



A Literary Analysis of A Voice of Innocence: The Tragic Story of Hind Rajab and the Power of Witnessing

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Abstract

This study examines the voice in the context of trauma theory and narrative ethics and draws on the story of Hind Rajab as a type of ethical witness. Cathy Caruth (1996) and Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992) have theorized how recorded speech displaces personal suffering into shared ethical experience, which is the principal focus of this study.

This qualitative analysis uses key elements of story voice, silence, fragmentation, and emotion as lenses through which to examine these five autobiographical narratives. It argues that the voice of Hind Rajab is the generating experience for which trauma theory posits deviation for a more direct representation (Caruth, 1996). In this way, her story also raises the relational aspect of witnessing, where the listener is no longer a bystander (the witness as creative artist), but an ethical co-witness (Felman & Laub, 1992). The results show that the story returns to the individuality of the victims in the process of restoring their representation. It also emphasizes the moral weight of eyewitness testimony while revealing the inadequacy of institutional conflict responses. The research was published under the following title, "Witnessing: Moving beyond narrative into ethical hermeneutics of trauma," and ultimately argues that witnessing is an ethical act rather than just a story act. Possible future studies could extend this analysis to explore the scope for comparative study of credentials stories.

Keywords

Hind Rajab , Gaza conflict, Child victims, Phone call testimony, Witnessing .



تحليل أدبي لرواية صوت البراءة: القصة المأساوية لهند رجب وقوة الشهادة

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المستخلص

تتناول هذه الدراسة الصوت في سياق نظرية الصدمة النفسية وأخلاقيات السرد، مستندةً إلى قصة هند رجب كنموذج للشهادة الأخلاقية. وقد نظرت كاثي كاروث (١٩٩٦) وشوشانا فيلمان ودوري لاوب (١٩٩٢) لكيفية تحويل الكلام المسجل للمعاناة الشخصية إلى تجربة أخلاقية مشتركة، وهو ما يُمثل محور هذه الدراسة.

يستخدم هذا التحليل النوعي عناصر أساسية من صوت السرد، كالصمت والتجزئة والعاطفة، كعدساتٍ لدراسة هذه الروايات الذاتية الخمس. ويجادل بأن صوت هند رجب هو التجربة المولدة التي تقترض نظرية الصدمة النفسية انحرافها نحو تمثيل أكثر مباشرة (كاروث، ١٩٩٦). وبهذا، تُبرز قصتها أيضًا الجانب العلائقي للشهادة، حيث لم يعد المستمع مجرد متفرج (الشاهد كفنن مبدع)، بل شاهدًا أخلاقيًا مشاركًا (فيلمان ولاوب، ١٩٩٢). وتُظهر النتائج أن القصة تعود إلى فردية الضحايا في عملية استعادة تمثيلهم. كما يُسلط الضوء على الأهمية الأخلاقية لشهادة الشهود، ويكشف في الوقت نفسه عن قصور استجابات المؤسسات للنزاعات. نُشر البحث تحت عنوان "الشهادة: تجاوز السرد إلى التأويل الأخلاقي للصدمة"، ويخلص في النهاية إلى أن الشهادة فعلٌ أخلاقي وليس مجرد سردٍ قصصي. ويمكن للدراسات المستقبلية أن تُوسّع نطاق هذا التحليل لاستكشاف إمكانية إجراء دراسة مقارنة لقصص إثبات الهوية.

الكلمات المفتاحية

هند رجب، حرب غزة، ضحية طفل، شهادة المكالمات الهاتفية لطلب المساعدة، الشهادة



1-Introduction

In recent years, images of human suffering in contemporary literature and cultural studies have emphasized voice, memory, and ethical responsibility. In this case, Hind Rajab's story is a compelling example of individual experiences that transcend the context in which they happen to a place where they intersect and coexist. Moreover, aside from being a historical account, Hind Rajab's voice is ethical and bears witness to the importance of maintaining an ethical response (to act), and at the same time, it bears witness to the importance of engaging silence.

In line with trauma theory and witnessing, this study is a critical exploration of the ethical and narrative dimensions of Hind Rajab's story. Specifically, this study is more symbolic, emotional, and ethical in nature and less about describing what happened to Hind Rajab's story. The voice on record is a testimony that places a listener in a position to witness and a mode of fear and vulnerability.

