

## **“Our memories are like shrapnel.” On the loneliness of war’s storytellers**

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### **Abstract**

This paper asks about the translation of experience into storytelling in one context of post-traumatic problematization of the experience of violence. Through an analytics of governmentality, this paper offers an investigation of two sites in which the subject of violence is called to produce stories about her or his war/military service time. The first site is one of expertise in clinical psychology and its vocation is to produce stories that heal and improve the lives of the suffering former combatant soldiers. The second site, an activist group of IDF veterans has as main work the opening of a space for anyone’s service story – the boring, the banal, the hurtful, the horrifying, the made up story, all are welcome. Its vocation is to provide this very relationship between storytellers and audiences, in a context of enforced silence around the experience of service in the IDF. If the clinical context aims to heal subjects, the activist context aims to suspend judgment. These two vocations ambiguously intersect and negate each other. From the office of the clinical psychologist to the meeting rooms of activists, notions of suffering, knowledge of the self and care for the self and others complicate the notions of testimony and trauma and the subjects we all are in the audiences of our contemporary wars’ stories.