**Interpretive Question:** Is Mrs. Luella a compassionate woman?

Revised

Mrs. Luella Bates Washington Jones is merely a misunderstood woman in Langston Hughes’, Thank You, Ma’am. ( Topic Sentence) In the story, as the excessively obese and seemingly stern woman trudged on – homeward bound – a seemingly punkish teenager, Roger, made a crude attempt to snatch her pocketbook. (Background) In her reluctance to not turn Roger loose until he underwent a positive transformation, Mrs. Bates’ phony façade is exposed, revealing her passion and sympathy toward the juvenile delinquent (Claim I). Mrs. Bates’ maternal concern for Roger is expressed as she observes his neglected personal hygiene, “I got a great mind to wash your face for you. Ain’t you got nobody home to tell you to wash your face? ”. (Quote I) She doesn’t *wish* to reveal her empathy for the misguided crook; however, her invitation to accompany him in cleansing his face makes it apparent. (Explanation I) Mrs. Luella Bates inherits a sense of sympathy and insists on feeding the adolescent. (Claim II) With a searing skillet occupying one grasp, and frustrations in the other, “She heated some lima beans and ham she had in the icebox”. (Quote II) Forgiving of her initial encounter with Roger, she is adamant on satisfying his hunger and sharing a meal, portraying her compassion. (Explanation II) Following her previous acts of kindness, she nonchalantly donates ten dollars to his blue- sued -shoe fund – the intent behind snatching her purse on her walk home. (Claim III) Mocking the novice thief’s scheme, Luella responds to the Roger with a tone of simplicity, “‘You could have asked me’”. (Quote III) From the moment she bonded with Roger, Mrs. Bates knew he was not a delinquent – rather a misguided teenager in need of aid. (Explanation III) Mrs. Bates Washington Jones represents a compassionate and sympathizing lady – depicting her kindheartedness to a suffering adolescent – between Langston Hughes’ lines of black ink and white paper. (Conclusion)