Online Communication Wars: A Critical Recursive Frame Analysis of Online Responses to the Article entitled, “This is why Colin Kaepernick Took a Knee”

Rebecca Jean Arklie

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Online Communication Wars:
A Critical Recursive Frame Analysis of Online Responses to
the Article entitled, “This is why Colin Kaepernick Took a Knee”

by

Rebecca Jean Arklie

A Dissertation Presented to the
Halmos College of Arts and Sciences of Nova Southeastern University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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2021
This dissertation proposal was submitted by Rebecca Jean Arklie under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the Halmos College of Arts and Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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November 1, 2021
Date of Final Approval

Robin Cooper, PhD., Chair
Dedication

This research project is dedicated to the black men and women who were unarmed and were killed by police officers. It is also dedicated Colin Kaepernick and to all activists – past and present - who have fought against structural violence and racial injustice.
Acknowledgements

I would like to give special acknowledgement to my amazing committee. It was truly a privilege to work with you on this project.

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I am the ONE who will seek peace

I am the ONE who will make a difference

-Rebecca J. Arklie
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Abstract

The World Wide Web provides us with a doorway to explore our world and access to social media; a “place” where we can keep in touch with family and friends and meet people from different cultures. Social media provides us with the ability to communicate using an Avatar, providing us with anonymity. Unfortunately, this anonymity gives people the freedom to unapologetically express their opinions, using any type of language they desire, without fear of repercussions. This study of the social and cultural implications from anonymous, unrestrained comments in a discussion thread will interest communications experts, psychologists, academics, and peacekeepers because of their interests in resolving social and cultural conflicts. This study employed a qualitative methodology: Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA). Analysis through Goffman’s (1959) framing theory revealed that comments were made in the context of the wording and language used in this specific article and current events. Analysis of commenter demographics through social identity theory revealed that these individuals identified as being a participant in this discussion thread and 73 percent did so anonymously. Analysis of the data through critical race theory supported the six basic tenants: denial of racism, white-over-black dominance, race is manipulated for convenience, racialization to meet labor market needs, no individual has a unitary identity and voices of color can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they do not properly understand. Language that contributed to conflict and created turning points in the conversation was found to be criticism of Colin Kaepernick and historical social justice reformers.
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

The World Wide Web provides us with an open doorway to explore our world and it gives us access to social media; a “place” where we can keep in touch with family and friends as well as the opportunity to meet people from different cultures across the globe. Social media provides us with the convenience of instant access to family photos, the joke of the day, and what your best friend’s cousin had for lunch. It also gives us access to meet people from different cultures regardless of whether these people live in our communities or somewhere across our vast globe.

Social interaction with friends, family and people from other cultures can provide us with great benefits however social media platforms also provide us with the ability to interact with others using a fake profile or identity making it difficult or impossible for others to know who we really are. A virtual cloak of invisibility is created when people use Avatars and/or pseudonyms to voice their opinions and communicate with others in discussion threads in response to news releases. This invisibility allows individuals to discuss subjects such as: religion, politics, abortion, gun rights, race, social justice, culture and other socially- and emotionally-charged subjects using any type of words or language they choose, with reasonable assurance that their true identity is hidden.

An Avatar is a cartoon identity assumed by users to either represent their individuality and/or to help conceal their identity. The following definition is offered by Blascovich et al.: “Avatars are graphical self-representations in a computer-mediated environment that can reveal social information in an otherwise cue-limiting setting” (Blascovich et al., as quoted by Palomares & Lee, 2009, pp. 4-5). A pseudonym is an alternative name or word used in lieu of a person’s real name in order to protect their identity (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).
In and around the year 2007 online news media outlets began to allow consumers to comment directly on news stories. Even though the media giants created the service for readers citing necessity, the fact remains that this practice led to a tremendous increase in user “hits” on news media websites. More hits and more viewers equal increased exposure and revenue. For instance, SFGate, a leading news agency, averaged 30,000 page views per month prior to turning on commenting on news stories in the summer of 2007. The average increased markedly to four million page views per month after turning on commenting on news stories (Kim, 2009).

Communicating online via an Avatar and/or pseudonym provides a certain level of anonymity that is both good and bad. Unfortunately, the good and bad reasons are the same: people feel free to voice their opinions without fear of repercussions. Conflict frequently arises because people often say anything and everything their hearts desire, using any type of language they desire, without fear of repercussions or accountability for possible backlash in other individuals’ lives or in communities across the nation and the globe (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015; Goujard, 2016).

Increased readership and hits may have been a nice “result” or statistic for online news agencies however it also resulted in a logistical nightmare for the agencies because their staff members have been forced to constantly monitor and police reader comments. The agencies discovered that they were caught in a never-ending cycle of blocking users, deleting comments, and/or turning off comments on specific news stories. Several online news agencies quickly became tired of “policing” user comments altogether. This resulted in several agencies turning off the ability for readers to comment directly on news stories (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015).
Layout of Dissertation

Chapter one provides an introduction to the study including the problem statement, purpose statement and goal of the study. Also provided are: definitions of key terms, acronyms, researcher context and an overview of the theories used to analyze the data. There is also a brief explanation of the inclusion of biographical information on Colin Kaepernick and historical social justice reformers as well as information about Black Lives Matter (BLM), the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR), and the National Football League (NFL). This is followed by a brief discussion of the methodology used for this study, Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) and then a summary.

Chapter two contains a literature review that includes: context of avatars and online discussion threads; previous studies; background of social media; and the history and background of online commenting. There is a complete description of the theories used to analyze the data in this study and how they are relevant to the study. Also provided is biographical information on Colin Kaepernick and historical social justice reformers as well as information about BLM, the OPHR, and the NFL followed by a summary.

Chapter three begins with the research questions and a full explanation of the methodology used in this study (RFA). This is followed by a description of semantic shift notations and then processes and procedures developed by this researcher to conduct this study, including: a description of semantic shift notations; system for determining intention of replies; critical data analysis; the process for creating the museums; the system for naming galleries; and the protocol for Avatar analysis. Then this researcher explained the data selection and sampling strategy. This is followed by sections on ethics and trustworthiness; researcher bias; identity
protection; limitations of the study and contribution to the field of conflict analysis and resolution.

Chapter four contains the findings of the study. First is a presentation of the data as analyzed through RFA. These findings are presented in four sections: Section I: Single Responses (single comments with no response that were directed at the author of the perspective piece); Section II: One Comment/One Response (single comment with only a single response); Section III: Three Short Conversations (conversations that were short); and Section IV: Long Conversation (a very long conversation with multiple starting points and responses). The findings are then presented through the lenses of the three theories (Goffman’s Framing Theory, Social Identity Theory, and Critical Race Theory). The findings are then presented through the lens of the research questions and then they are presented in museums of galleries (an added step to the RFA methodology).

Chapter five presents a discussion of the findings beginning with the purpose and goals of the study and a brief reiteration of the RFA methodology. The findings are then discussed through the lenses of the three theories and then the research questions. This is followed by sections that discuss limitations of the study, recommendations, contributions to the field of conflict analysis and resolution and then concluded with researcher reflections and conclusions.

**Problem Statement**

Communicating online via an Avatar and or pseudonym provides a certain anonymity that is both good and bad. Unfortunately, the good and bad reasons are the same: people feel free to voice their opinions without fear of repercussions. Conflict frequently arises because people often say anything and everything their hearts desire, using any type of language they desire
(Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015; Goujard, 2016), without fear of repercussions or accountability for possible backlash in the lives of other individuals.

Diversification of technologies has resulted in the creation of technologies that are deeply social thereby demanding our attention (Walther, 2012). Research on the social and cultural ramifications and repercussions associated with language use and communication utilized in online discussion threads will be of interest to communications experts, linguists, psychologists, academics, and peacekeepers that are concerned with this problem.

The problem associated with using an Avatar and/or a pseudonym to participate in an online discussion thread, anonymity, and freedom from repercussions is pervasive enough that several online media outlets have made the decision to “turn off” user based comments to news stories (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015; Goujard, 2016). Even though this method of addressing the problem (turning off the ability for users to comment) eliminates the problem for these specific news outlets, the problem is still pervasive on other social venues.

