

21W.730 Autobiography **Second Writing Assignment**

**Preparation:** Read the chapters by Jacobs on pages 35-62 of the packet; write Reading Notes; brainstorm and freewrite about the text, talk with others, and fastwrite an “idea draft” before making it reader-friendly.

**Proposal:** Email or deliver your proposal to me by noon on Saturday. I’ll be in my office Friday from 1:30-2:30 if you email me by Friday at 11 AM that you want to meet.

**Due Date:** Monday, Feb. 26 at the start of class. We will workshop these papers.

**Length:** 3-4 typed, double-spaced pages. Bring 3 copies. STAPLE, name at top right.

**Audience:** A magazine (*The Atlantic*) or web audience (Culture Shock).

**Purpose:** Develop awareness of the writer’s *sense of audience and use of a persona*, or presentation of self, to influence readers’ opinions and reactions.

**Topic:** Analyze the effects of Jacobs’s sense of her audience on her life story. First, look for instances of her direct address to readers, her selection of material to present, her depiction of herself, and her explicit and implicit guidelines for telling her story. Then formulate a tentative thesis about the writer’s sources of power in her autobiography. (We could refer to this as her *authority*). Look for evidence to support your thesis, and revise it if necessary. What relationship between herself and readers does Jacobs create or participate in? How does this supposed relationship suit her declared purpose in relating her story, constrain her, and shape the story?

**N.B:** If you wish, you may include instances from your own life in which you have tailored your style to suit an audience, but let these support the focus on Jacobs.

This assignment asks you to analyze the autobiography, not to write your own.