

***Outcasts United* – Response Assignment**

Agnes Scott College

Summer 2010

Please use the following themes to frame your written or creative response to *Outcasts United*. Written and creative responses may include poems, essays, screenplays, sculptures, iMovies, choreography, musical compositions, paintings, drawings, etc. Choose one of these themes for your response:

1. **IMMIGRATION:** You may know a friend or a family member who immigrated to the U.S. How has this experience shaped this person's sense of individual identity? How does this shape what it means to be an American for this person?
2. **MENTORS:** Like many of you, Luma Mufleh's life has been influenced by an important relationship with a mentor. In her case it was her high school volleyball coach, Rhonda Brown. Has anyone played a similar role in your life? What is the nature of this relationship, and how might you illustrate that influence? How does this person's influence help you prepare to enter a new community?
3. **SPORTS and other EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** How has participation in a sport, a musical or theatrical organization, or other extracurricular activity shaped your sense of personal identity? How has your membership in one of these organizations influenced your thinking about the relationship between individual and social identity?
4. **LEADERSHIP:** In what specific ways do Luma's ideas and experiences connect with your own leadership experiences? What have you learned from, and how have you grown as a result of these experiences?
5. **SERVICE:** As soon as she meets these refugee boys, Luma Mufleh is inspired to become their coach. Why? What does she gain from volunteering like this? How does her experience connect to service projects in which you have been involved?
6. **CULTURAL CHANGE:** *Outcasts United presents* a vivid depiction of the rapid changes Clarkston, Georgia, has undergone in the last 30 years. How has your own community experienced change, whether based on expansion, contraction, shifts in population, or political changes. What specific examples demonstrate these changes?
7. **STEREOTYPES:** Warren St. John writes that the mothers of African refugee boys dislike braided hairstyles and other styles they associate with African-Americans; they have, it seems, taken on prejudices and stereotypes that are familiar within American culture. What problems emerge from relying on stereotypes? Why do people turn to stereotypes?
8. **ADAPTATION:** Mehlinger, Church, Tony Scipio, even Luma benefit by adapting to changing demographics. How have you benefitted—intellectually, spiritually, financially, academically—from interacting with people who are different from you or from adapting

to changes around you? When have you responded positively to a change you may have initially resisted?

9. SACRIFICE: In Part III of *Outcasts United*, Warren St. John describes the difficult labor conditions experienced by many refugees and the difficult work schedule for Generose Ntwari. Like many of the parents depicted in the book, Generose sacrifices much for her children. In what ways does the notion of sacrifice play a part in your life? How have the sacrifices of those around you helped you get where you are today? What personal sacrifices have you made, or would you be willing to make, for family members?