Social media communication via the use of an Avatars and/or pseudonym provides us with a vehicle through which to express our feelings on every subject matter without fear of retribution or physical harm. The researcher has identified a variety of studies related to the use of Avatars.

In one study Kang and Yang (2006) investigated the influence of different media on the use of Avatars by comparing Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Instant Messenger (IM). The study found that “avatars as symbols for users can have different characteristics in terms of self-identity and self-disclosure in different media” (para. 1). The also study found that gender had significantly more moderation effect of avatar usage compared to age, which was shown to have a “mixed moderation effect” (para. 1).
In another study Nicholas Palomares and Eun-Ju Lee investigated how the gender of an individual’s Avatar affected their use of gender-based languages; specifically, the study looked at references to emotions, apologies, and tentative language. Research results indicated that “gender-matched avatars promoted counter-typical language, especially among women” (p.11). However, participants’ language was not influenced by the gender of the communication partner’s avatar (Palomares & Lee, 2009).

These studies and others discussed in chapter two explored different aspects of online communication using Avatars, but none of them investigated the discourse in communication between users. This dissertation investigated the discourse contained in communications between people utilizing Avatars and/or pseudonyms in order to gain a better understanding of how these conversations affect conflict related to culture, socioeconomic status, and/or race, gender and ethnicity. The findings of this study serve to fill the gap in exiting literature related to social and cultural conflict that arises in online discussion threads where people utilize an Avatar and/or pseudonym.

Discussion threads provide us with a venue to express our feelings on every subject matter without fear of retribution or physical harm. This researcher believes that freedom of speech and the freedom to express oneself are the rights of every individual. This researcher also believes that in order for progress or resolution to result from communication that it should be done in a respectful manner and with the understanding that each individual is entitled to their own viewpoint that others do not need to adopt as their own.

According to Statista.com, the number of social media network users worldwide increased from .97 billion in 2010 to 2.82 billion in 2019 (Clement, 2019). So, given the sharp increase in the number of social media users, this researcher felt that it was important to conduct
a study of a discussion thread (responses to a high profile, controversial news story/release) by people using an Avatar and/or a pseudonym in order to determine how the discourse contained in the comments contributed to social and/or cultural conflict.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine a discussion thread wherein individuals pose as an Avatar and/or utilize a pseudonym, and analyze the language of that conversation using Critical Recursive Frame Analysis in order to gain a better understanding of how the use of certain words and phrases, or emoticons, affect the course of events in a conversation.

**Goal of the Study**

The goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of how language used in an online discussion thread is used to shift the conversation from constructive to destructive; as well as destructive to constructive.

**Definition of Key Terms**

**Avatar:** “Avatars are graphical self-representations in a computer-mediated environment that can reveal social information in an otherwise cue-limiting setting” (Blascovich et al., as quoted by Palomares & Lee, 2009, pp. 4-5).

**Context:** Context is defined as “the interrelated conditions in which something exists” (Folger et al., 2009, p. 203).

**Social Identity:** Social identity is defined as “the sense of identity we get from belonging to a larger social group” (Folger et al., 2009, p. 92).

**Pseudonym:** A pseudonym is an alternative name or word used in lieu of a person’s real name in order to protect their identity (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).
Acronyms

- AFC – American Football Conference
- APFA – American Professional Football Association
- BLM – Black Lives Matter
- CMC - Computer-mediated communication
- CNN – Cable News Network
- CRT – Critical Race Theory
- DVD – Digital versatile disc
- IM – Instant Messenger
- IOC – International Olympic Committee
- IRC - Internet Relay Chat
- RFA – Recursive Frame Analysis
- MUDs - Multiuser domains
- NAACP – National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- NCAA – The National Collegiate Athletic Association
- NFC – National Football Conference
- NFL – National Football League
- NOI – Nation of Islam
- NPR – National Public Radio
- OPHR – Olympic Project for Human Rights
- PT – Perspective Transformation
- RST - Rhetorical Structure Theory
- SCLC – Southern Christian Leadership Conference
Reasercher Context

As a researcher, it was important to remember that the results of my research could have been heavily influenced by my experiences, writing style, and point of view on the given subject matter of the article. As the researcher, I was the one who gave a voice to the subjects; I was also the one who decided how much of their background (or context) was shared. By keeping this in mind and my personal experiences in check, I was able to better report the data as I found it to the greatest extent possible (Fink, 2000).

Theories

This study examined the discourse contained in an online discussion thread. This researcher studied the data through three lenses or theories: Goffman’s framing theory; Social Identity Theory; and Critical Race Theory (CRT). These theories are discussed in the literature review in chapter two.

Colin Kaepernick and Historical Social Justice Reformers

As part of the literature review in chapter two, this researcher provided biographical and background information about Colin Kaepernick and historical social justice reformers: Muhammad Ali, Dr. John W. Carlos, Tommie C. Smith, Peter Norman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks. This researcher included these individuals in the literature review because commenters compared Colin Kaepernick to them. This information has been provided to show the significance of Kaepernick being compared to these individuals and Kaepernick being hailed as a social justice reformer.
Organizations and Corporations

As part of the literature review in chapter two, this researcher provided information on BLM, the OPHR, and the NFL. Information on BLM was provided because Colin Kaepernick is involved with this organization and this researcher believed it was important to provide background information for reference and relevance. Information on OPHR was provided because historical social justice reformers, Dr. John W. Carlos, Tommie C. Smith and Peter Norman were involved with this organization. Basic background information on the NFL was provided because the organization is a major subject-matter of Sally Jenkins’ (2020) article.

Methodology

This research project employed Critical Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) as the research methodology. According to Dr. Ron Chenail (1995), when we communicate using words, we do so by stringing words together in a specific manner in order to convey a certain message. RFA is a qualitative research methodology that was designed to assist the researcher gain a much deeper understanding of the words utilized in a conversation by listening and/or reading repeatedly and clumping (or chunking) words into categories and analyzing the resulting groups of (clumps of) words through frames or context (Chenail, 1995).

RFA is grounded in the works of Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman in that data – conversations – are analyzed through frames or context. According to Dr. Ron Chenail (1995), “context does not cause that which is contextualized to have meaning; meaning is produced when the two--the context and the text, are brought together” (para. 5).

Research methodologies are intended to be fluid, as is RFA. RFA was developed into a tool for therapists to analyze transcribed conversations that took place in group therapy sessions, but was designed with flexibility so that it can also be utilized in research. Therefore, given that
this researcher utilized discussion threads as her data, as opposed to recordings of conversations, she utilized the flexibility of RFA to ensure quality research. RFA is described in more detail in chapter three. Additionally, during the data analysis phase of this study, the researcher recognized that it would be beneficial to the study, and provide a deeper meaning of the findings to analyze the data critically by considering external factors that may have contributed to the language used in these conversations. This process was developed by the researcher and is described in chapter three.

This study sought to answer the following research question(s):

1) Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used this discussion thread escalate conflict with those who respond? Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread de-escalate conflict with those who respond?

2) Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread contribute to conflict regarding race with those who respond?

3) What are the turning points in the conversation?

**Summary of Chapter 1**

This study began with an extensive review of available literature on the subject and an explanation through selected theories (Chapter 2); followed by an explanation of the research methodology to be used (Chapter 3); followed by results (Chapter 4); and concluded with discussion of the findings (Chapter 5). The findings of this study provided insight into the discourse and mechanics of the discourse used in an online discussion thread, how the language in these threads did or did not contribute to social and cultural conflict with the individuals (using an Avatar and/or a pseudonym) that participated in the discussion thread. The findings
also provided discovery of specific dynamics that caused conversations to move from constructive to destructive as well as destructive to constructive.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter presents an integration of a review of existing literature in order to gain a better understanding of existing research and knowledge, as well as identified gaps in literature that needed to be filled. This literature review provides readers with understanding and enlightenment through and exploration of using Avatars and/or pseudonyms as communication mediums in online media settings, through selected theories. This chapter also outlines basic information about computer-mediated communication (CMC), multiuser domains (MUDs), online commenting, research and theories behind the need for individuals to have and portray an *identity* or multiple identities, as well as the theories that were utilized to conduct this research.