This study draws on significant theoretical positions from narrative ethics and trauma studies. As Cathy Caruth (1996) says, trauma is an experience that emerges as incompleteness in fragmentation, delay, and repetition. This idea is pivotal for the inquiry into the emergence of trauma by way of voice. Felman and Laub (1992) are mentioned for their conception of witnessing as a relational and ethical act, where the listener also participates in the actual process of testifying. Even though the field of trauma and witnessing is well-covered in the literary studies corpus, the role of recorded voice as a kind of ethical testimony in contemporary violent narratives has not received much scholarly attention. Our study fills this gap by exploring how the voice in Hind Rajab acts as an auditory form of witnessing, that transforms individual loss into a shared ethical encounter.

Therefore, this study will examine how the listener may be included in the ethics of witnessing, how trauma may be heard through narrative and performative elements, and how voice may generate ethical significance. Combining theorization and close reading, this study contributes to understandings of voice as both narrative element and ethical force in contemporary representations of trauma.



2-Literature Review

Some recent studies have expanded on an earlier scholarship that has challenged more traditional views of trauma, bearing witness, and moral obligation that are prevalent in much of contemporary literary and cultural narratives. Cathy Caruth (1996), as noted in trauma studies, argues that trauma is neither fully known nor experienced when it happens, and resurface only later as disjointed symptomatology through various modes of repetition. The consequence of this form of reading — which interprets stories of suffering as being the way people try to speak what cannot be spoken rather than accounts of lived experience — has dramatically shaped literary analysis. So, this is why trauma is most often manifested in silence, disruption, high emotion. In further elaborating this view, Dominick LaCapra (2001) claims that trauma narratives typically oscillate between what he terms the "acting out" and "working through" trauma, meaning that the traumatic narrative moves to and from critical reads of the past, and re-enactments. Rather, it highlights the ethical and hermeneutic dilemmas around depicting suffering, especially in sites of trauma and loss. In this sense, trauma fictions require an engaged and reflective rather than merely metonymic mode of reading.

Theories of witnessing and testimony then expand on the relational nature of trauma. Testimony, as Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992: XX) write, is a performative act that, as a result, makes of the listener a co-witness and thus witness is a dialogic and ethical act. Kelly Oliver (2001) extends this idea of witnessing as a moral obligation where one responds to and recognizes the other. Together these perspectives view testimony as a process of exchange whereby meaning is co-constructed between the teller and the listener. Meanwhile, narrative ethics' focus is on the influence of narrative on our understanding of moral issues and our emotional involvement in them. Martha Nussbaum (1997) argues that stories invite reflection on moral sensitivity, compassion, and imagining the life of the 3rd person; seen this way, representation of victims—mostly children—is reduced to notions of vulnerability and purity, personal responsibility to morals, and narrative to morals encounter.

On the other hand, postcolonial theory offers this story from another perspective that centres the politics of representation and silencing. The subaltern is often spoken over or spoken back into the land of the silent by hegemonic narratives that serve to shore up power structures (Said 1993). It suggests that another kind of narrative, one in which the never mentioned have reclaimed their voice, identity and agency, is comforting. Understandings of the witness, a concern of research in trauma, and narrative ethics more generally, have mostly overlooked the recorded voice in the literary and ethical possibilities of representations of the contemporary conflict. The concept of "acoustic witnessing", in particular, seems rather underdeveloped. This study helps fill this gap by examining the way the voice of Hind Rajab is recorded as a witness to suffering's negotiation into an ethical commonality.



3-Methodology

The qualitative research study provides the story of Hind Rajab as a cultural and literary text. From the analytical perspective, the story of the event is presented as one of the many language, voice, and representation-related narratives (not descriptions) of reporting reality. The research is based on actual recordings of telephone calls to the Palestine Red Crescent Society and film reenactments of the calls in the film "The Voice of Hind Rajab" (2025). The study is an expansion of the archive of those days ... not only documentary texts but also narrative texts, as they also carry out this function through affects, music, and sounds.

