

# COLLECTIVE ACTIVISM AND VIRAL NARRATIVES: EXPLORING THE SYMBIOSIS BETWEEN *SEVEN JEWISH CHILDREN* AND THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE VIA ONLINE MEDIA DECONSTRUCTION

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## ABSTRACT

*The study explores the intricate relationship between Caryl Churchill's renowned play 'Seven Jewish Children' and the Palestinian cause. It particularly addresses collective activism and the increasing impact of viral narratives that influence public opinion regarding the ongoing Palestinian-Israel conflict and the play. Through the lens of a multi-dimensional approach, the study employs online media interpretations as a main methodological framework to examine the interaction between collective activism, viral narrative, and the historical significance of the play. The study explores how viral narratives inform and impact public perception toward the play and the serious issues it tackles by utilizing the digital realm, online forums, and social networking platforms. Moreover, it explores how social upheavals and online communities mobilize the collective activism, analyzing the different tactics used to magnify their voices and strive for change. By investigating the play's digital circulation, reactions, and reception, the study reveals the mutually reinforcing relationship between the discursive potency of the play and the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, it explores how viral narratives and online activism may question dominant perceptions, raise awareness, and spark debate about the profound socio-political concerns that are presented in the play. This study contributes to the current scholarship by emphasizing the transformational power of social media platforms and providing insights into the way that collective activism and viral narratives interact to shape public perception and promote support for the Palestinian cause. In the light of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it also highlights the value of the play as a historical document that inspires multiple narratives as well as mobilizes unity, opening up new debates about representation, activism, and social transformation.*

**KEY WORDS:** Palestinian cause, Jewish, Churchill, collective activism

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Brief contextualization of the play ‘Seven Jewish Children’ and the Palestinian people

Seven Jewish Children is a drama by British playwright Caryl Churchill which she completed in 2009. It is a play about the Gaza war, or the operation cast lead which was in the period of 2008-2009 between Israel and Hamas. The play shows a dialogue between a group of Jewish adults discussing how to explain the events in the strip of Gaza to a child. Cathcart and Snider reveal the change of opinions in the two major branches of the Jewish population all throughout Israel and Palestine, and Pfeffer shines further light on the multi-faceted dilemma through the interactions between the two main characters.

The Palestinian cause means the continuous fight of the Palestinian people for their right for an independent state and their own country. The issue of conflict between the State of Israel and Palestine is perhaps one of the most contentious issues as well as enduring issues in the Middle East that dated back to the earlier part of the 20th century with the advent of British Mandate in the region (Said, 1979; Khalidi, 1997). The Palestinian issue has become increasingly popular and supported in the international level with people and groups fighting for the recognition of the latter’s rights and their desire for self-determination.

### B. Justification of the study and aims and objectives.

This study is an attempt to discover the rather complex connection between Caryl Churchill’s play Seven Jewish Children and the Palestinian struggle, mainly in relation to how collective cultures and viral stories having an impact on the public and eliciting their support for the Palestinian struggle. The study goals to:

1. Examine how the collective activism collaborates with the going viral narratives and the historical significance of the play as identified in the references like Tufekci, 2017; Castells, 2015.
2. Discuss how viral narratives educate and discuss with the public concerning the play and the significant matters it addresses through the use of the WWW, virtual forum, and social networking sites (Nahon & Hemsley, 2013; Shifman, 2014).
3. Explain how sociopolitical changes and social networks mobilize social activism and how the methods for amplifying their calls and fighting for change differ (Gerbaudo, 2012; Kavada, 2015).
4. Reveal the interaction between the discursive power of the play and the Palestinian issue, and how viral stories and some of digital activism may challenge the dominant narratives, inform, and create controversies over the deep and concern socio-political themes included in the play (Lughod, 2008).