**Context of Avatars & Online Discussion Threads**

An Avatar is a cartoon identity assumed by users to either embody their individuality and/or to help conceal their identity. “Avatars are graphical self-representations in a computer-mediated environment that can reveal social information in an otherwise cue-limiting setting” (Blascovich et al., as quoted by Palomares & Lee, 2009, pp. 4-5).

According to Lin and Wang (2014) the term “avatar” was initially defined as the descent of a deity to the Earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape in Hinduism. The term is now widely accepted to mean something that represents the identity of a user. While that definition is a bit broad, the term “avatar” is “to refer to the digital self-representation of participants in the virtual world” (p. 213).

The popularity of avatars has increased markedly over the past few years as has the demand for the ability for customization. Users may now choose from three-dimensional avatars created by professional developers. Users may also choose their avatar’s eye color, hair color, physical characteristics, body style, height, clothing, accessories, and personality traits. Available
features such as this allow users to build a self-representation of themselves through experimentation of blending different personalities, personalized behavior patterns, and distinctive appearances (Lin & Wang, 2014).

**Previous Studies**

In one study Kang and Yang (2006) investigated the influence of different media on the use of Avatars by comparing Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and Instant Messenger (IM). The study found that “avatars as symbols for users can have different characteristics in terms of self-identity and self-disclosure in different media” (para. 1). The study also found that gender had significantly more moderation effect of avatar usage compared to age, which was shown to have a “mixed moderation effect” (para. 1).

In another study, Nicholas Palomares and Eun-Ju Lee investigated how the gender of an individual’s Avatar affected their use of gender-based languages; specifically, the study looked at references to emotions, apologies, and tentative language. Research results indicated that “gender-matched avatars promoted counter-capital language, especially among women” (p.11). However, participants’ language was not influenced by the gender of the communication partner’s avatar (Palomares & Lee, 2009).

An online survey (N=244) conducted by Lin and Wang (2014) revealed that online users create avatars for interaction in a virtual world because of four major motivations. Those include: (1) virtual exploration; (2) social navigation; (3) contextual adaptation, and (4) identity representation.

According to a study by Laramie Taylor called, *Avatars and Emotional Engagement in Asynchronous Online Communication*, using an Avatar to accompany a questionnaire resulted in
more questions being asked than when one was not used. The study also found that when people did respond, they were more likely to be empathetic (Taylor, 2011).

An exhaustive search for existing studies and literature on technology, communication, language and discussion threads revealed that existing studies on discussion threads are related to online learning. For example, Dieter (2011) conducted a critical discourse analysis that investigated post threads from three graduate level distance learning courses. In this study, these threads were coded and analyzed for “evidence of perspective transformation” (p. xiv). Using Mezirow’s perspective transformation stages, Dieter found that “the relative numbers of coded passages of text decreased as the level of PT stages increased, with the exception of Shared Recognition (PTS 4)” (p. 119).

In another study, Potter (2007) used Rhetorical Structure Theory (RST) to investigate and gain an understanding of “interactional coherence in asynchronous learning environments” (p. iii). Potter conducted an analysis using a modified form of RST, of three discussions located on Allaire, WebCT, and STS. The results of the study found that “augmentation was more prevalent in some groups than others” (p. iii). The study also found that the “dominant mode of interaction was disagreement” (p. iii) in one group; in another “argumentation was generally constructive” (p. iii); and in the third, “argumentation tended to be supportive and concessive” (p. iii). The study further found that “topic drift” (p. iii) was intentionally created to change the subject to a preferred topic. Potter (2007) found that while most threads opened with a research-based message, the conversations descended to “anecdotes and personal commentary” (p. iii). Potter also noted that in one group, less than half of the responses were threaded with the remaining half being single responses.
In a study entitled, “(In)Appropriate Online Behavior: A Pragmatic Analysis of Message Board Relations,” Jenny Arendholz (2013), conducted a “descriptive and comprehensive study on the discursive struggle over interpersonal relations in online message boards” (description). In this study that was designed to merge the fields of interpersonal pragmatics and computer-mediated communication (CMC), Arendholz used two theories (Social presence theory and De-individuation theory) to investigate positive and negative behavior in the online message board called The Student Room (TSR) which is a discussion board for British and international students. Arendholz posited that regardless of whether we communicate with one another via computers or face-to-face, we are simultaneously exchanging information and “(un)consciously negotiating social relations on an interpersonal plane” (p. 1). The results of the study showed that some participants revealed a high level of personal information while others chose to remain “faceless” (p. 260); participants often utilized links and embedded objects to make a statement; interpersonal roles were continuously redefined and renegotiated due to incomplete personal background information; and the expectations of users participating in a “message board such as TSR can be broken down to sharing and being part of a group” (p. 260). The study also found that online behavior was affected by contextual factors (p. 261) and that responses most often mirrored the stance of the content of the original post whether it was “aggressive or altruistic” (p. 262) in nature. The study even notes that often thread starters would revise or edit their original comment to avoid conflict or misunderstandings.

The studies by Kang and Yang (2006), Palomares and Lee (2009), Lin and Wang (2014), and Taylor (2011) explored different aspects of online communication using Avatars, but none of them investigated the discourse in communication in discussion threads in response to a media story between commenters. The study by Potter (2007) investigated “interactional coherence in
asynchronous learning environments” (p. iii); an environment where users would be known to one another. The study conducted by Arendholz (2013) acknowledged that some users disclosed personal information while others did not and that contextual factors played a role in communication but the study focused on interpersonal relations.

While these studies contributed to different research fields, there is a gap in the literature as it pertains to the discourse contained in communications between people utilizing Avatars and/or pseudonyms. This study was conducted to gain a better understanding of how these conversations affected conflict related to culture, socioeconomic status, and/or race, gender and ethnicity. The findings of this study serve to fill the gap in exiting literature related to social and cultural conflict that arises in online discussion threads where people utilize an Avatar and/or pseudonym.

**Background of Social Media**

Social media got its beginnings in the early 2000s. According to Statista.com, the number of social media network users worldwide increased from .97 billion in 2010 to 2.82 billion in 2019 (Clement, 2019). This statistic represents a large increase in the number of social media network users.

In 2004, the social media site MySpace became the first social media site to achieve a million active users on a monthly basis. Beginning with MySpace, this list contains social media sites in the order they were established along with first year user statistics, 2019 user statistics and most recent user statistics available.

- **MySpace** – reported 980,000 users in 2004; then 46 million users in 2011 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); but then reported a decrease in monthly users in 2016: 15 million monthly users (last update provided) (DMRb, 2021).
• Flickr – reported 3.68 million users in 2004; then 80.0 million users in 2013 Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); but then reported a decrease in monthly users in 2021: 60.0 million monthly users (DMRa, 2021).

• YouTube – reported 1.95 million users in 2005; then 1.90 billion users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019), then 2.291 billion in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

• Reddit – reported 248,000 users in 2005; then 355 million users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019), then an estimate of 430 million* users was provided by Statista.com (2021a). (*platform has not updated user figures in the past 12 months; figure may be out of date and less reliable).

• Facebook – reported 100 million users in 2008, then 2.26 billion users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); then 2.853 billion users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

• Twitter – reported 43.25 million users in 2010; then 329.50 million users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); then 397 million users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

• WeChat – reported 47.82 million users in 2011; then 1 billion users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); then 1.242 billion users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

• Tumblr – reported 18.2 million users in 2014; then 26.9 million users in 2018; but then reported a decrease in monthly users in 2020: 20.94 million monthly users (Statista.com, 2021c).

• Whatsapp – reported 300 million in 2013, then 1.33 billion users in 2017 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); then an estimate of 2.000 billion* users was provided by Statista.com (2021a). (*platform has not updated user figures in the past 12 months; figure may be out of date and less reliable).
• Instagram – reported 117.5 million users in 2013; then 1 billion users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); then 1.386 billion users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

• Snapchat – reported 46 million users in 2014; then 218 million users in 2019; then 293 million users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021b).

• Pinterest – reported 143.3 million users in 2014; then 246.50 million users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); and then 478 million users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

• TikTok – reported 239.1 million users in 2017; then 500 million users in 2018 (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019); then 732 million users in 2021 (Statista.com, 2021a).