The study is informed by an interdisciplinary theoretical framework drawing upon trauma theory, testimony theory, and narrative ethics. From a trauma theory point of view, this is a study that draws upon Cathy Caruth's definition of trauma theory from 1996: "Trauma is not an event but rather an experience that is not processed and thus re-enters conscious awareness in unpredictable ways." The study makes use of key concepts related to repetition, stasis, and splintering and grapples with how much it is able to "hear" Hind's voice on record to speak to this. Also, LaCapra's (2001) concepts of 'acting out' versus 'working through' are used to reward our interpretation of the oscillation in the narrative between that which is continually repeated and the efforts to signify something from the painful experience.

Witness is at the centre of its methodology. The testimony is thus, as Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (1992) testify, a relational act, always a relational act — always a performative act that makes the listener therefore a witness too. In the following, we draw on this paradigm by suggesting that witnessing as an ethical reactio⁷⁵³n and recognition is a major theme in Kelly Oliver (2001) Rather than going right to the audience as though it were just a consumer of information, the analysis examines how Hind's voice creates an ethical relationship between speaker and audience.

Methodological consistency is ensured by embedding research questions into the analysis process itself. In particular, the research looks at (1) the voice of Hind Rajab as moral witness (2) the narrative and aural modalities of trauma that movement from narrative to the listener being placed in an ethical witnessing frame Every stage of the analysis is intended to answer these questions, through



text and sound at their most granular: through recordings of the same text, excavated in the methods detailed below.

This methodology starts by conceptually based systematic study on the process by which the individual suffering becomes a social ethical experience and then integrates the theoretical lenses with close textual analysis to achieve a better conceptual understanding of the phenomenon. In this way, the approach emphasises voice in modern narratives of contention as a site of ethical engagement, as well as a site of both the making of meaning and of expression.

4-Questions of the Study

The research questions, which the research is designed to answer, are as follows:

In what ways does the voice of Hind Rajab function as ethical witness?

In what ways does the story transform personal tragedy into a collective experience?

In what ways does the story challenge the manner in which victims are represented in conflict discourses?

What role does the listener play in the witnessing process?

5- Discussions and Findings :Key Results of the Study

The findings of this study evidenced the voice of Hind Rajab as the embodiment of one form of moral witnessing where pain transforms into a collective obligation to deliver action. Instead of covering the event as if it were some far away or mediated news item — a voice from afar — the voice on the recordings is immediate, intimate, asking the listener to come to terms with trauma. This corresponds with the theory — formulated by Cathy Caruth (1996) — that trauma is experienced not by direct narrativization, but as an assemblage of charged, narrative-styled repetitions of events. The import finding explore way Hind's narrative disrupt separation of victim and witness. To Felman and Laub (1992), listening is part of an active witness rather than a passive one Here, the audience is co-witness to the act being written into an ethics, with their reaction and recognition creating a new meaning. This paper is in line with the assertion that testimony is a fundamentally relational act and that the speakers have an ethical obligation to the audience *εν τω παράδειγμα* and that the audience has an ethical obligation to the testimony.



In an analogous fashion, with regards to conflict narratives, the present study posits that Hind's narrative contributes to the rehumanizing of the victim. Her uniqueness and humanity are restored; the narrative is no longer just a statistic, an emotion, or an expression of voicelessness. It is also an expression of the failure of modern media representation, where the value of the testimony is given in terms of numbers. Here, the narrative serves as what Edward Said (1993) calls counter-narrative with respect to the dominant forms of representation.

Statistics, Jach attempted to clarify, but at the same time, he used them to demonstrate how Hind's story also revealed more basic institutional and systemic failures to protect civilians in conflict. While humanitarian organizations are present, their inability to provide safety is a symptom of more basic systemic failures that render even the non-combatant civilian population extraordinarily at risk and children most at risk of all. Finally, the research suggests that Hind's story has a broader ethical significance than initially suggested by the manner in which it is related and that this is so because such modes of aesthetic and cultural representation are essential not only to facilitating empathic engagement but to maintaining the ongoing ethical vigilance that sustains the dignity of lives over there and in other times (Nussbaum, 1997).

