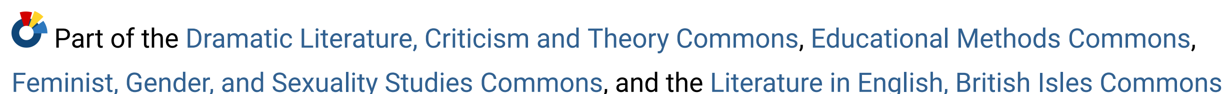
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Inviting Twenty-First Century Students to the Eighteenth-Century Party

Abstract

This article describes a classroom activity that increases students' connection to literary characters, and by extension, texts. The activity, constructed as a party attended by literary characters, tasks students with taking on the point of view of one character in an assigned novel. This can encourage a student to see the viewpoint of a character that differs from him or her in gender, social status, or any other category of difference. In heightening students' relationship to eighteenth-century characters, I argue, instructors can bring the eighteenth century closer to contemporary students as well as increase students' sensitivity to viewpoints that differ from their own. A post-activity writing assignment extends the activity to encourage student analysis and reflection.

Keywords

empathy, connection, gender, pedagogy, activity, worksheet, Evelina, Burney, Oroonoko, Behn

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The eighteenth century is, in many ways, much like our own time. Yet my students all too often enter my classroom believing that this is not the case. As a consequence, they often experience difficulty in seeing from the perspective of someone in the eighteenth century. Admittedly, a perceived lack of common ground isn't the only aspect of teaching eighteenth-century texts that can pose challenges for students. As Paula Backscheider writes, "There's the language, especially for the period before 1740, and [the eighteenth century] has always seemed to me to require the most interdisciplinary knowledge and skills of any period" (1). These linguistic and cultural disruptions help to perpetuate students' all-too pervasive belief that the eighteenth century was radically different from their current era.

Yet because of the unique nature of my home institution, distance in time is not the only difference that my students must overcome. I teach at The Citadel, the Military College of South Carolina, and only approximately six percent of The Citadel's undergraduate students are women. Because my male students are less likely than other male students to have as much or as frequent contact with women (at least during their time at college), or as much cross-gendered interaction as my female students have with men, they can benefit from learning to empathize with female characters. Though the classroom activity that I will describe can highlight many different aspects of a selected focal text—including race, class, politics, economics, and any other element upon which you might choose to dwell—I use it to close the gap between the experiences of my mostly male students and the very often female eighteenth-century characters and writers I most enjoy discussing. In this exercise, students role-play characters from eighteenth-century novels. I tend to assign characters to students that don't match that student's gender whenever possible so that as many students as possible must imaginatively change their perspective in unfamiliar ways.

To close the chronological and gender gaps between my students and the texts I assign them, it is necessary for students to empathize with the characters in eighteenth-century texts. Students must be able to understand the feelings, motivations, and viewpoints of characters to engage with the themes and implications of the texts. While lectures and presentations providing the interdisciplinary context that Backscheider calls for are essential, this kind of contextualization alone does not always spark students' interest or understanding. I initially stumbled upon an activity to increase student empathy for eighteenth-century literary characters when teaching Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield*. My students could not seem to find much enjoyment or even interest in the novel, and class discussions were coming to a standstill. So I used an activity that I called a "Wakefield party" in which I assigned each student a character from Goldsmith's novel. Each student had the task of discovering the other students' Wakefield identities, but could do so only by asking and answering questions while acting as his or her assigned character. Why did I take class time to do this, especially when there are too many texts to fit into the very limited time I have in any given semester?

My answer is best explained by an anecdote. After participating in the Wakefield party, one of my students told me in casual conversation that he would not have wanted to be a woman in the eighteenth century. He had been Sophia Primrose in the party and had experienced difficulty answering questions while trying to convey feminine propriety. Not every question he was asked was fit for a young lady to answer, and scrambling to put his words in the most delicately virtuous phrasing was taxing and in some instances even downright impossible. From that point

onward, he showed heightened sensitivity to the difficulties of female characters in the eighteenth-century texts, in particular the ways in which their utterances were constrained. His empathy for Sophia convinced me that this activity could not only generate more student interest in and command of a text—many more students had a firm grasp on *The Vicar of Wakefield* after the party than had seemed to before the party—but also aid in increasing male students' empathy for female characters.