This study contributes to the existing literature by stressing the integrative role of social media platforms and highlighting visions of how combined activism and viral stories work together to shift the general attitude and foster endorsement of the Palestinian solidarity. It also underscores the importance of play as sources of historical records that provoke multiple stories and espouses unity to address different agendas of activism and transformation of society, representation, and democracy.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### A. Collective Activism

Collective activism may be defined as the vigorous action by a number of people or companies with the purpose of effecting social change within any given society as defined by Tilly (1978) and McAdam et al. (1996). The characteristics of collective activism include common interests and/or complaints according to which collective activists can be joined together by the goal, concern, or complaint that collective activists wish to voice (Melucci, 1996). It is also noteworthy that collective activists work towards the creation of a shared sense of individual identity and belongingness, which in a way contributes positively to top-level group integration and unity (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). Mobilization and organizing are mandatory as collective activists partake in many forms of mobilizations such as protests, demonstrations, and campaigning to name but a few and organize themselves through formal or informal structures (McAdam, et al., 1988). Also, collective activists employ various traditional and innovative ritual techniques to accomplish goals and missions (Tilly, 1986).

The rise of social media has grounds up major changes in the dynamics of group advocacy. Technological tools such as social sites have played significant influence on the group activists since they facilitate easy and uploading and sharing of information besides helping them pull together in executing their activities and responsibilities thanks to rapidity and convenience (Castells, 2015; Tufekci, 2017). Social media also provides a base from where the collective activist can speak out, share, and present counter narratives (Gerbaudo, 2012; Kavada, 2015). Besides, through social media platforms, collective activists create an avenue whereby they can reach a larger population, this creates a sense belonging that, parents, brothers’ sisters, etc. all support a given course. By using social media, collective activists have no limitations to the extent to which they can influence public opinion without going through what Tufekci (2013), and Nahon and Hemsley (2013) have termed as media gatekeeping. Lastly, through social media, formation of transnational networks and articulation of the international solidarity amongst collective activists is made easier (Della Porta and Tarrow 2005).

## B. Viral Narratives

Internet memes or viral stories refer to stories, ideas, or pieces of information which circulate across the new media platforms, social networking sites, and other new media communities within a short time and space (Nahon, & Hemsley, 2013; Shifman, 2014). These narratives can be text, images, video, or a combination of the three. Many of them garner mass interest and engage the attention and enthusiasm of a big number of people by evoking sharing, discussion, or commitment. Viral pieces spread by sharing, reposting, or other similar practices and, especially, by using the aid of influencers, celebrities, or accounts with numerous followers. It is because the narratives in circulation can easily generate demonstrative emotions literally eliciting a laugh, anger, disbelief, or curiosity among the audience of a viral item (Shifman, 2014).

The phenomenon of viral narratives is quite fascinating, and they can certainly influence the public discussion significantly and in different ways. They can help create and shape people's stance on different issues, from political ones to social, consumer, and even cultural ones (Vosoughi et al., 2018). This means that viral narratives can enhance the dissemination of particular views, stories, or belief systems, but this may at the same time tend to ignore or/and erase other possibilities. Sometimes, due to speedy propagation, it may spread certain misconceptions, misinterpretation, or fake news which could influence the general public before the authentic information could do so (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

However, viral narratives can also become effective mobilizers in relation to certain concerns, social issues, and processes, which define group actions and events (Gerbaudo, 2012). Positive narratives have the capability to unite people, inspire them to act and influence society for the better. Hence, in the business and marketing perspective such viral stories may present immense influence on consumers' choices and on perceptions towards a certain brand, creating rising awareness and a farther reach, as well as generating acceptance of a product or service (Duan et al., 2008). Moreover, viral narratives does not only mirror the opinion of the target audience but also maintain and intensify biases, beliefs and ideological positions widespread in the society; in particular, it contributes to the so-called echo-chamber effect, by which people receive and consume mainly the information that corresponds to their beliefs (Flaxman et al., 2016). Indeed, this could help amplify polarization and cement two different views on the matter. It is thus crucial to turnout critical and media essential analysis skills when dealing with viral stories since they may greatly influence the public's knowledge, dialogue, and choice-making processes.

## METHODOLOGY

There are various approaches that can be taken to analyzing the case, although the primary lens through which to view it lies in the media, specifically with reference to the techniques that are a blow-by-blow representation of the online media interpretations by the numerous media houses.