5.1 Analysis of Trauma, Justice, and the Ethics of Witnessing

This is the symbolic representation of every pain that society is going through and every agony of heart that a person passes through, yet, Hind Rajab illustrates the grief of breaking up. By examining her final phone calls with the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), this analysis shows how personal trauma is transformed into a moral imperative. Approaching Hind's "living voice" makes it possible for her words to become an action in the moral consciousness instead of just a mere testimony. Hind's voice is an example of a particular kind of sonic witnessing that leaves the listener with moral coevalness with the victim. According to Felman and Laub (1992), testimony is a process in which the responsibility of the witness is co-established at the same time as the events from the past are retold. Instead of offering abstract numbers or distant reporting, this study transports the viewer inside the lived experience of violence through her audible gasps, cries, and sobs of fear, hopelessness, and desire. As trauma theory notes, the break and slowness of traumatic experience is expressed in the recorded voice of Hind (Cathy Caruth 1996). In its hurriedness, its tangled loops of repetition, its fragility — the dips and spikes of her voice suggest spitting marrow



from her throat — her speech conveys the challenge of describing acute terror as it appears in the moment. Disruption and Incompleteness: while a compelling narrative might seem easier to digest, the voice there shows pain. This corresponds to Dominick LaCapra's (2001) idea of "acting out", a victim still caught in the reality of the trauma cannot achieve any understanding or narrativization of it.

The research indicates that the level of the Hind testimony is at the level of a testimony at the witnessing level. As defined by Shoshana Felman (1992), at its most basic level, testimony is not the telling of a story but, in fact, the interactions wherein the audience is made a co-witness. Perhaps the very act of listeningship becomes the ethical co-conspirator of the opportunity, and those charts made on those calls will reflect that. Expanding on this paradigm, Oliver (2001), building on the work of Felman, asserts that to witness is to be compelled to listen to the other. The tedium of the voice of Hind becomes the very ethical imperative, the very act of moral engagement as a reaction to the very passivity of the listener. It also becomes a clear example of how the story demonstrates the very limitations of the institutional safeguarding. The promise of salvation to come, the inability to return those displaced to home, despite the very stipulations made for safe return, becomes a clear example of, again according to LaCapra, a more ventriloquial form wherein the very act of trauma becomes not only experienced but driven to production.

The story of Hind Rajab is a colourful ready and a smart retort to prevailing styles of representation. The researcher, through her voice, illustrates the ways by which the voice contests the representation of hegemonic discourse (Said, 1993) that render victims numerical and abstract categories. Instead, emotional presence, individuality, and independence are reintroduced into the narrative. With this methodology, the victim is dehumanized, and the child is rechanneled into an active subject of narration instead of a passive figure.

Finally, the final sort of witnessing that extends beyond the event itself is the literal transfiguration of Hind's story into a song (The Ballad of Hind Al-Husseini) and eventually the adaptation of her story into a film Hind Al Husseini's Promise and public displays of memorialization. From the perspective of narrative ethics (Nussbaum, 1997), the ethical function of storytelling as a means of creating empathy and moral awareness is embodied in this process. The movement from personal testimony to collective memory demonstrates how such



testimony is able to open up onto broader forms of global solidarity and ethical obligation. The idea of witnessing as a site of survival and ethical being has an interesting connection to Agamben's (1999) understanding of the 'witness' under extreme conditions, where testimony comes from the limits of language and experience.

5.2 The Aesthetics of Acoustic Witnessing and Ethical Responsibility

The Hind Rajab narrative provides a key hearing-based dimension to the media studies and literature-based concept of witnessing, which shifts focus from the visual to the aural. Hind Rajab's PRCS telephone conversations are seen as a form of sound testimony that can be defined as "beyond humanitarianism" in terms of sound as an ethics of encounter and sense.

The voice has been defined in trauma and narrative studies as "the distillate that is left behind by that which cannot be signified by the subject." Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub [1992] state that "testimony is a performative act," which positions the listener as co-witness rather than receiver of information. Hind's voice in this case subverts the line of demarcation between the participant and the observer and positions a listener in that unique space.

5.3 Trauma Theory and the Unclaimed Experience of Hind Rajab

Hind Rajab's experience, according to the framework of trauma theory, is just one instance of the so-called "unclaimed experience" (Caruth, 1996) According to this belief, traumas aren't fully integrated at the time they occur, so instead resurface later in fragmented, ghostly forms. Trauma exists in both the incident itself and its non-direct and non-immediate representation.

Kaouther Ben Hania observes this concept in practice in her 2025 film *The Voice of Hind Rajab*, which constructs a mediated space for audiences to engage in and respond to a recollection of Hind's instead of merely witnessing the event as real. By emphasizing sounds and space, particularly the toxic atmosphere of the car in an intensely claustrophobic environment with obscured visibility, the video pinpoints silence, tension, and time suspended as key aesthetic features. These elements both bolster Caruth's thesis that trauma is resistant to total narration, and highlight the difficulties of representation of trauma experience.

