Memory, Rememory, and Trauma in *Beloved* and *Night Terms* (merriam-webster)

- neologism – a new word or expression
- memory – the power of process of remembering what has been learned; something that is remembered; the things learned and kept in the mind; capacity for storing information
- trauma – a very difficult or unpleasant experience that causes someone to have mental or emotional problems usually for a long time; severe mental or emotional stress or physical injury

**Trauma & Repressed Memory**

“The Reality of Repressed Memories” by Elizabeth F. Loftus (University of Washington)

- Repression is one of the most haunting concepts in psychology. Something shocking happens, and the mind pushes it into some inaccessible corner of the unconscious. Later, the memory may emerge into consciousness. Repression is one of the foundation stones on which the structure of psychoanalysis rests. Recently there has been a rise in reported memories of childhood sexual abuse that were allegedly repressed for many years.

“Questions and Answers about Memories of Childhood Abuse” (American Psychological Association)

- Some clinicians theorize that children understand and respond to trauma differently from adults. Some furthermore believe that childhood trauma may lead to problems in memory storage and retrieval. These clinicians believe that dissociation is a likely explanation for a memory that was forgotten and later recalled. Dissociation means that a memory is not actually lost, but is for some time unavailable for retrieval. That is, it's in memory storage, but cannot for some period of time actually be recalled. Some clinicians believe that severe forms of child sexual abuse are especially conducive to negative disturbances of memory such as dissociation or delayed memory. Many clinicians who work with trauma victims believe that this dissociation is a person's way of sheltering himself or herself from the pain of the memory.
Rememory

- Rememory is a neologism from Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*
- Memory is a living thing
- We relive the past when we remember, especially in cases of extreme trauma

“Manifestations and Memory: A Look At Trauma, Hauntings, and ‘Rememory’” by Elizabeth Palmer

- In Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, the word “rememory” is used when the main character, Sethe, recalls moments that have been forgotten. She is faced with these uncanny re-memories—moments that are not quite familiar because they have been tucked away for so long—and at their sudden manifestation, becomes haunted by their existence... Morrison is clearly making a distinction between “rememory” and memory. Memory is a constant knowledge and represents the moments we willingly recall. “Rememory” addresses the recollection of the things that a person has forgotten and, as Freud puts it, repressed.

Quotes from *Beloved* by Toni Morrison

"Anything dead coming back to life hurts.” (65)

"I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened.” (88)

Quotes from *Night* by Elie Wiesel

"For in the end, it is all about memory, its sources and its magnitude, and, of course, its consequences.” (xv)

“To forget the dead would be akin to killing them a second time.” (xv)

"Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.” (34)