The strategy used in this study is based on the interpretation of media representations detected on the Web, which stands as the primary rationale for which the analyzed phenomenon can be considered. This approach helps to establish the learning that is had through digital platforms/media in the configuration of the public/collective debate/narratives/meanings-making arena (Deller & Hallam, 2011). In this case, by analyzing the digital word-of-mouth, responses and appreciations of the play, researchers will be able to gain an understanding of the different views, and controversial as well as multiple interpretations of the work of art in the digital environment.

### Data collection and analysis

1. To analyze the issue, the play's reactions, receptions, and digital circulation will be examined.

A critical component of the process is the rigorous evaluation of audience reactions and criticism on the play, as well as its diffusion throughout multiple social media channels. This strategy includes identifying and analyzing materials that are being shared about the play, such as reviews, news articles, posts, Internet discussions and user-generated content. (Burgess & Green, 2018). By tracking the phenomenon's activity on the internet and visibility through the run-up to the performance, scholars can gain a full picture of how the work is perceived, discussed, and reused by diverse online communities and spectators.

2. Usage of online platforms and social networks:

The research technique also involves a study of the spontaneous flow of debates on various online forums and social networking sites discussing the play's interpretation. electronic media serve as valuable research sites for collecting the multiple voices of consumers, as they express their points of view, their responses, and their dissents in digital environments (Kozinets, 2015). Through identification of such conversations, discussions, and user-generated contents, researchers are capable of gaining visions into the inherent narratives, themes, and discourses raised in regard to the play and the habits in which such narratives interrelate with the social, cultural and the political dimensions.

The data collected through these online sources will in this manner be categorically analyzed applying qualitative research path; thematic analysis, discourse analysis also known as critical discourse analysis and content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Fairclough, 2003). By using this fairly analytical strategy, investigators receive detailed and

multifaceted understandings, histories, and meanings associated with the play in addition to the power relations and hegemonic implications that form these understandings in the Internet context.

## **Looking at the correlation between the play and the Palestinians via a semiotic plane.**

### **A. The historical background to the play**

It is thus safe to conclude that Caryl Churchill's; 'Seven Jewish Children' has gotten historical significance due to its bold axing of the Israeli Palestinian conflict through the elaborate attempt by Jewish parents to spare their children from a reality that is as ugly as death. absence and non-words, for the metaphor and the play's strictly limited dialogue has fuelled passionate discussions and contemplations on the multiple layers of the narrative of this protracted conflict (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2010).

Hence, Churchill's work has been sharply political and has been understood as a censure of how Israel deals with Palestinians, especially regarding the Gaza conflicts and occupation. This is because the play has endeavored to face the audiences with the solidarity of the parents' instinct of protection combined with the historical and political settings; it has provoked the concerns regarding the vicious circle of violence, trans generational transmission of trauma, and the pragmatic questions emerging from such a conflict.

Through focusing on elements of gender and sexuality in Jewish families of different time periods, the play urges audiences to engage with the foundational, creeping, and warring principles behind the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has continued for decades. Due to its tendency to inspire all and sundry and often extremely opposite responses, it has become popularly an important cultural artifact that shows the over sensitized and continued struggle.

The connection between "Seven Jewish Children" and the Palestinians stems from the fact that the play puts people back into the seemingly intractable Israel-Palestine conflict and then turns a powerful light on the catastrophes endured by both sides of the conflict in which the trauma of loss, the experience of displacement and the pain of generations are lived on both sides of the divide.

Though the play is about the Jewish story, it inadvertently presents the Palestinian side, the families' sufferings, which are displaced from their homes and have attempted to shield their children from all sorts of violence and injustice. Due to limited script depiction and generalization of the events, spectators easily associate the Jewish families' ordeal with the unseen but no less miserable experiences of the Palestinian families as victims of the same struggle.

Thus, through the representation of the experience of passing fear from one generation to the other, the drama is grounded in cultural memory and trauma, and it relates to the contemporary Palestinian experience and the ongoing fight for liberation. Relating the parents' attempts to protect their children from the realities of violence, one can recall the Palestinian families who tried to keep the spirits high, to find strength in the face of occupation, forced displacement, and warfare.