Meanwhile, it also places hind's personal trauma within a national context of trauma and terror. This gradual return of individual trauma to collective life is consistent with the understanding of testifying as relational as described by



Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in 1992: "The witness who testifies to an event is not only testifying to an event; he or she is also negotiating the ethics of testifying in relation to his or her auditor." Thus, from this point forward, Hindvoice is an ethics of relation to the other as total substitution of individual mourning by collective memory.

We might describe it as something rather more like cultural experience than 'senseless loss,' as testimony that at least engages with the question of the value of experience in some sort of cultural way. We might describe it as cultural landmark in relation to the risible abyss, as an artistic statement of the ontological imperative to see. The story of Hind Rajab is a story of trauma as much as it is an incomplete moral argument in terms of recognition, responsibility, and accountability.

5.4 Denial and Counter Narrative: An Ontological Resistance

That kind of narration is shaky at best, but in Hind Rajab, it is summoned in response, and it is a powerful and urgent counter-narrative . In an era of colonial savagery where the mantle of narration . Storytelling is a two way street — similarly to political and territorial conflicts. If dominant imperial discourses are to thrive, hegemonic stories that legitimize power dispossess colonized voices (Berrios, 1993, in Said). In this very sense, the erasing procedures cannot erase the ontological presence that the speech of Hind Rajab creates here. The narrative counters the scrolling through statistics — an abstraction of the victim into numbers, data-driven subjects or faceless entities. The people who suffered are personalised, and an it takes flesh; a human subject with a name, a voice, personal history. In showing this, the film counters the dominant discourse that tends to remove, and even lose, the agency of civilians victimized by war.

It further allows room for considering the modes of erasure in relation to contemporary depictions of war, in the press, and in political discourse. Rather than commodified acceptance of these structures, the narrative (almost always) retakes agency as the victim's personhood is reaffirmed through visibility and voice. Thereby, it is consistent with Said's (1993) notion of counter-narratives as acts of opposition against, and contestation of, hegemonic regimes of representation and knowledge. At heart, The Voice of Innocence is a cultural and moral slam against silence, ensuring that the victim's voice will reverberate, at least, in the political and academic discussion. It transforms the storytelling into a site of moral labor, a site in which sustaining voice is a form of resisting erasure, a form of recovery of humanity.



5.5 The Representation of Gaza's Civilian Suffering

Numerous international organizations have described in unmeasured detail the humanitarian disaster that befalls Gaza, with civilians being the most negatively affected group of people. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2025), "widespread military operations have resulted in mass death, injury, and the displacement of nearly 90 percent of Gaza's people." They represent a contextualization of the conflict within a broader cycle of violence and refer back to the events of October 7, 2023 when the Israeli side recorded the greatest loss of life to that point in the conflict, as well as significant numbers of captives (United Nations, 2023).

As reported by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF, 2024a; 2024b), civilian infrastructure has been greatly affected, medical facilities have been constantly hit and there have been limitations in humanitarian access. There have been multiple instances of violence against medical personnel in which individuals have been killed or injured, and there have been assaults on hospital buildings leading to their evacuation. Such situations have grossly stymied the provision of essential medical treatment and even more so in collective humanitarian response, particularly during an outbreak.

On top of that shortages of food, water and medical goods have exacerbated the problem. Irregular humanitarian access has enabled specialist care for only some patients outside of Gaza (MSF, 2024a). These limitations have compounded the plight of people, especially in dire need of medical assistance, thus making them more vulnerable.

As a result of forced evacuation, many people live in crowded and unsanitary conditions. Health agencies recorded high rates of communicable diseases, including skin infections, diarrhea and respiratory diseases (MSF, 2024b; WHO & OCHA, 2024), which are in part due to the lack of adequate sanitation and limited access to safe drinking water. The collapse of vaccination has raised the concerns of how the epidemics may break out.

