

# Psychic trauma and resilience in the war on terror

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## Abstract

This paper constitutes the testing ground for a question about the politics of trauma in the contemporary regime of violence/war. It takes as its starting point a rather puzzling common problematization of the suffering of Guantanamo prisoners in the war on terror and US soldiers as post-traumatic stress. After discussing aspects of the effects of embodiment that trauma creates and the political stakes of this, the argument is made that what is needed is not an account for the extension of the clinical expertise of psychiatry into new fields, although this is the case. What is suggested instead is that we are at a loss of understanding what violence is, and the biological imagination of traumatic experience seems to offer the means to make it legible and offer an aesthetic regime of its manifestation at a global level and thus a space of governmentalized intervention over numerous subjects of trauma. Resilience is taken as the mode of articulating the problematization of trauma in order to make violence intelligible for a public sphere.