It's all too true that each semester offers only a finite amount of time for the texts on our literature syllabi, making the time that we spend in class particularly precious. So every moment spent in class on one text by necessity creates less time for other texts. But I agree with Elaine Showalter when she advises that "instead of aiming for comprehensive coverage, we have to think about what students need to read in order to establish a basis for further learning" (13). As long as students have the perception that they are radically different from the people who lived in the eighteenth century, that perception compromises their ability, as well as their willingness, to understand eighteenth-century characters and texts. Increasing students' empathy for characters makes students more likely to consider what motivates someone whose point of view differs from their own, allowing for more nuanced discussion of texts. Though I've isolated gender and chronology as my foci, you could easily emphasize the closing of other disconnects, such as gaps between characters who inhabit the *beau monde* and students from socioeconomically disadvantaged spaces or those between the relative homogeneity of a text's characters and the heterogeneity of an ethnically diverse classroom.

Yet empathy is not without its pitfalls. As Ann Jurecic rightly reminds us,

> Recent work in affect theory . . . warns us to be wary of the fellow feeling associated with social emotions, such as empathy, sympathy, compassion, and pity. Although these social emotions may seem authentically personal, we are warned, they can be expressions of power, appropriations of others' experience, and falsely oversimplified understandings of social and cultural relationships. (11)

A reader's background can lead that reader to perpetuate oversimplifications that result from his or her unquestioned belief in power dynamics as proper, inborn, or inescapable. In other words, inviting empathy without reflection and discussion of its implications could also be inviting facile generalizations, or even creating the potential for a student to believe that he or she truly understands a subaltern or marginalized character from a few minutes of empathy with that character. Clearly, this is a concern not to be taken lightly. Yet empathy can help students to understand the political, sexual, and cultural dynamics at work in texts. Discussing the possible pitfalls of empathy after this "party" activity helps avoid the dangers that Jurecic outlines, as does the use of a reflective post-activity writing assignment, which I outline below. Despite the risks, I've had success with this activity in decreasing the gap between a twenty-first century student and an eighteenth-century individual by coaxing students into identifying with literary characters. In so doing, I hope not only to amplify students' empathy with seemingly distant eighteenth-century men and women, but also to provide a basis for students to engage with literature and gender more fully, to provide as Showalter suggests what they need to read in order to learn further.

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Playing the game
I'll use *Evelina* as an example text but will later discuss how to select other possible texts for this activity. I start by writing on the board "Do not disclose your *Evelina* identity to anyone yet." Then I explain that today's class will be an activity—a party, in fact. At this point I take roll and assess how to modify the invitations for absences, a process I discuss later. While doing this, you might choose to have students wear a name tag with their first name and last initial, since this will facilitate the identification part of game play among students who do not know each other's real names. Next, I give students their invitations. If I expect a late arrival or two, I keep in reserve a sufficient number of invitations.

Then, I tell the students what I mean by "party." The quickest way to do this is to read a shortened version of the beginning of the invitation. I tell students that they are "in disguise – all of the partygoers will have false identities. Your objective during this party is to ascertain the *Evelina* identities of the other attendees." They have a list of characters on their invitations, and the students, as the invitation says,

> are to write down the false identity name of the others as you discover them. The only way to discover the identities of these pretend 'students' is to talk to them; ask them questions such as "where would you sit to watch an opera?" or "when is it permissible for a young lady to decline to dance at a ball?" Depending on what they know as well as what they *don't* know, you can learn who they are – or are not. (See Appendix A)