The long-term impact of this particular conflict is expected to reach beyond its immediate deaths. This could lead to long run public health problems, as systems are structurally damaged, the environment deteriorates, and resources remain scarce. In 2024, The Lancet published a study on indirect deaths caused by disease, famine and systemic collapse, which could significantly increase the



total mortality rates and highlight the broader impact of the problem. In *South Africa v. Israel* (2024), the ICJ issued provisional measures at the legal and international level, ordering measures to ensure humanitarian access and to prevent further harm. Studies show these processes are at best only partially implemented (ICJ, 2024), raising concerns about accountability and the role of international law in protecting civilians.

5.6 Hind's voice

Hind Rajab, five, her aunt, uncle and four cousins were in a car in Gaza's Tel al-Hawa neighbourhood when incoming Israeli forces trying to escape on January 29, 2024, when it was struck. Hind immediately called the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) to ask for assistance, despite having escaped the first strike (The Guardian 2024; Washington Post 2024; Forensic Architecture 2024).

Hind and her slain relatives and two PRCS paramedics were found twelve days after Israeli troops withdrew from the area. It was reported that the paramedics who were dispatched lost communication as they were under fire (The Guardian, 2024; AP News, 2025; Forensic Architecture, 2024). Such incidents illustrate the vulnerability of civilians and humanitarian workers in conflict zones.

A worldwide furore erupted over faded recordings of open-line conversations between Hind and PRCS dispatchers, although this alleged incident was consistent with a broader streak of child casualties that has emerged since the latest round of violence erupted in early October 2023. In this instance, her voice transcended the particular event and became emblematic of the plight and agony of civilians (Washington Post, 2024; AP News, 2025). That shift is in line with damage and witnessing theory, where personal narrative takes on ethical and communal weight. Kaouther Ben Hania's *The Voice of Hind Rajab*, which was produced by several celebrities around the world, recreates these moments of finality using real dispatch audio. This film, which premiered in September 2025 at the Venice Film Festival, illustrates how recorded voice can be employed for ethical engagement and narrative reconstruction (Reuters 2025; AP News 2025). And a Palestinian first responder said this about the importance of Hind's voice:

Hind made the world listen, but did they hear her heart? Children of Gaza are not just statistics. Hind was a real girl, full of life, with dreams, laughter, pain, and fear.



5.7 Not a Target: Civilian Casualties and Ethical Duty

Thousands of Palestinians, including children, have been killed due to crossfire in Gaza (Health Ministry, Gaza, 2023; Al Jazeera, 2023). However, in response to this unprecedented international mass activism to stop the shelling in Gaza, none of the political leaders had much to say (Al Jazeera, 2025; Reuters, 2025). The case of Hind Rajab is an anecdote of this general observation. An internal military inquiry found that there was no violation of the law in this case; however, outside bodies believe that the evidence suggests it was a deliberate attack rather than an incidental strike (Forensic Architecture, 2024; AP News, 2025).

This anecdote highlights the pre-existing state of narratives of accountability in conflict zones. The national, (2025) called it an act of justice for Hind, an act of justice for her family, an act of justice for the paramedics who tried to save her as well; it was time to call the Irish first responder (the national, 2025) And it was arranged in conjunction with the route of the planned ambulance by the Israeli authorities and the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) (Washington Post, 2024; Forensic Architecture, 2024).

The sources mentioned that the medical team was killed in the course of this, and the ambulance was found in a state of breakdown not far from the area of Hind (LBCI/PRCS, 2024; Forensic Architecture, 2024). It also points to the exceptional danger to humanitarian workers and, once more, to some vital humanitarian questions in regards to attacking members of the medical profession. It was an appeal to safeguard them – an appeal that PRCS has called routinely, for the safeguarding of medical teams and for the prosecution of violators of these principles (PRCS 2024). Other than this case, the general history of the conflict – that is, the appeals for population transfer and collective punishment – make the humanitarian catastrophe that much more tragic. Such appeals and discourse, like the one in regards to Hind in the international arena, have condemned the actions for their infringement of international humanitarian laws and international crimes that the International Criminal Court should avoid in rare instances.

The ethical and emotional implications that a case like Hind's raises, to quote one humanitarian worker, is the kind of case that stretches "the stretch [of] humanity, the elasticity of what we are willing to do".



Additionally, her story has been part of global solidarity actions, using symbolic gestures to evoke the sense of injustice. Those reactions show in what ways testimony can go beyond personal experience to affect a social sense of ethics (LaCapra, 2001).