Although three of these social media sites (flickr, Tumblr, MySpace) experienced a decrease in users, these figures clearly demonstrate the huge increase in social media users given that all of these sites started at one. Table 1 lists the most popular social media sites in order of “most users.”

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media Sites Listed by Most Users</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WeChat</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
History & Background of Online Commenting

From a historical perspective, online news media outlets began to allow consumers to comment directly on news stories around the year 2007. Although the media giants claim to have created the “service” of online commenting out of necessity, the fact remains that these online media giants experienced a prodigious increase in user “hits” to their websites. An increase in the number of viewers and hits translates to increased exposure and revenues. For example, SFGate, a leading news agency, reported an average of 4 million page views per month for comments, whereas, prior to “turning on” comments to news stories in the summer of 2007 they only averaged only 30,000 page views per month (Kim, 2009).

Increased readership and hits to their websites may have produced desirable results for online media outlets in for form of “hits” to their sites (Kim, 2009), however it also lead to a logistical nightmare in the form of a perhaps unanticipated consequence of opening the proverbial “can of worms”; staff members suddenly found themselves caught in an iterative cycle policing users through blocking users, deleting comments, and/or turning off comments on specific news stories when user comments would become out of control or unmanageable (Beaujon, 2014).

According to Finley (2015), due to increasing online audiences, the difficulty of moderating online conversations increased as well. Several online news agencies quickly became
tired of “policing” user comments altogether which resulted in the agencies simply “turning off” the ability for readers to comment directly on news stories (Beaujon, 2014). This researcher found it to be a significant and unexpected finding early in the literature review process.

*Popular Science* discontinued user comments September 24, 2013 (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015). They were one of the first major publications to discontinue this popular feature. Former Digital Editor, Suzanne LaBarre included this statement in the announcement on the site:

If you carry out those results to their logical end—commenters shape public opinion; public opinion shapes public policy; public policy shapes how and whether and what research gets funded—you start to see why we feel compelled to hit the “off” switch. (Finley, 2015, para. 5)

Three years after discontinuing user comments, *Popular Science* magazine still stood by their decision. Online Director, Carl Franzen, stated, “This [the website] is the place to read and share. The conversations happen on our social media channels. It’s not the primary product of our media” (Goujard, 2016, para. 2).

According to Beaujon (2014), in addition to *Popular Science* ending the ability for readers to comment on postings in September, the *Chicago Sun-Times* eliminated the comment feature that summer. According to Finley (2015), the *Chicago Sun-Times* discontinued user comments on April 12, 2014, over the “tone and quality” (2015, para. 6) of user comments. Finley also stated that commenting is still not allowed on most articles. Representatives from the *Chicago Sun-Times* said the decision was made because comments contribute to a “morass of negativity, racism, hate speech and general trollish behaviors that detract from the comment” (Beaujon, 2014, para. 4). *The Huffington Post* had also announced plans to end user comments (Beaujon, 2014).
In August of 2014, CNN “quietly” deactivated the comment feature on their site during the protests that took place in Ferguson, Missouri. Media giant, Reuters followed suit on November 7, 2014 by disabling the comment feature and redirecting users to social media (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015). They did this for all stories except for opinion pieces (Finley, 2015). Regarding the move of user comments to social media, Reuters stated, “Those communities offer vibrant conversation and, importantly, are self-policed by participants to keep on the fringes those who would abuse the privilege of commenting” (Beaujon, 2014, para. 1; Finley, 2015, para. 8).

On November 20, 2014, Recode, a popular tech news website also pulled the plug on user comments and redirected their users to social media. They were followed by The Week that ended user commenting on December 15, 2014; immediately followed on December 16, 2014, by Mic.com, a millennial-focused site “proving that comment-phobia isn’t just for old media” (Finley, 2015, para. 11).

The trend of disappearing comment section continued in 2015 beginning on January 27 with the relaunch of Bloomberg’s website without the comment feature. On July 6, 2015, The Verge, a tech news website, announced that it would be discontinuing the ability to post comments for the duration of the summer. On July 7, 2015, WIRED launched their forum called, “short post” without the ability to post comments. Next, The Daily Dot turned off their comment feature on July 27, 2015 along with The Daily Beast on August 19, 2015. On October 5, 2015, Vice Motherboard announced a “letters to the editor” feature that replaced their comment section. This move was followed the very next day, October 6, 2015, by Reddit that launched a news site called Upvoted that has no mechanism by which to comment or “upvote” anything leaving users in the dark as to where conversations would take place (Finley, 2015).
According to Goujard (2016), in late 2016, *NPR* also announced that it intended to discontinue its story-page (comment) section. The media outlet experimented with comment sections for eight years but ultimately decided that it was not “providing a useful experience for the vast majority of [its] users” (para. 1) according to Scott Montgomery, Managing Editor.

Table 2 is provided to give a snapshot of media outlets that discontinued the ability for users to comments on articles. The table lists a total of 16 media outlets and these represent the beginning of the trend of discontinuing the ability for users to comment due to staff members having to continuously police comments, delete comments and ban users from their site.

### Table 2

**Media Outlets that Discontinued User Comments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Media Outlet</th>
<th>Date of Discontinuance</th>
<th>Source(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Popular Science</td>
<td>September 24, 2013</td>
<td>Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chicago Sun-Times</td>
<td>April 12, 2014</td>
<td>Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Huffington Post</td>
<td>2014*</td>
<td>Beaujon, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNN</td>
<td>August, 2014</td>
<td>Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Huffington Post</td>
<td>2014*</td>
<td>Beaujon, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Week</td>
<td>December 15, 2014</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mic.com</td>
<td>December 16, 2014</td>
<td>Finley, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Verge</td>
<td>July 6, 2015 ***</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wired</td>
<td>July 7, 2015*</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Dot</td>
<td>July 27, 2015</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Daily Beast</td>
<td>August 19, 2015</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice Motherboard</td>
<td>October 5, 2015**</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reddit</td>
<td>October 6, 2015*</td>
<td>Finley, 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPR</td>
<td>2016***</td>
<td>Goujard, 2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(*Launched forum without the ability to post comments; **Replaced with another product; ***Announced discontinuance*)

(Sources: Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015; Goujard, 2016)
Paradoxically, the editor’s note from Reuters that stated, “Those communities offer vibrant conversation, and, importantly, are self-policed by participants to keep on the fringes those who would abuse the privilege of commenting” (Beaujon, 2014, para. 1; Finley, 2015, para. 8) was unsigned making it effectively anonymous. It is as if the news giant politely but anonymously said goodbye to their anonymous Avatars… goodbye indeed to their great and mighty Avatars engaging facelessly in conversations and fighting their battles like warriors at an online Masquerade Ball holding in their hands the almighty devices by which they engage in their own *keyboard revolution* (personal conversation, Dr. Jorge Rice) where in their minds they are changing their world one keystroke at a time.

This portion of the literature review shows a distinct trend of the end of user comments on media outlets. However, while some websites have terminated user comments and/or redirected users to social media to avoid having to police and manage user comments (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015), the internet is still replete with media outlets that still allow user comments.

**Theories**

The three theories that were used to examine the discourse contained in an online discussion thread are: Goffman’s framing theory; Social Identity theory; and Critical Race Theory.

**Goffman’s Framing Theory**

Analyzing the discourse in an online discussion thread using Goffman’s framing theory allowed exploration of theoretical or rational views of a specific circumstance or situation (Chenail, 1995). Goffman’s theory on framing posits that significances of everyday life can be most efficaciously dealt with taking into consideration the way in which these experiences are framed because these significances, or meanings “are the projection of the structure or form of
the experiences in which they are embodied” (Jameson, 1976, p. 119). Goffman’s theory applies universal rules to human interactions or reciprocities in that his theory posits: life events as well as the role players (people involved) affect or determine the lens through which an individual views a particular situation in the playing of games (Gonos, 1977).