Students' adherence to the rules of the party game is essential to its success. The invitation provides those rules:

> You must participate. You cannot reveal your identity by saying who you are. However, you must answer any question you are asked as honestly and in a manner as consistent with your character as possible. You may *not* ask any version of the question "who are you?" and you must not ask any questions that can be answered with a "yes" or "no." Additionally, you must answer the others' questions in a manner consistent with your *Evelina* identity. Tell only the truth as your character sees it, or (to your shame be it written) confess that you aren't sure, but make a guess as to what your *Evelina* identity would say. You will have ten minutes to review your character as well as refresh your memory as to what your fellow characters are like so that you can identify them. (See Appendix A)

To ensure that students play the game to the best of their abilities, I allow them five or ten minutes to review the text. This helps them to differentiate characters with similar names and to refresh their memory about their assigned characters. Before releasing them into this review time, I tell them that there will be a follow-up writing activity, so it is imperative that they perform as well as they can. This helps focus them on the review and helps prevent them from merely socializing with their classmates. As they review the text, I circulate through the room to make sure that I can answer any questions. Alternatively, you could lead a review of the characters for the class as a group if he or she feels that a significant number of students need guided review.

At the end of this period, I announce that it's time to put away the texts. I encourage students to move and talk as their character would, much like an actor tries to embody a character on stage or in a film. While this kind of acting might seem unnecessary, the potential it holds in helping students connect with a character makes it worth encouraging. Jean Decety and William Ickes explain that "[m]atching neural representation or mimicking another's posture . . . may facilitate understanding of, or belief about, another's state," and moreover, that "[i]ntuiting or projecting oneself into another's situation . . . may give one a lively sense of what the other is thinking and feeling . . . and may thereby facilitate other-oriented feelings" (10). In short, the more fully a student embodies a character, the better. Next, I announce that the party has begun. During the "party," I keep circulating to overhear students' questions (and ensure that no one is fudging the rules). When the activity is underway, I keep an eye on the clock, because I want to make sure I have sufficient time for wrap-up discussion. The end of the party can come at any time you choose, but I prefer to end it once a solid handful of students have discovered all of the *Evelina* identities; waiting for *everyone* to do so is impractical, as most classrooms will have at least a few students who did not complete (or did not carefully examine) the reading assignment and therefore are less skilled at formulating questions for their classmates.

After announcing the end of the party, I ask students to identify each of the *Evelina* characters. We do this aloud as a group so that they all know which student embodied which character. Then I conduct a short discussion. If during the activity I overheard signs of conversation frustrated by some students who obviously did not finish the reading, I'll try to move past this challenge by acknowledging how difficult this activity is when some partygoers have not read *Evelina* carefully. To get the discussion off the ground, I'll begin by presenting some of the questions that I overheard as I circulated through the "party," and ask how students chose what would best help them identify characters. We'll talk about any characters who might have been tough to distinguish. For example, in *Evelina*, Sir Clement Willoughby and Mr. Lovel might seem similar because they are both rakish libertines who see Evelina as easy prey. The impossibly worthy Lord Orville and Rev. Villars also might be easily confused (they are both ideal men, after all), as might Tom and Polly Branghton as hopelessly—and similarly—hoydenish members of the merchant class. Clarifying these confusions could lead to discussions of class, as perhaps the only clear differentiator between Willoughby and Lovel is the distinction in their social statuses, or to discussions of why certain secondary characters are included in the text. One such discussion question is: Why is Mr. Lovel necessary to the narrative when Sir Clement already exists in the text as an unsuitable match for Evelina?

To keep students on task and focused throughout the game, I build in several safeguards. One twist to the game that can help students follow the rules and keep them working diligently is to announce before beginning that the first five students to identify all "partygoers" correctly earn an extra two points on an upcoming quiz (or some other small prize that would work as an incentive for students). If you take this route, you must keep a master list to check the accuracy of each student's completed list. To do this quickly, I recommend having already made tentative character assignments before class. Then, to adjust for any absent students, make all necessary changes to the master invitation list during the ten-minute review period. As students complete the blanks on the invitation form, I compare their answers to my master list and record the names of those who receive prizes.