In addition, secularism of the play and discussing and debating state actions and policies towards the Palestinians has contributed to the voice of justice, human rights, and liberation as per the Palestinian cause. Thus, the play offers people an emotionally driven reason to reflect on the human element of the war and notice that Palestinians do occupy an important position in the social struggle and can be a part of the mainstream conversation.

Here it helps to think of "Seven Jewish Children" as a dan Brownish or a Sophie Okonedo, a cultural signifier that speaks to the Palestinian freedom dream through the grammar of performance art and the problematization of identity. Thus, it is not only a theatrical performance, but a means to promote discussion, raise funds, improve awareness, and truly unite people under the unifying theme of understanding the complexities of this constantly evolving conflict.

It will be overly critical to underestimate the role of the play in raising the voice of Palestinians. Although the series deals with Jewish people's lives, its raw depiction of suffering and expulsion resultant from the turmoil has been keenly felt by the Palestinians and their supporters.

In this consideration, through stressing upon the human angle of the conflict and how the violence and displacement continue to affect the generations, 'Seven Jewish Children' has offered the Palestinians the space to be heard on the global level and their plight recognized. Through the evoking of empathy and the provision of critical perspectives it has shifted the discursive tolerance of Palestinian narratives, which have traditionally been erased or exoticized.

In addition, the play's call for a response to the Israeli policies and actions has coincided with the weight of justice, human rights, and an end to occupation shouted by the Palestinian cause. Discussions concerning cyclical violence and the ethical issues of the conflict have also stirred the Palestinian personas who have striven to draw the global community's attention to political oppression and violates human rights by Israel.

As a result of the play, people are encouraged to become more receptive and involved with the Palestinian cause through the provisions of a platform for discussion and introspection. Due to its contention, it has contributed to raising Palestinian voices and engaging with the current injustice and violations Palestinians suffer under occupation.

Additionally, the controversies that have surrounded the play and its production have served to engage more people with the Palestinian cause and situation, this because the controversies that have surrounded the play have often led to discourses related to Palestinian rights, freedoms, and the ongoing quest for justice and regular citizenship.

**B. The last form of activism associated with the play.**

The performance of *Seven Jewish Children* became the bone of contention for many people since they used online media as tools to amplify the voices and messages of several communities as regards with other aspects of play and its message. Online reporters, discussion groups, and blogging services served as a stage where people engaged themselves in feisty debates, posting of analyses, and promoting their version regarding the content and portrayal in the play assigned by Duncombe (2019).

Another key strategy adopted by online communities that was frequently hired was speaking directly to the audience through videos, memes, and digital art. These creative expressions served as effective communication channels in terms of sharing opinions, arguing against the other side, and mobilizing collective attention and participation (Jenkins et al., 2013). Moreover, there were boycotting campaigns in the form of online petitions, which requested funding for, or condemnation of, the play depending on the side of the community that was proposing it. These online actions which include but are not limited to creating viral content, sharing opinions, and circulating information were all aimed at trying to construct the perception about the play and attempt to garner support or outrage.

It prudent therefore to state that the online activism close *Seven Jewish Children* was therefore linked intrinsically to the overall fight for the rights and self-determination of the Palestinian people. Those that sided with the Palestinians were quick to adopt the play’s ideas and semantics to push for their agenda, nurturing the power of informational outlets that equipped the Palestine solidarity camp with an influential tool for rallying support and upraising the oppressed (Aouragh, 2011).

Pre-Internet web advocacy activities were to drum up international awareness concerning the suffering of Palestinians with human interest accounts, first-hand narratives as well as picture and video diaries shared on the Internet underlining realities on the ground. Social networking sites constituted the other significant theme through which these narratives were spread since they ensured information sharing and mobilization across borders for the activists, supporters, and human rights administration.

Moreover, online campaigns for fundraising were organized to help legitimate and credible aid organizations and advocacy groups as well as grassroots campaigns that strive for the Palestinians’ rights and liberation. In cyberspaces, people began to engage in drawing resources and assembling arrays with innovative means of making the world notice and develop thoughtful actions for the Palestinian casualty (Aouragh, 2019).