5.8 Hind Rajab as a Symbol of Global Opposition and Unity

The case of the Hind Rajab situation is a clear example of the challenges that still exist in the effective application of the IHL, which offers protection to children from the effects of conflict. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL), as codified by the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols of 1977, actually outlines clear laws and protections that oblige states to safeguard civilians, including children, from exploitation, acts of violence, and participation in conflicts (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2017; OHCHR, 2000). However, as is evident from the situation of the Hind Rajab case, the rights of the child wither away in the face of war.

The story of the Hind Rajab situation is not only about the individual but is a metaphor for the plight of all Palestinian civilians. The killing of the Palestinian, her family, and the medical team who were trying to save her is a serious violation of the Geneva Conventions, which can amount to a war crime under the Rome Statue (Euro-Med Monitor, 2024). This is the broader narrative of the story of the Hind Rajab situation, which can be seen as a narrative of criminality and responsibility. Hind's story has prompted gestures of remembrance and solidarity as well as much-publicized international gestures of remembrance and solidarity. These span from the absurd (the Hind Rajab Foundation), to the ideal (her name becoming synonymous with a moral responsibility), to the symbolic (renaming parts of a campus after her).

For example, student activism at Columbia University—where protest changed the public name of the building that is home to the 2023 interview from Hamilton Hall to Hind's Hall—reflects the importance of public space as sites of protest and sites of public thought (Columbia Spectator, 2024; Al Jazeera, 2024). Her story has also shaped cultural production paving the way for a larger resistance and representation movement. Both the performance work *The Voice of Hind Rajab* (2025) and the protest song *Hind's Hall* (2024) demonstrate how in these artistic embodiments, the medium itself may mirror the amplification of one voice into a deepening collective memory of witness. Throughout the years and



around the world (notably, on the Venice Film Festival) (Reuters, 2025; The National, 2025). The film although indirectly showed how art/ literature can become an instrument of resistance to the dominant narratives and also a site where victims are humanized in opposition to that imagery.

5.9 Hind Rajab's Personal Sorrow

Hind Rajab has become the face not only of the broader experience of injustice and human rights violations associated with occupation, but also that of the personal tragedy of a child caught in the crossfire of war. Her story exemplifies how, during such circumstances, individuals and children become powerless when protections fail, such as distress calls and targeted attacks, and in the absence of safe passage guarantees (Red Crescent claims, Al Jazeera, 2024, and The Independent, 2024).

Hamilton Hall was renamed "Hind's Hall" by Columbia University students, and this incident turned her legacy into a public rallying point. Renaming is an act of protest in itself, bringing space and distance, in a local context, closer by emphasizing that the suffering in Gaza is not far away and art, protest and solidarity may be important mechanisms to demand accountability and give victims a voice (Al Jazeera, 2024; Firstpost, 2024).

Both a victim and a voice, Hind Rajab is a powerful lesson in lost innocence, the imperative to bear witness, and the forces that bind us all in collective civilian agony in war zones around the globe.

5.10 Finding Hope Amidst Struggle in Hind Rajab Story

The nature of Hind Rajab's martyrdom has become almost a paradoxical hope; because her witness, despite her personal tragedy, has been the subject of debate and the discussion of some people as contributing to the general moral awareness of all salafi-jihadi-inclined people you can imagine. In her final exchange with the Palestine Red Crescent Society (Al Jazeera, 2024), a primitive human desire for survival and connection despite staggering fear and isolation is still portrayed.

5.11 A Voice in the Rubble:

The story of Hind Rajab, apart from its tragic value, has a lasting symbolic importance. On the 29th of January, 2024, a six-year-old girl, whose dead family was placed on top of the automobile in which she was stuck in the Tel al-Hawa



suburb of Gaza, contacted the Palestine Red Crescent Society (Al Jazeera, 2024; South China Morning Post, 2024).

The change from the initial narrative, which was focused on a specific event, to the final call, "I am so scared, please come," transformed the narrative into a symbol of the overall situation. This change reflects what Felman and Laub (1992) have called the witnessing process sense personal witness (testimony) ceases to be a site of storytelling *sensu strictu* and (often, more often than not) transforms into a site of moral responsibility and ethical (moral, ethical) participation. Here, The story of Hind Rajab is now beyond the individual tragedy and speaks to the larger humanitarian outreach in terms of the ethics of documenting and the way in which everyone in conflict is affected and therefore in a state of general weakness. It speaks to the basic tenets of trauma theory that speaks to the way in which testimonies are not only imbued with the pain of the victim but also hitched to a call to action by the general public (Caruth, 1996).