The practicalities

The size of a class dictates what texts will work well with this activity. Because my own eighteenth-century literature classes tend to be small, I enjoy a lot of latitude with text selection. A small class of twelve or so students can use texts with large *or* small casts of characters. If a small class isn't the case, there are options for larger classes. For instance, texts with a large number of characters will likely work well. The number of characters could match the number of students, or you can select the characters you most want to highlight from a text with more characters than there are students in the class. For particularly large classes, students could be divided into two separate "party" groups. If using these groups, make sure to have a method to distinguish the two groups. Otherwise, the activity can be confused by students from one group accidentally asking question of students in the other group. One way to distinguish groups is to use different rooms for each group of "partygoers." You could also name each group by color. Students could be encouraged first to ask each other "are you in the silver party?" A class with an even number of students divides easily into two groups, but if a class has an odd number of students, the list of attendee characters for each group simply could differ by adding one. If the class has two parties in the same room, try to enforce a physical division between the two teams to avoid confusion (say, the crimson team works at the front of the room while the silver team keeps to the back). One additional safeguard to distinguish multiple parties would be to use color-coded name tags with the students' real names, helping give a visual cue as to which party the student belongs. If name tags are in short supply at your campus, just bring tape. Students can make their own name tags from notebook paper and tape them to their shirts. You can also break up smaller classes into two parties. But keep in mind that texts with a very small number of characters don't pose the same level of challenge for the student, since the identification question-and-answer period would be short.

Class size and student attendance are important factors in *conducting* this activity, so be sure to consider them in *planning* this activity. Because my institution enforces attendance by levying penalties for unexcused absences, I am aware of student absences in advance except for cases of documented student illness. This, I realize, is highly unusual, and the number of students in a more typical college classroom is likely to change without notice. Some classes might experience wide fluctuations in day-to-day attendance, and this will cause planning difficulty. To demonstrate one way to navigate this challenge, I have included a sample of invitations for an *Oroonoko* party (Appendix B). The *Oroonoko* invitation includes the nameless figures of "A courtesan in the king's otan, Coramantien" and "A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam." Deleting one or more of these anonymous characters (that is, telling students to cross off one or more from the list of characters to identify) can allow you to accommodate unexpected attendance irregularities. When employing this tactic, I prefer to have more than one category of nameless participants so that students playing the game can't identify someone by simply asking "do you have a name?" Keep in mind that, although the invitation rules specify that students must avoid asking questions answered with a simple "yes" or "no," this rule is easy for students to forget. Having only one anonymous category can make the anonymous characters far too easy to identify. I had only one category of nameless participant in my initial *The Vicar of Wakefield* party—"citizen of Wakefield"—and won't repeat that mistake. This reinforces my previous assertion that some texts work better than others, since some texts don't lend themselves to more than one distinct kind of anonymous character. In short, knowing the habits of the students will

make planning and executing this activity much easier. It's for that reason that I would suggest this as a mid- to late-term activity rather than one performed at the beginning of a semester.

Though I previously mentioned assigning characters before the start of the class as a way to help administer prizes, I also like to do so in an effort to make the party as successful as possible. I might have to shift some students' identities around because of absences, but pre-preparation helps me assign the central characters to my more dramatic students, as well as my students who are likeliest to not only complete reading assignments but also understand their nuances. For example, a student with a good sense of humor would be a good choice for the Frenchified and melodramatic Madame Duval or the blustery Captain Mirvan. A student who seldom reads might make a better candidate for one of the smaller characters, like the relatively nondescript Lady Howard or the limited-English-speaking Monsieur Dubois, as he or she would be less likely to lead the more diligent students astray. However, students who are less likely to read consistently may well be the students whom you most want to motivate, so I would urge anyone trying this activity to consider giving at least a few such students a more prominent character with whom identification would be beneficial. To help such students better embody their assigned characters, you could even lend aid in the preparation phase so as to better equip them for the roleplaying involved in the party. Additionally, your more probing readers are likelier to bring greater depth to secondary characters, so the activity will work more powerfully if you take into consideration the needs as well as the skills of your students.