A matrix of possible events and a cast of roles through whose enactment the events occur constitute together a field for fateful dramatic action, a plane of being, an engine of meaning, a world in itself, different from all other worlds, except the ones generated when the same game is played at other times. (Goffman, 1961, pp. 26-27, as quoted by Gonos, 1977, p. 857)

In his work entitled, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Goffman (1959) postulates that every individual performs roles in their everyday lives and have many motives for attempting to control the impression they make on others. He further proposes that our patterns of actions that we present through “play” can actually constitute a “part.” Abigail De Kosnik (2019) discussed Goffman’s work in her essay entitled, *Is Twitter a Stage? Theories of Social Media Platforms as Performance Spaces*, and pointed out that Goffman is not concerned with the content of the performance, but rather the “fact that performance takes place, and how performance works, in social interaction” (2019, p. 20). De Kosnik wrote that our performance in everyday life, as described by Goffman, can be used to describe how we perform on digital media platforms and that the impressions that we seek to make upon others and the parts that we play while do so, are our online identities.

**Social Identity Theory**

Social identity is defined as “the sense of identity we get from belonging to a larger social group” (Folger et al., 2009, p. 92). An individual’s “identity is a complex personal and social
construct, consisting in part of who we think ourselves to be, how we wish others to perceive us, and how they actually perceive us” (Wood & Smith, 2005, p. 52).

Social identity theory was developed using the early works of Henri Tajfel, “which attempted to apply cognitive grouping and gestalt phenomena to social groups” (Islam, 2014, p. 1781). This type of cognitive grouping encompasses “judgmental accentuation where cognitive categories lead to the increased salience of distinguishing features between categories, exaggerating category differences” (p. 1781). This principle can be used to explain or discuss exaggerated or biased perception differences when applied to social groups.

According to Hogg (2006), social identity theory is a “social psychological analysis of the role of self-conception in group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations” (p. 111) and is used to address issues such as intergroup conflict; group cohesiveness and polarization; crowd behavior; prejudice; deviance and other social phenomena. The foundation of social identity is categorization (i.e., social categories or categories of people). There are attributes that capture similarities within the group as well as differences such as attitudes, behaviors, feelings and perceptions. Hogg (2006) further stipulated that recognizing or categorizing an individual as a group member changes how we see that individual.

Analysis of the discourse in this online discussion thread through social identity theory allowed a better understanding of social context or “belonging” (Folger et al., 2009). It also provided a lens through which to evaluate intergroup conflict and provided the researcher with an understanding of how attitudes, behaviors, feelings and perceptions divided people into two groups within the group of people that commented in this discussion thread. These things, along with the group(s) interacting in an online platform, anonymity, the content of the article and current events at the time the article was written created a unique context. Understanding context
is an important component of conflict resolution because the core of any conflict is grounded in the perception of the individuals engaged in conflict.

**Critical Race Theory**

Hylton (2009) summarized critical race theory as a “framework from which to explore and examine the racism in society that privileges whiteness as it disadvantages others because of their ‘blackness’” (p. 22). Critical race theory challenges policy and practice that promotes race neutrality while it recognizes the valuable black voice that is often marginalized in mainstream theory, policy and practice.

There are several points that critical race theorists agree on and understand. One is that “race is a central structure in society” (Zamudio et al., 2010, p. 3). Although many individuals alive today have not lived in a society where slavery was an accepted way of life, segregation was the law and land was stolen, race still pervades social ideologies and belief systems.

Another point that critical race theorists understand is the creation of social division based on race (racialization). The foundation of racial inequality was created by Europeans when they colonized Africa, the Americas and Asia effectively dividing the world into the categories of “conquered and colonizer, master and slave, white and non-white” (Zamudio et al., 2010, p. 4).

Critical race theorists also understand that “voice” matters. History is articulated through the lens of the dominant group in society and therefore the “minority” voice matters. On this point, it is important and valuable for the counter-story to be told through testimonies and narratives by those without power rather than silently accept narratives of the dominant group that we have come to accept (Zamudio, 2010).

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), critical race theorists study and seek ways to transform the relationship among race, racism and power. While the critical race theory
movement takes into consideration the same issues as conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses, they view the issues through broader perspectives including “economics, history, setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious” (p. 3). While traditional civil rights discourse focuses on incremental progress, critical race theory “questions the very foundations of liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law” (p. 3).

The six basic tenants of CRT are:

1. Racism is ordinary and is a common, every-day experience for many people of color in the United States. Racism is a problem that is very difficult to address because it is not acknowledged;

2. Our system of white-over-color dominance serves both psychic and material purposes for the dominant group. In other words, racism, for the most part, is the result of interest convergence;

3. Race is socially constructed; meaning that races are categories that society invents, manipulate and/or retires at their convenience;

4. Racism can take the form of differential racialization; whereupon society racializes different minority groups to suit changing needs (i.e., labor market);

5. Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity; and

6. Voice of color; which means due to the unique histories and experiences with oppression, writers and thinkers who are black, American Indian, Asian, or Latino can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they likely do not know or properly understand (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).
CRT informed this study by providing the researcher with a lens through which to analyze the data for this study. Using the six basic tenants of CRT, this researcher identified comments that support the tenants either through affirmation or through negativity that demonstrate the need for this theory. This data for this study is comments from a discussion thread in response to the article entitled, *This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee* (Jenkins, 2020). CRT also provided a lens through which to analyze and discuss comments made about Colin Kaepernick for his social activism.

**Colin Kaepernick and Historical Social Justice Reformers**

This section provides biographical and background information about Colin Kaepernick and historical social justice reformers: Muhammad Ali, John W. Carlos, Tommie C. Smith, Peter Norman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks. This researcher included these individuals in the literature review because commenters compared Colin Kaepernick to them. This information has been provided to show the significance of Kaepernick being compared to these individuals and Kaepernick being hailed as a social justice reformer.

**Colin Kaepernick**

This section provides history and background information about Colin Kaepernick because he is the subject of the article written by Sally Jenkins (2020). This information provides readers with a little bit of background information as well as insight and perspective on Kaepernick, the actions he took and the sacrifice he made: an overview of how he went from being adopted, to playing college football, to joining the NFL, to sacrificing it all for standing up – by kneeling down – against injustice.
Biographical and background information

Colin Kaepernick was born on November 3, 1987 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin to a single white mother and a black father. He was put up for adoption and was adopted by Rick and Teresa Kaepernick (a white couple) who had two biological children, Kyle and Devon. Even as a child, strangers often assumed that he was not with the Kaepernick’s (Branch, 2017). Colin once said in an interview that his family would go on summer vacations where the family would drive and stay at different motels. He said,

And every year, in the lobby of every motel, the same thing always happened, and it only got worse as I got older and taller. It didn’t matter how close I stood to my family, somebody would walk up to me, a real nervous manager, and say, ‘Excuse me. Is there something I can help you with?’ (Branch, 2017, para. 20)

His road to the NFL began when his brother, Kyle, sent DVD’s of Colin’s highlights from high school to different colleges. Ultimately, Nevada offered Colin a scholarship. In college, Kaepernick’s talent as a quarterback emerged and he became more curious about African-American history. Colin was a starter for most of his four seasons at Nevada, a NCAA team, and became the first player to throw in excess of 10,000 yards and rush more than 4,000 yards. Kaepernick was a great student and ultimately graduated with a degree in business management (Branch, 2017).

Colin Kaepernick was a 2011 second round draft pick for the NFL where he played for four seasons for the San Francisco 49ers. As quarterback, Kaepernick led his team to the Super Bowl at the end of the 2012 season (NFL, 2021a).

By 2016, Kaepernick sought more education through auditing a summer course on black representation in popular culture at the University of California, Berkeley. His professor, Ameer
Hasan Loggins said that Colin often sought out extra reading materials and stated, “He was willing to work and study to kind of understand what was happening with this teammates, with other people, and how this whole thing rolled out over 400 years” (Branch, 2017, para. 53).