Thus, the controversy elicited by ‘*Seven Jewish Children*’ escalated and embraced more than an aesthetic critique or a certain interpretative framework, playing a role of an effective call, a signal for contentious processes and actions regarding the views of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the search for justice and recognition as well as the struggle for the Palestinian’s rights and the global solidarity movements in their support.

The connection between the play and the Palestinian struggle proved art possess the power to spark social and activism initiatives and the tendency of the social media to empower and support the oppressed society, to mobilize people, and question the mainstream narrative across the civilizational benchmark (Castells, 2015).

Thus ‘*Seven Jewish Children*’ was not limited to reactions and discussions revolving only in the Israeli-Palestinian context but facilitated the unification of progressive forces and global solidarity to engage with other social justice struggles and oppressed communities in the world. The show’s themes affected and addressed people of various tribes in the region who were also in similar situations and experienced the impacts of conflict; this made it possible for cross-advocacy motion.

A particularly rich connection was found with indigenous rights struggles, especially in relation to colonialism and Indigenous peoples’ dispossession from their lands as well as cultural assimilation. The issues of colonial violence and the attempts to maintain cultural and Indigenous people’s identity were resonant among Indigenous people across the globe, which paved the way for partnerships and joint actions to assert the common understanding of oppression and resistance.

In addition, the global activism regarding the drama of ‘*Seven Jewish Children*’ engaged with other forms of liberal feminisms and gender justice politics. Considering the play’s portrayal of the stories of mothers who try to shield their children from violence and trauma as well as gendered themes inherent in the war, conflicts affecting women were discussed in the framework of the feminist approach in media and art. These followed online campaigns empowered all



Palestinian women's rights activists to stand with the global activist feminist movements asking for gender equality and women control over their bodies and urging the recognition of women while seeking peaceful ways of solving conflicts.

Themes of violence and human rights violations also became relevant to issues antiracist and anti-fascist, join in advocacy for justice for oppressed people, and equality, which consequently solidified partnerships with such groups for the fight against state violence, racism, and other forms of oppression. Cyberspaces provided a platform for sharing strategies, tools and stories over abolishing oppression and discrimination, and increased awareness of how different struggles are connected in these movements.

Moreover, the interactions between old and new media in relation to 'Seven Jewish Children' was environmental justice in as much as displacement of the Hebrews and erasure of their home resulting from holocaust resonated with other communities affected by effects of climate change, environmental deterioration, and dearth of natural resources. People on social media used hashtags that highlighted solidarity with the Palestinian people and environmental justice activists; such partnerships created synergy in combating environmental injustice and fighting for peoples' rights to control their lives.

The concept of intersectional solidarity and cooperation stemmed from the online activism related to the play "Seven Jewish Children" that demonstrated that art and digital media could effectively break barriers, raise the voice of oppressed people, and encourage collaborations for social justice and human rights. The play became the tool for intersectional activism, and it urged viewers and campaigners alike to look at the interconnectedness of the fight against oppression and advocate for the formation of those networks in which people will challenge systemic oppressions in the modern world (Aouragh, 2019).

In the case of 'Seven Jewish Children' online activism can be viewed as an effective tool and means of presenting visual art, media, and thus, advocating for ideas and different artistic works on the internet; however, the protest directed at Cahill's play encountered some problems and challenges which limited the activity and potency of this form of activism.

This clearly showed one major factor, this was the problem of fake news and the existence of abusive and polarizing communication in cyberspaces. In turn, the play served as a catalyst for raising highly contentious issues and generating contrasting opinions and opinions, and it unleashed negative consequences regarding specific online communities, in which likely fake or misleading information was spread, participations involving hatred and propagandistic narratives of prejudice and bias, and bigotry increased. This state of affairs was characterization by gross misconduct and fake news that hindered constructive discussion, encouraged prejudice, and sustained prejudice and bias.

Moreover, the actual activism that was occurring on the Internet was fragmentary and, in many cases, highly uncoordinated, with a lot of activists and different organizations pursuing their own goals and tactics and not necessarily being in concert with each other. Sometimes there was confusion between these diverse units and a lack of straightforward management hierarchy that sometimes-played mischief with compatible online advertising campaigns; at times, these campaigns contradicted each other and at other times, they overlapped and there was unnecessary overworking of the same audience.