To prevent this activity from merely being an entertaining departure from the more standard lecture or discussion class format, and to avoid the pitfalls of superficial sympathy that Jurecic discusses, I require students to complete a follow-up writing assignment. For any absent students, I convert this writing assignment into a character analysis, selecting a character that I think would be unlike that student and asking a question that requires explanation and justification in its answer, like "how might this character's role in the novel be different if she were a man? Why?" But for those students who participated in the party, I ask a series of reflective questions (see Appendix C). The point of these questions is to encourage reflection that capitalizes on what it felt like for the student to "be" someone else, particularly someone who seems at first blush so different from the student. While it is certainly possible to ask students to write more at length in response to this activity, my goal with the writing assignment is to encourage the kind of connection between student and character that my "Sophia Primrose" experienced in *The Vicar of Wakefield* party. Having students discuss their experiences is what I most want to facilitate, and I find that their comments are more carefully considered once they have organized their thoughts through writing first. Changing the focus of the reflection questions could easily change the focus of the subsequent discussions; while some of the questions I ask my students in the appended sample center upon gender, you could frame questions to focus students' thinking toward issues of ethnicity, religion, age, or social class, for example.

Conclusion

Increasingly, students in my classes comment on how "relatable" a character seems to them, yet those students tend to want the "relatability" to come ready made rather than be something for which they must work. Not every student will have the kind of reaction to the party that my Sophia-Primrose student did. But the reflection necessary to put ideas in writing can make

students participate more actively in finding common ground with a character seemingly different from them, whether the difference is of chronological era, gender, class, or any other identity category. Keith Hjortshoj labels the point of writing in higher education as the attempt "to give individuals *more* to say, with broader perspectives and stronger voices of their own with which they can take more active, constructive roles in professions and public life" (193). Helping students better understand the eighteenth century is one key reason I conduct a "party" in my classroom, and to that end I endorse the idea of modifying the writing questions to focus upon issues with which students have been struggling in class discussion.

But a further point of this activity, particularly because the student population in my classes is predominantly male, is to help provide the reflection necessary to empathize with female characters and to cultivate the viewpoint of eighteenth-century women. Because few people think to engage in activities that encourage them to empathize with a member of the opposite sex, activities that do so provide a kind of viewpoint unlikely for students to obtain elsewhere. As Ann Jurecic explains, readers "report that they value the experience of empathy in reading, but they tend to choose books containing characters or plots with which they identify beforehand. On their own, they do not regularly choose reading material that cuts across social and cultural boundaries" (15). Stepping into the shoes of a character, especially if the student engages in movement, gesture, and facial expressions, serves as one way to foster empathy with a character very different from him or her. The "relatability" that students seem to seek in fictional characters suggests that they are likeliest to empathize with those characters most like them, which is to say that most male students are likely to empathize with male characters. Yet common ground between students and characters exists even in unexpected ways, and "[c]haracters can and do invite empathy from readers who differ markedly from them in identity traits" (Keen 302). Reflecting on shared beliefs and emotions can help obviate differences, even differences as culturally fraught as those of gender. Classroom time spent on encouraging empathy with seemingly distant or different characters can then broaden perspectives, as Hjortshoj might say, which could shift the ways in which students understand not only the characters in the texts but the texts themselves.