Kaepernick’s personal experiences, education and association with people, such as his girlfriend, Nessa Diab, who is active in the BLM movement, helped make him into an outspoken advocate for social justice which began to emerge through his social media posts following back-to-back killings of black men by police in July of 2016. According to Branch (2017), following the death of Alton Sterling, after a video of his killing became public, Kaepernick wrote on Twitter and Instagram,

This is what lynchings [sic] look like in 2016! Another murder in the streets because the color of a man’s skin, at the hands of the people who they say will protect us. When will they be held accountable? Or did he fear for his life as he executed this man? (Branch, 2017, para. 58)

The following day, Philando Castile was shot and killed while sitting in his vehicle. Colin Kaepernick posted a video taken by a woman who was in the passenger seat and said, “We are under attack! It’s clear as day! Less than 24 hrs [sic] later another body in the street” (Branch, 2017, para. 60).

According to Branch (2017), the next month, on August 26, 2016, a reporter happened to take a photograph of the bench at the third pre-season San Francisco 49ers game but did not notice Kaepernick sitting alone near the coolers until later. Kaepernick was later interviewed by Steve Wyche of nfl.com. In this interview, Colin stated,

I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color. To me, this is bigger than football, and it would be selfish on
my part to look the other way. There are bodies in the street and people getting paid leave
and getting away with murder. (Branch, 2017, para. 64)

Colin also iterated that he had not sought anyone’s permission to sit on the bench, tucked
safely behind the other players, during the playing of the National Anthem (Branch, 2017). He
further stated,

    This is not something that I am going to run by anybody. “I am not looking for approval.
    I have to stand up for people that are oppressed. If they take football away, my
    endorsements from me, I know that I stood up for what is right. (Branch, 2017, para. 66)

Kaepernick faced criticism for his actions – sitting on the bench. Some claimed he
disrespected the military while others did not believe he was genuine – nor did he have the right
to take a stand against black oppression given that he was a millionaire and was raised by his
white adoptive parents who provided a comfortable life for the family (Branch, 2017).

Undeterred, Kaepernick kicked things into gear at the beginning of the 4th pre-season San
Francisco 49ers game by kneeling during the National Anthem instead (Branch, 2017). Although
Kaepernick has been widely criticized for taking a knee - accused of disrespecting the military
(2017) – it was a former active-duty Green Beret and former player for the NFL’s Seattle
Seahawks, Nate Boyer, who convinced Kaepernick to kneel instead of sit. Boyer explained in an
interview that the two of them (he and Kaepernick) met and discussed their differences of
opinions – Kaepernick wanted to sit and Boyer wanted him to stand. Boyer said he suggested
kneeling because he thought it was more respectful (Martin, 2018). Boyer further stated,

    In my opinions and in my experience, kneeling’s never been in our history really seen as a
disrespectful act. I mean, people kneel when they get knighted. You kneel to propose to
your wife, and you take a knee to pray. And soldiers often take a knee in front of a fallen
brother's grave to pay respects. So I thought, if anything, besides standing, that was the most respectful. (Martin, 2018, para. 12)

Following the 2012 NFL season – a losing season for the San Francisco 49ers, the coach and general manager were fired. Colin had a contract for the following year however his salary was not guaranteed unless he made the team. He did not believe that this would happen, so he ultimately opted out of his contract and became a free agent. He has not played in the NFL since, given that no other teams have been willing to hire him. Kaepernick has continued his activism outside of the spotlight and has donated money to several grass-roots organizations (Branch, 2017).

**Historical Social Justice Reformers**

This section provides biographical and historical information on historical social justice reformers: Muhammad Ali, John W. Carlos, Tommie C. Smith, Peter Norman, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks. This researcher included these individuals in the literature review because commenters compared Colin Kaepernick to them and to show the significance of Kaepernick being compared to these individuals and Kaepernick being hailed as a social justice reformer.

**Muhammad Ali**

Muhammad Ali was a boxing legend and was described by Schuppe (2016) as “the silver-tongued boxer and civil rights champion who famously proclaimed himself ‘The Greatest’ and then spent a lifetime living up to the billing” (para. 1).

Muhammad Ali was born in Louisville, Kentucky on January 17, 1942 and was given the name Cassius Marcellus Clay. He began boxing at the age of 12 and won Golden Gloves titles before winning a spot in the 1960 Olympics which were held in Rome. After winning the gold
medal in the light heavyweight division at the Olympics, he turned professional in the sport (Schuppe, 2016).

He often spoke in “verse” to eloquently describe himself, which earned him the nickname “the Louisville Lip” (Schuppe, 2016, para. 9). Ali would often gear himself up with famous lines such as, “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee” and after winning bouts would proclaim, “I am the greatest! I am the greatest! I’m the king of the world” (para. 12).

In an article entitled, “Muhammad Ali: 4 Ways He Changed America,” sports columnist Mike Rubin (2021) wrote:

The only things quicker than his fists and feet were his mind and mouth: Speaking truth to power, the loquacious Ali said things in a confrontational, even “arrogant” manner that mainstream America was not yet prepared to hear, especially coming out of the mouth of a young black man. (Rubin, 2021, para. 2)

Even the heavyweight champion of the world was not spared from racism; after being refused service at a soda fountain counter, he said he threw his Olympic gold medal into a river. Ali (who was still Cassius Clay at the time) retreated from the world of promoters and agents and turned instead to the Nation of Islam (NOI). In 1963, he converted from Christianity to Islam. Shortly after, he “renounced Cassius Clay as his ‘slave name’” (Schuppe, 2016, para. 13) and proclaimed that he would be henceforth called Muhammad Ali – a name given to him by Elijah Muhammad, founder of the NOI (Rubin, 2021; Schuppe, 2016).

Jonathan Eig is the author of Ali: A Life and a columnist for The Washington Post. In a perspective piece, Eig (2017) wrote, “Muhammad Ali’s conversion to Islam, in many ways, defined his career and legacy as a fighter with conviction. He went on to become an icon for American Muslims” (para. 1). According to Eig, Ali wrote a letter following an argument with
this wife, in which he wrote about “why” he joined the NOI. In this letter, Ali said that when he was just 12 years old, he was leaving a roller skating rink and was looking around for pretty girls. Instead of pretty girls, he spotted a man selling NOI new papers and he bought one to be polite. Ali was familiar with the group and knew they used elements of Islam to teach black separatism and self-improvement, but in the newspaper he noticed a cartoon in which a black slave was being beaten by his white slave owner; the owner was demanding that the slave “pray to Jesus” while he was beating him. This carried a powerful message for young Ali: the religion of Christianity was forced upon slaves by the white establishment. Ali wrote, “I liked that cartoon. It did something to me” (para. 10).

Ali’s became eligible for the draft when his draft status was reclassified in March 1966 (Rubin, 2021). Ali was outspoken about his conscientious objection of joining the military, and explained his objection,

My conscience won’t let me go shoot my brother, or some darker people, or some poor hungry people in the mud for big powerful America. And shoot them for what? They never called me nigger, they never lynched me, they didn’t put no dogs on me, they didn’t rob me of my nationality, rape and kill my mother and father. … Shoot them for what? How can I shoot them poor people? Just take me to jail. (Brown, 2018, para. 4; Rubin, 2021, para. 7).

In 1967, the war in Vietnam was raging on and hundreds of American soldiers were being killed. Meanwhile, conscientious objectors were leaving for Canada and draft cards were being burned by protesters. Ali did not want to flee to Canada, nor did he have any intention of joining the Army (Brown, 2018). However, Ali, now a Muslim convert, arrived at the Armed Forces Induction Center in Houston on April 28, 1967, but when they called his “given” name, Cassius
Clay, he refused to step forward. He was pulled from the line by a senior military officer who demanded to know if Ali understood the gravity of his actions. Ali assured him that he understood, and then a lieutenant repeated the request, “Mr. Cassius Clay, will you please step forward and be inducted into the United States Army” (Brown, 2018; Rubin, 2021). Ali did not budge and emerged from the center and gave the following statement:

It is in the light of my consciousness as a Muslim minister and my own personal convictions that I take my stand in rejecting the call to be inducted. … I find I cannot be true to my beliefs in my religion by accepting such a call. I am dependent upon Allah as the final judge of those actions brought about by my own conscience. (Brown, 2018, para. 14).