Furthermore, access to technology and the internet is still an issue along with the concept of the digital divide; thus, it created barriers to the diverse and inclusive activism online. People of color and other systemic-oriented minorities or those who did not have proper access to ICTs and social media remained left out or poorly represented in the online civil society organization revolution, and thus did not transcend their marginalized status.

The fire and forget kind of online activism defeats the cause, along with the media cycle and changing trends, which challenged the aspect of commitment to the Palestinian cause. What started as legal online activism following the première to sustain the energy necessary to translate virtual protest into concrete, long-lasting positive change due to the rapid decentralization of internet users' attention and ambiguous positioning of alternative narratives.

Nevertheless, the controversy related to "Seven Jewish Children" revealed important aspects of online activism, which lies in the ability of new media to advocate for increasing awareness about oppressed groups and cultural injustice and to question hegemonic discourses. Yet, the optimization of the opportunities and the overcoming of the challenges of the online activism required constant work against fake news, for collaboration and for the inclusion of the most oppressed groups, as well as for the definition of effective strategies for the transformation of the digital activism into a real-life activism (Milan, 2015).

### **C. Viral stories concerning the impact on the population.**

The viral narratives that were created in relation to Seven Jewish Children helped in shaping and influencing the general reception of the play. Thus, the reaction to and ideas behind the play continued to grow as multiple interpretations, analysis, and criticisms started to rage in the digital spheres (Nahon & Hemsley, 2013).

Through the reposting of content on social media and the interactions on different online forums, viral narratives were able to marginalize or emphasize certain themes and connotations in the play. For example, for the side supporting the Palestinians, messages focusing on play's analysis of the occupation both Israeli and dehumanization of Palestinians were continuously brought up, while for supporting side occupied by Israel, messages empowered play as anti-Semitic and prejudice against Jewish culture (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

Such viral narratives, by virtue of being appealing and highly shareable, had the capability to sway public opinion and thus govern the reception and perception by audiences of the play's material (Shifman 2014). These narratives also contributed to the play becoming more well-known and brought the play higher exposure to persons on the international level and thus more persons gained their own opinions regarding the play.

Despite this, viral narratives have the potential to bring about change approaching movements' transformative effects: they can cement and enforce partisanship and prejudice, but they can also disrupt common ways of seeing and make people aware of the otherness of banned voices and views (Gerbaudo 2012). Regarding the situation with 'Seven Jewish Children,' viral narratives contributed a lot to the Palestinian support and questioning the Israeli rule.

The pro-Palestinian viral narratives shared single stories of Palestinians, narratives of people whose eye-witness accounts illuminated the existed condition of people living under occupation. These were intended as a response to the dominant Israeli discourse where they were to provide an alternative standpoint along with providing information about injustices committed against Palestinians in terms of human rights abuses.

Moreover, viral narratives successfully depoliticized the process of combating for support and solidarity to the Palestinian political agenda. SOS appeals, online campaigns and petitions exploded in cyberspace and gained international support and mobilization of activists.

Through competing with hegemonic representations and giving voice to the marginalized, these viral narratives held the possibility of affecting the community's orientation and conversation on the struggle in and over Israel/Palestine. They fostered problem solving skills, raised questions about such historical and political issues, and emphasized the notion that there's more than one way to look at the things and people (Flaxman et al., 2016).

However, one must treat them with media literacy and caution, as, sometimes, they mislead or overgeneralize, or reinforce prejudice or divide viewers into oppositional groups (Bradshaw & Howard, 2018). In this regard, irrespective of their capability to alter concrete politics, they are significant in awareness creation, challenging the dominant rationality, and creating social activism as vital in determining the public consciousness of contentious issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The activism provoked by the play did not happen in an online-only context, but it was intertwined with concerning offline activism concerning the Palestinian issue. This interconnectivity of virtual and physical platforms generated an active environment for advocacy which not only promoted the voices and stories of minorities but also translated online actions into offline impacts.