Recently, a *New York Times* blogger interviewed Dale J. Stephens, founder of Uncollege.org, a site that urges young adults to "hack" their education and eschew traditional college courses in the search for their success, and the interview reveals the deep suspicion with which many people regard college classrooms. "What you learn in college," Stephens opined, "is generally the same skill set that you learn in a traditional school environment . . . You learn how to follow directions, meet deadlines and memorize facts" (Ojalvo). Here Stephens displays a common belief about a university education, one that insists that college teaches students mechanistically and by rote. Yet the people I know who convene collegiate literature classes would argue strenuously with Stephens' assessment of university classes' goals (except, perhaps, the meeting of deadlines). Ideally, literature classes encourage reflection, discussion, and understanding—not just of texts, but of the underlying concepts they forward—and therefore foster analytical syntheses of information that encourage emotional as well as intellectual growth.

Activities like the party exercise I delineate here perform work very differently from what Stephens imagines transpires within the walls of a college classroom. In particular, the work that this assignment does is to provide a basis for education that enhances empathy. While spending

twenty minutes answering questions in the persona of Evelina Anville is not likely on its own to change a young man from boorish to sensitive, it is worthwhile if it causes a student to find common ground with someone he might have thought had little to nothing in common with him. This is likely to be something that the average young person cannot "hack," if only because these kinds of activities outside of a university classroom so seldom include reflection upon and analysis of one's relationship to a perceived other. It is my hope that this activity opens a door so that further conversations about women's issues and about eighteenth-century culture can take place.

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Appendix A

Greetings, Evelina Anville!

This letter is your invitation to a party. Many people from your life will be there, yet you will all be in disguise – all of the partygoers have false identities. Your objective during this party is to ascertain the ***Evelina*** *identities of the other attendees. To accomplish that goal, below is a list of the other attendees. You are to write down the false identity name of the others as you discover them. The only way to discover the identities of these pretend "students" is to talk to them; ask them questions such as "where would you sit to watch an opera?" or "when is it permissible for a young lady to decline to dance at a ball?" Depending on what they know as well as what they* <u>*don't*</u> *know, you can learn who they are – or are not.*

Evelina Anville	*You!*
Rev. Arthur Villars	________________
Lady Howard	________________
Mrs. Mirvan	________________
Miss Maria Mirvan	________________
Captain Mirvan	________________
Miss Fenton	________________
Sir Clement Willoughby	________________
Lord Orville	________________
Mr. Lovel	________________
Madame Duval	________________
Monsieur Dubois	________________
Tom Branghton	________________
Polly Branghton	________________
Mr. Smith	________________
Mr. Macartney	________________
Mrs. Selwin	________________
Sir John Belmont	________________
Lady Louisa Larpent	________________
Lord Merton	________________
Miss Belmont	________________
Dame Green	________________
Mrs. Beaumont	________________

Rules of the party: you must participate. You cannot reveal your identity by saying who you are. However, you must answer any question you are asked as honestly and in a manner as consistent with your character as possible. You may <u>*not*</u> *ask any version of the question "who are you?" Additionally, you must answer the others' questions in a manner consistent with your* ***Evelina*** *identity. Tell only the truth as your character sees it, or (to your shame be it written) confess that you aren't sure, but make a guess as to what your* ***Evelina*** *identity would say. You will have ten*

minutes to review your character as well as refresh your memory as to what your fellow characters are like so that you can identify them. I wish you luck in divining the identities of your fellow partygoers.

Sincerely,
Dr. Hansen

Appendix B

Good morning, nameless courtesan in the Coramantien king's otan!

This letter is your invitation to a party. Many people from your life will be there, as will many other people, like you, who simply live in Coramantien or Surinam. Yet you will all be in disguise – all of the partygoers have false identities. Your objective during this party is to ascertain the **Oroonoko** *identities of the other attendees. To accomplish that goal, below is a list of the other attendees. You are to write down the false identity name of the others as you discover them. The only way to discover the identities of these pretend "students" is to talk to them; ask them questions such as "how do you feel about someone changing your name?" or "how do you feel about slave rebellions?" Depending on what they know as well as what they don't know, you can learn who they are – or are not. Additionally, you must answer the others' questions in a manner consistent with your* **Oroonoko** *identity. In your case, that means knowing very little indeed about what happens – you're a minor character, my dear, so don't pretend to know more than you could possibly know!*