This cost Ali dearly as he was immediately stripped of his heavyweight title and his boxing license (Brown, 2018; Rubin, 2021). He was then convicted for the felony charge of “violating the Universal Military Training and Service Act” (Brown, para. 17) and sentenced to five years in prison (Brown, 2018; Rubin, 2021). Speaking to a crowd of college antiwar protesters, Ali said,

It has been said that I have two alternatives. Either go to jail or go to the army. But I would like to say that there is another alternative. And that alternative, that alternative is justice. And if justice prevails, I will neither go to the army, nor will I go to jail. (Brown, 2018, para. 18)

Ali’s conviction was eventually overturned in 1971. Although some found the decision surprising, the decision by the U.S. Supreme Court was unanimous (Brown, 2018).

Being stripped of his boxing license cost him dearly because he was in his prime; his decision to stand up for justice cost him three and a half years of participating in his sport – a
sport in which he was truly gifted – costing him untold millions. Ali’s boxing license was not restored until 1970, at which time he was 29 years old. Ali participated in two “tune-up” fights and then he attempted to regain his heavyweight title from Joe Frazier who was the new champion. Ali was ultimately knocked down by Frazier, who was declared the winner. Both fighters were sent to the hospital following the fight (Brown, 2018; Rubin, 2021). According to Brown (2018), Ali eventually defeated Frazier in 1974 and then went on to challenge the then-reigning champion, George Foreman. The fight was held in Zaire – now called the Congo – so the fight became known as the “Rumble in the Jungle” (Brown, 2018, para. 36). Ali sent Foreman to the canvas with a right hand to the chin in the eighth round. Quoting The Post, Brown (2018) wrote:

Mr. Ali’s knockout victory was considered almost miraculous and took on symbolic importance because it took place on African soil. It had been more than 10 years since Mr. Ali first won the title, and seven years since he relinquished it. When he reclaimed the heavyweight championship in such dramatic fashion, many observers considered it one of the most remarkable displays of endurance and boxing skill in history. (Para. 38)

Ali’s sacrifice cost him three and a half precious years during which he was unable to participate in his sport which left him in debt and caused him to fight way beyond the point of which he should have retired. Ali sustained many blows to his body and head which is now widely believed to have led to Ali getting Parkinson’s disease (Brown, 2018; Rubin, 2021).

For the last three decades of his life, Ali suffered from Parkinson’s disease which is a progressive neurological condition that had robbed Ali of his physical dexterity as well as his verbal grace (Schuppe, 2016). The slowing of his speech made it difficult to entertain fans so Ali
would instead invite people for religious discussions where he would compare the Bible to the Koran (Eig, 2017).

Following a 32-year battle with Parkinson’s Disease, Ali passed away on June 3, 2016, in a Phoenix, Arizona hospital where he was being treated for respiratory complications. Ali was 74 years old (Brown, 2018; Rubin, 2021; Schuppe, 2016).

Muhammad Ali’s never-ending fight for civil rights influenced and inspired others, including John Carlos and Tommie Smith who, in protest, raised their black fisted gloves on the medal stand at the 1968 Olympics (Rubin, 2021).

**Dr. John W. Carlos, Tommie C. Smith and Peter Norman**

In this section, this researcher has provided brief background information on the organization called Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR); background information on Dr. John W. Carlos and Tommie C. Smith who were both American track-and-field athletes in the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City; as well as background information on Australian track-and-field athlete, Peter Norman because all three of these athletes were medalists in the 200-meter dash competition. This section then describes the stand these athletes took for human rights, how it involved the OPHR organization and the consequences for the athletes (John Carlos 1968, 2020a, 2020b; Montague, 2012; Red, 2020; Rubin, 2021).

*Olympic Project for Human Rights.* According to the John Carlos 1968 webpage (2020b), the American organization called Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR) was established in October 1967 by Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos, as well as Harry Edwards and others. The leader of the organization, Dr. Harry Edwards was influenced by the Black Freedom struggle. The goal of the organization was to “expose how the US used black athletes to project a lie both at home and internationally” (John Carlos 1968, 2020b, para. 10; Montague, 2012).
Dr. John W. Carlos. Dr. John Carlos was born in Harlem, New York on June 5, 1945. Carlos was gifted athletically and earned a full track-and-field scholarship to study at East Texas State University (John Carlos 1968, 2020b). On his road to the Olympic Games, Carlos competed in 200-meter dash competition at the 1967 Pan Am Games in Manitoba and won the Gold medal. He then competed at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City where he won the Bronze medal (John Carlos 1968, 2020a).

Tommie C. Smith. Tommie C. Smith was born on June 6, 1944. Smith was part of the track-and-field team at San Jose State University where he set multiple records (John Carlos 1968, 2020b). Smith also competed in the 200-meter dash competition at the 1968 Olympic Games in Mexico City where he won the Gold medal (Red, 2020).

Peter Norman. Australian athlete, Peter Norman was born on June 15, 1942 and grew up in a suburb of Melbourne in Victoria (John Carlos 1968, 2020b). Norman was also a competitor at the 1968 Olympics in the 200-meter dash competition, along with Smith and Carlos; he won the Silver medal (John Carlos 1968, 2020b; Red, 2020).

Medal ceremony and their stand for justice. When these three athletes took the medal stand, they made world history when both Carlos and Smith appeared wearing only black socks on their feet and each raised a fist with a black glove – “a Black Power salute – to peacefully protest against racial injustice and inequality” (John Carlos 1968, 2020a; Montague, 2012; Red, 2020, para. 2). Their black-socked feet represented impoverished people who could not afford shoes and their black-gloved fists and bowed heads humbly reflected “the strength of the human spirit” (John Carlos 1968, 2020a, para. 3).

Australian athlete, Peter Norman showed his support by wearing an OPHR badge (John Carlos 1968, 2020a) however Norman was also protesting racial strife in his own country of
Australia, where there had been protests over the “White Australia” policy. This policy restricted immigration of non-whites and included legislation for removing Aboriginal children from their parents, giving them to white couples to raise (Montague, 2012).

In that moment, the three men were photographed for the entire world to see. The famous photograph was dubbed by Montague (2012) as “perhaps the most iconic sports photo ever taken” (para. 1).

Consequences and aftermath. According to Rubin (2021), the influence of Muhammad Ali could be felt in that moment – the moment when two African American athletes dared to make a statement by saying nothing – dared to make a statement about racial injustice by wearing only black socks on their feet and with bowed heads, raised their black-gloved fists in the air. And like Muhammad Ali, there were consequences for their actions; some were swift and immediate, while others lasted for years (John Carlos 1968, 2020a; Red, 2020; Wise, 2017). Smith and Carlos were immediately suspended from the United States team and were banned from the Olympic Village by Avery Brundage, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Conversely, Australian athlete, Peter Norman was not penalized by the IOC (John Carlos 1968, 2020a). The following day, both Carlos and Smith were expelled from the U.S. team and made to return home (John Carlos 11968, 2020a; Montague, 2012; Red, 2020).

In addition to financial losses for Carlos and Smith (Red, 2020), Carlos said that for the next ten years, his life was “hell”; Carlos lost not only friends, but also his marriage. Carlos said that his friends and spouse loved him but were scared that they would also be ostracized (Wise, 2017). More serious backlash came in the form of death threats against John Carlos and Tommie Smith and their families (John Carlos 1968, 2020a).
Matthew Norman is the nephew of Peter Norman and the director of the film called, “Salute!” that is film about Peter’s life. Although Peter Norman was not sanctioned or penalized by the IOC, Matthew said that Peter was hated as soon as he returned home. Wearing the OPHR badge effectively ended Peter’s career; to Australians, he was a pariah. Basically, he was given an unofficial sanction and was ridiculed as “the Black Power salute’s forgotten man” (Montague, 2012, para. 6; Red, 2020). Peter Norman was cut from Australia’s Olympic team that was set to compete in Munich in 1972; he never competed in the Olympic Games again (Montague, 2012; Red, 2020). According to Matthew, his Uncle Peter “suffered to the day he died” (2012, para. 9). Following the loss of his career in sports, Peter became a teacher and then later worked for the Victorian Department of Sport and Recreation. He passed away on October 3, 2006; unfortunately the Australian House of Representatives waited until October 11, 2012 to offer an official apology (John Carlos 1968, 2020b).

