

Teresa Hooper Spring 2007 ENGL 102 Inquiry Topic

### Inquiry into Memory and Performance

Whether we like it or not, what we remember—of ourselves, of others, and past events— is inextricably tied to *how* we remember; what someone recalls in a personal letter to a friend, for instance, will be quite different from the same memory repeated on the witness stand. The genre, the audience, and even our emotional state will drastically change the content of our memories. If this is so, how much can we trust our own memories of the past—or anyone else's, for that matter? And, how do we negotiate the limitations of our memories when we live in a society that holds memories in such high regard? This class will explore the complexities of memory and recollection in fields like biology and psychology, in memoirs and comic novels, stage plays, politics, and legal testimony, using both our own memories and those of others for our own investigation.