Oroonoko (Caesar)	____________________
Jamoan	____________________
Imoinda (Clemene)	____________________
Aboan	____________________
Onahal	____________________
Oroonoko's grandfather, king of Coramantien	____________________
Narrator	____________________
Trefry	____________________
Tuscan	____________________
Willoughy	____________________
Bannister	____________________
Byam	____________________
A courtesan in the king's otan, Coramantien	*You!*
A courtesan in the king's otan, Coramantien	____________________
A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam	____________________
A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam	____________________
A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam	____________________

Rules of the party: you must participate. You cannot reveal your identity by saying who you are. However, you must answer any question you are asked as honestly and in a manner as consistent with your character as possible. You may not ask any version of the question "who are you?" Tell only the truth as your character sees it, or (to your shame be it written) confess that you aren't sure, but make a guess as to what your **Oroonoko** *identity would say. You will have ten minutes to review your character as well as refresh your memory as to what your fellow characters are like so that you can identify them. I wish you luck in divining the identities of your fellow partygoers.*

Sincerely,
Dr. Hansen

Good morning, Trefry!

This letter is your invitation to a party. Many people from your life will be there, as will many other people, like you, who simply live in Coramantien or Surinam. Yet you will all be in disguise – all of the partygoers have false identities. Your objective during this party is to ascertain the **Oroonoko** *identities of the other attendees. To accomplish that goal, below is a list of the other attendees. You are to write down the false identity name of the others as you discover them. The only way to discover the identities of these pretend "students" is to talk to them; ask them questions such as "how do you feel about someone changing your name?" or "how do you feel about slave rebellions?" Depending on what they know as well as what they don't know, you can learn who they are – or are not. Additionally, you must answer the others' questions in a manner consistent with your* **Oroonoko** *identity. In some cases, that means knowing very little indeed about what happens – if a courtesan or slave, that person can't pretend to know more than he or she could possibly know!*

Oroonoko (Caesar)	____________________
Jamoan	____________________
Imoinda (Clemene)	____________________
Aboan	____________________
Onahal	____________________
Oroonoko's grandfather, king of Coramantien	____________________
Narrator	____________________
Trefry	*You!*
Tuscan	____________________
Willoughy	____________________
Bannister	____________________
Byam	____________________
A courtesan in the king's otan, Coramantien	____________________
A courtesan in the king's otan, Coramantien	____________________
A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam	____________________
A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam	____________________
A slave at Parham plantation, Surinam	____________________

Rules of the party: you must participate. You cannot reveal your identity by saying who you are. However, you must answer any question you are asked as honestly and in a manner as consistent with your character as possible. You may not ask any version of the question "who are you? Tell only the truth as your character sees it, or (to your shame be it written) confess that you aren't sure, but make a guess as to what your **Oroonoko** *identity would say. You will have ten minutes to review your character as well as refresh your memory as to what your fellow characters are like so that you can identify them. I wish you luck in divining the identities of your fellow partygoers.*

Sincerely,
Dr. Hansen

Appendix C

After the Party: Your Writing Assignment

Answer #1 with a word or phrase, and answer #2-#7 each with a minimum of a one paragraph response.

1. What character were you?

2. What did you think of this character before the "party?" Why?

3. How did your view of this character change from the "party" activity? If your view did not change, explain why it stayed the same.

4. Does this character display traits that are usual or unusual for his or her gender (please give an example)? Why are these traits considered usual or unusual?

5. What would change about the novel's plot and themes if this character were of the opposite sex? Why?

6. If you had a minor character, why do you think this character didn't receive more attention in the text? In other words, what themes of the novel would change if your character had been a major character? If you had a major character, what is there about that character that deserves a high level of attention?

7. Do you think the text treats this character fairly? Why or why not?