5.12 Children: The Ignored Victims of War

children are the worst affected by Armed Conflict and they are one of the most vulnerable group who suffers from trauma, loss and life-term effects. Their suffering remains largely hidden in political and media discourse, hence they are often termed the "hidden victims" of conflict. The impact of the war is particularly dire in Gaza, whose 47% of the population is aged under 18 years (UN OCHA, 2025).

UNICEF 2024; UN OCHA 2025 reporting thousands of children orphaned as a consequence of, or separated from one or both parents, whilst many hundreds of thousands remain unfound The children living under such conditions are more exposed to potential hazards like child labor, exploitation, neglect, and limited access to basic services such as health care and education.

Research on trauma shows that prolonged violence and separation from caregivers significantly increases the risk of mental disorders, including anxiety, depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (WHO, 2024). The absence of strong family structures is an additional factor in secondary vulnerabilities even more in situations of displacement and destruction. Humanitarian findings, such as those of SOS Children's Villages (2024), indicate that insecurity in homes and economic hardship mean it is impossible for many to offer sufficient care, while it prompts other families to seek ways of survival in very hard conditions.



While there is continued provision of aid by humanitarian agencies, such an extent indicates that there is an urgent need to offer long-term protection and mental health care to these children. These situations highlight the moral and legal imperative to protect children in situations of armed conflict and prioritize their needs in such situations (UNICEF, 2024; WHO, 2024).





6. Conclusion

In this study, the narrative of Hind Rajab is analyzed through the framework of trauma theory and narrative ethics, emphasizing voice and voice as moral witnessing. The analysis suggests that Hind Rajab's voice is not only a symbol of personal loss but is also used to create a universal human and moral experience from personal suffering.

The analysis has shown that Hind's voice challenges the conventional distinction between the victim and witness. The audience is given a moral obligation through active participation in witnessing through Hind's voice. This supports the argument that witnessing is a relational and active process that informs our understanding of justice and suffering. The analysis has also shown that Hind's voice is used to humanize the victims of war. Her voice gives personality and vulnerability instead of reducing people to mere statistics.

This is to show that witnessing narratives are crucial in countering the dominant discourses that eliminate the human aspect of war. However, the study's concentration on a single case and qualitative interpretive methodology are its limitations. Future studies might broaden the focus by looking at various types of witnessing in literary and media texts or by incorporating several testimonial tales to offer a more comprehensive analytical viewpoint. In summary, Hind Rajab's tale is noteworthy for both its sorrowful nature and the moral obligation it places on the viewer.



7- Recommendations

Several suggestions for improving academic analysis and ethical engagement with trauma and testimony narratives can be made in light of the study's findings. First, scholars and authors are urged to adopt an ethical memorialization strategy rather than merely passively consuming terrible stories. This entails using what could be called a "restorative narrative" framework, in which the victim is portrayed as a whole human person with identity, memory, and emotional depth rather than being reduced to the circumstances of death. This strategy aids in reversing the dehumanization process that is frequently seen in depictions of conflict. Second, when working with testimonial material, our study suggests including more thorough and context-sensitive analysis. Timestamps, pauses, silences, and digital traces are examples of characteristics that should be handled as significant components of testimony, according to what can be called an ethics of care in analysis. This method, which is based on the idea of "slow violence" (Nixon, 2011), enables researchers to look at how structural flaws, institutional gaps, and delayed reactions affect the sense of injury.

The study also suggests relating specific accounts, like the one of Hind Rajab, to more general accounts of child witnesses and civilian suffering in conflict situations. The idea of witnessing as a kind of ethical involvement and resistance rather than just a narrative act might be strengthened by this comparative viewpoint. Additionally, it places individual testimonies in a broader context of global responsibility and communal memory.

Lastly, it is advised that scholarly writing on these kinds of stories take a more responsible and involved approach, turning research into a kind of ethical recollection. The researcher recognizes that accounts of pain bear a continuing ethical responsibility by treating testimony as a "living memorial." In this setting, Hind Rajab's voice becomes both a chronicle of tragedy and an ongoing moral appeal for justice, accountability, and recognition.



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