Of the features of this interplay, it was possible to notice the ability of cyber-activism to mobilize and organize a protest, rally, and demonstration in the real world. Social sites and group messaging made it easier for the activists and supporters to spread the word on the events that they wanted to undertake, and this allowed people from various areas to come together and express their concerns en mass. Such 'offline' expressions of the online activism not only ensured that the stories and experiences of Palestinians were brought to the media attention but also created togetherness among the people demanding justice for Palestinians.

Finally, the new media activism was also very instrumental in presenting narratives of on the ground activities and interventions concerning the Palestinian cause. Thus, pictures and videos taken by activists and journalists on the spot as well as personal testimonies of Palestinians shared in social media and other platforms, gave voice to the oppressed and informed about the conditions of living under occupation. This digital documentation helped to counter the popular media discourses to the local and international audiences and gain more support to the Palestinian struggle.

On the other hand, offline activism and events also played a role in incite and define the interactions and opinions online. Arabs and Israelis react particularly violently to posts related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict involving violence or human rights issues and significant political events would be revealed in the online activism posts. These online conversations were not only a place where participants could make some collective sense of the event but could also lead directly to further action either online or in real life.

Furthermore, the linkages between the Palestinian struggle as a just cause among other social justice causes evident both on cyberspace and real world. Other tactics and multiple advocacy campaigns were organically linked to anti-racism, colonialism, and systemic oppression fights and showed movement solidarity and cooperation. These social

networking then transformed to actual demonstrations, riots, and protests which inclusively rallied different groups of people and voiced for justice as well as human rights.

Canceling the show and fanning the Palestinians' cause revealed how the online and offline support tumultuously intersect in contemporary protest. Social networks enabled the making of more voices and to mobilize collectively, as well as to denounce or share the opposite of official scenarios, while embodied protests placed the struggle in real life contexts, and these become the main topic for network and online discourse and networking.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A closer look at the synergic relationship between the play "Seven Jewish Children" by Caryl Churchill and the Palestinian cause offers insight into how discursive practices entail a reciprocal reinforcement relationship between the artistic work and the struggle for justice that Palestinian people are conducting. It is intriguing that the conflict of the play focused on the backdrop of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict especially the Jewish parental measures that really echoed the pro-Palestinian group and the pro-Israeli group's narratives, and, as a result, fed their fire and fuel for their debates.

At the same time, the advocates for the Palestinian side and the spectators who support their struggle evident in the criticism of the Israeli occupation and dehumanization of Palestinians saw the play as an opportunity to make more people realize their situation, unite them, and thus gain support from people all over the world. That the play may teach the audience and provoke a critical stance toward the hegemonic discourse and present the Palestinian cause and cry for justice made the play even more significant in its empowering position.

On the other hand, narratives that originate from the Israeli side used the play as an opportunity to respond to what they considered as prejudiced and anti-Semitic representations of the Jews' suffering. In this case, these narratives were intended to change the terms of reference through highlighting histories of trauma and existential threats faced by the Jewish people to mobilize support for Israel's security-centered policies and operations.

This commonly reinforcing relation of play with the Palestinian cause depicts the change making role of art in dictating the political and social revolutions. The discursive potential of Churchill's play went beyond the theatre stage, serving as a rallying point for solidarity, the spread of viral stories, and challenging main/single narratives of the leadership on the Israeli/Palestinian conflict.

It is evident from the findings of this research that the social media platforms and cyberspaces hold significant abilities to set the tone regarding the attitudes and discussions of the people on various topics that are in essence hot button issues such as the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Technology for stranded voices was clearly seen, as in the case of Seven Jewish Children where Facebook meet-up and viral narrative made new public connection; between the inequity of oppressed media and the ability inform, activate, and counter dominant narratives on the world stage (Castells, 2015).

By availing the opportunity of sharing user-generated content and breaking the monopoly of other authoritative institutions, social media platforms provided activists and followers an opportunity to share personal stories, other generalized narratives, multimedia materials and other important information through social media. These digital arenas were indeed effective in mobilizing awareness, garnering support, and creating networks of solidarity at the transnational level.

Moreover, it was the spread of the narratives of the play that worked actively to create the cultural readability of the play to the public. This information suggested that viral narratives offered the tremendous capacity to frame the play's messages and implications in certain ways that could influence the manner in which their audiences made sense of its contents (Nahon & Hemsley, 2013; Shifman, 2014).

However, we should not forget that social networks and narratives with high visibility can have positive and negative effects. That said, they can amplify marginalized voices and disrupt ontological perceptions, as well as propagate misperceptions and pathological prejudice and worsened the problem of polarization and echo chambers (Flaxman et al., 2016; Bradshaw & Howard, 2018).

The findings explain how collective activism and viral narratives are related with regards to the struggle between the Israelis and Palestinians and around the "Seven Jewish Children." Both online activism and viral narratives are intertwined where one contributes to the feed and escalation of the other.

Thus, through different forms of activism in social networks, forums, blogs, and hash tags, collectivized content production and narration created texts and messages that had the potential to 'viral' – that is, to reach wider audiences and attract huge attention (Gerbaudo, 2012). On the other hand, emotionally charged viral narratives enabled by the speedy propagation of the information in the Cyberspace mobilized the participation of persons in online and offline protest activism regarding the Palestinian issue.



The mutually reinforcing relationship between group organizing and trending stories shows how online environments can help oil the wheels of intersectional coalitions of those who wish to make a change. Thus, inspired by such services, the ideas, attitudes, and calls to action intermingled with artistic productions and ‘went viral,’ creating an environment that stimulated public discourse and potential unity for social and political action via online media platforms (Jenkins et al., 2013).

However, it is safe to engage in this interaction with some critical thinking and media literacy as the discussed narratives can be sometimes too sensationalist or bias and might essentially contribute to the further reinforcement of people’s political divides. However, the results suggest that collective activism and viral narratives comprise a possibility to alter a public consciousness, address dominant narratives of the dominant discourses, and amplify the voices of the oppressed within the consideration of political and social contentious issues.

## CONCLUSION

This research has revealed how and why the play *Seven Jewish Children* by Caryl Churchill is problematic yet linked to the Palestinian politics and highlighted how art, protest ensemble, and viral storytelling abuse the bearing force as the tools for changing the perception and altering the discourse about controversy political and social matter. The conclusions specify that there is constructive collaboration between the rhetorical power of the play and the struggle for the realization of the rights of the Palestinian people and their liberation.

The critique revealed that by reacting to the terms of the play in the light of the Israeli occupation and the dehumanization of Palestinians the pro-Palestinian organizations and activists promoted their agendas and employed the play’s themes and symbols to raise awareness, to gain sympathy and to mobilize on an international level. On the contrary, the pro-Israeli narratives employed the play as a platform through which they could challenge what they found in their view to be anti-Semitic and bias representation of Jewish people’s plight with the intention of shifting the narrative and garner support for Israel’s security-oriented endeavors and operations.

Moreover, what is highlighted as revolutionary is the efficiency of the social media platforms and the digital space as agents of changing people’s opinion and shaping the public discourse. Social justice movements and viral stories demonstrated that digital technologies could effectively amplify the oppressed voice, foster social movements, and resist the prevailing status quo online. However, the study also acknowledges the potential of social media platforms and viral narratives as possibly giving rise to epistemological polarizations, modern-age echo chambers, prejudices, lack of critical thinking and fake news proliferations.

Forthcoming research could expand the scope of inquiry by incorporating ethnographic and qualitative methods to discover the lived experiences, motivations, and perspectives of persons and communities directly involved in the online activism and viral narratives surrounding "Seven Jewish Children" and the Palestinian cause. Furthermore, comparative studies examining similar phenomena across different cultural and political contexts could further improve the understanding of the interaction between art, collective activism, and viral narratives in determining public perception and discourse.

Moreover, as digital technologies and platforms carry on evolving rapidly, longitudinal studies chasing the long-term impacts of online activism and viral narratives on social and political movements would provide appreciated insights into the sustainability and efficiency of these digital strategies over time.

By addressing these limitations and discovering new avenues of research, scholars can deepen their understanding of the multifaceted dynamics at play and contribute to the improvement of more effective and responsible strategies for leveraging the authority of art, collective activism, and digital spaces in pursuit of social justice, conflict resolution, and the strengthening of marginalized voices.

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