Carlos, Smith and Norman remained friends following their fateful meeting on the Olympian winners’ podium in Mexico City. When Norman passed away, both Carlos and Smith attended his funeral and gave the eulogy; they also served as pallbearers. Carlos said that Norman was “‘a lone soldier’ for his small but determined stand against racism” (Montague, 2012, para. 42). Smith said, “He paid the price. This was Peter Norman’s stand for human rights, not Peter Norman helping Tommie Smith and John Carlos out” (para. 43). “He just happened to be a white guy, an Australian white guy, between two black guys in the victory stand believing in the same thing” (Montague, 2012, para. 44).

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. was born in Atlanta, Georgia on January 15, 1929 (NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021) as Michael Luther King, Jr.; he had his name changed to Martin.
King attended segregated public schools and graduated at just 15 years old. He then enrolled at Morehouse College, “a distinguished Negro institution of Atlanta which both his father and grandfather had graduated” (NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021, para. 1) and earned his B.A. degree in 1948. King then studied at Crozer Theological Seminary located in Pennsylvania where he earned a B.D. (Bachelor of Divinity) in just three years, graduating in 1951. At Crozer, King was not only elected president of his senior class that was predominantly white, he also won a fellowship through which he enrolled at Boston University for graduate studies. King completed his doctoral residence in 1953 and his degree was conferred in 1955. It was in Boston where he met and married Coretta Scott; the couple had two daughters and two sons (NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021).

Martin Luther King was a strong activist for civil rights. In 1954, King became the pastor of a church in Montgomery, Alabama called the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church. King was also a member of the executive committee for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). In December 1955, King accepted the leadership role in the Montgomery bus boycott, a campaign by the African-American population to end forced segregation on busses (The King Center, n.d.; NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021). This was the first “great Negro nonviolent demonstration of contemporary times in the United States” (Nobel Peace Prize, 2021, para. 2). The boycott lasted just over a year – 382 days. Finally, on December 21, 1956, the U.S. Supreme Court declared that it was unconstitutional to require Negroes and whites to ride on separate buses. King emerged as a civil rights leader following the 382-day boycott, during which time King was subjected to much personal abuse, he was arrested and his home was bombed (Nobel Peace Prize, 2021).
King was elected as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957. The organization was formed to provide leadership to the growing civil rights movement. While King derived the ideals of the organization from Christianity, he derived its operational techniques from Gandhi (The King Center, n.d.; NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021).

From 1957 to 1968, King was at the forefront of the civil rights movement. During this time, King appeared wherever there was injustice, protest and action, traveling over six million miles and speaking more than 2,500 times (Nobel Peace Prize, 2021). He also led a massive protest in Birmingham, Alabama that was dubbed the “most segregated city in America” (The King Center, n.d., para. 6; NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021) at the time. This protest consisted of non-violent sit-ins throughout Birmingham that King organized while working closely with the NAACP and the SCLC (NAACP, 2021). Birmingham police responded violently to this non-violent protest and drew national attention as their actions of using pressurized water hoses and turning police dogs on young blacks were televised across the nation (The King Center, n.d.; NAACP, 2021). During this campaign, King was arrested and it was there that he wrote his famous, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” King also orchestrated the drives for the registration of Negroes as voters in Alabama as well as the peaceful march on Washington, D.C. of 250,000 people where he gave his “I Have a Dream” speech. King’s letter and speech are among “the most revered orations and writings in the English Language (The King Center, n.d., para. 3; NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021).

King was involved in politics: conferring with President John F. Kennedy and campaigning for President Lyndon B. Johnson. During this eleven-year period, King was assaulted at least four times and was arrested about 25 times, however, he was awarded five
honorary degrees, *Time* magazine named King, Man of the Year in 1963, and he became “not only the symbolic leader of American blacks but also a world figure” (Nobel Peace Prize, 2021, para. 3). In 1964, King became the youngest person to have received a Nobel Peace Prize; he was just 35 years old. King donated the prize money of $54,123 to further the civil rights movement (The King Center, n.d.; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021).

According to Polle (1990), “the voice of Martin Luther King, Jr. sounded a clarion call for peace and unity” among the “abrasive, violent rhetoric of socio-political upheaval in America” (para. 1). Dr. King led a nonviolent movement and drew his inspiration from the peaceful teachings of Mahatma Gandhi and Christianity. Instead of using violence like other freedom advocates, King utilized the power of speech and nonviolent resistance (E.g., protests, forming grassroots organizations and civil disobedience) to achieve goals that seemed impossible. King led other campaigns against international conflict and poverty, guided by his principles that “men and women everywhere, regardless of color or creed, are equal members of the human family” (The King Center, n.d., para. 2). The study by Polle (1990) entitled, “The nonviolent rhetoric of Martin Luther King, Jr.,” substantiated that King’s nonviolent method and peaceable philosophy for social change were influenced by personal philosophy, the Sermon on the Mount, Gandhi – and other factors – and attracted a large following and substantially contributed to significant political reform.

King paid the ultimate price for being an outspoken civil rights leader and leading the civil rights movement. In 1968, following about 13 years of civil rights leadership, King was set to lead a protest march in Memphis, Tennessee, in sympathy with garbage workers who were on strike. On April 4, 1968, while standing on the balcony of his hotel, King was tragically

**Rosa Parks**

Rosa Louise McCauley was born on February 4, 1913 in Tuskegee, Alabama (The King Papers Project, 1985) and grew up on a farm with mother, grandparents and brother. It was there that a young Rosa witnessed the Ku Klux Klan on their night rides and fearfully listened to lynchings that occurred near her home. Her family eventually moved to Montgomery where she attended school and became a seamstress. In 1932, Rosa married Raymond Parks who was a barber and a member of the NAACP (National Park Service, n.d.). In 1943, Rosa joined the local NAACP chapter and was elected secretary (The King Papers Project, 1985; National Park Service, n.d.; Theoharis, 2015). In her role as secretary, Parks traveled throughout Alabama and interviewed people who had been victims of discrimination and that were witnesses to lynchings (National Park Service, n.d.).

In deeply segregated Montgomery, Alabama, the bus system was segregated (The King Center, n.d.; NAACP, 2021; Nobel Peace Prize, 2021) and Parks who had served as the secretary for the Alabama State Conference of the NAACP for 12 years, boarded a bus and took a seat in the “white” section. A white businessman boarded after her and demanded that she move. Parks, who had witnessed many atrocities, had “had enough.” When she refused to move to the “black” section of the bus, the bus driver, who in previous incidents had just removed her from the bus, called the police instead. Parks was arrested and this was the fuel that started the great Montgomery Bus Boycott (The King Papers Project, 1985; National Park Service, n.d.).

During the 13-month boycott, Parks inspired tens of thousands of black citizens of Montgomery to boycott the bus system. During that time, she also coordinated transportation for
protestors. Parks, along with King and 80 other individuals, was indicted for participating in the boycott (The King Papers Project, 1985). Also, in the aftermath of the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Parks was fired from her tailoring job and was the recipient of death threats. She and her family moved to Detroit, Michigan hoping to find employment opportunities (The King Papers Project, 1985; National Park Service, n.d.).

According to Jeanne Theoharis (2015), professor of political science at Brooklyn College of CUNY and author of the award-winning book, “The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks,” remembering Rosa Parks as a “quiet seamstress” has “stripped her of her political substance” (para. 3). In a review of the “Rosa Parks Collection” – Parks’ personal papers, writings, speech notes, letters, financial and medical records, political documents and photos - that had been unavailable for years due to disputes over the distribution of her estate – Theoharis (2015) wrote that this collection reveals an activist who had spent a lifetime challenging white supremacy even before the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Parks wrote about the difficulties of navigating life in a segregated society and the refusal to normalize the ability to function in racist America.

Even though Parks relocated to Detroit, she continued to serve the NAACP and worked for congressman, John Parks from 1965-1988, assisting homeless persons find housing. In 1987, The Rosa and Raymond Parks Institute of Self-Development was established for the purpose of providing job training to black youths (The King Papers Project, 1985; National Park Service, n.d.). Parks was bestowed with the Congressional Gold Medal of Honor in 1999; the highest honor a U.S. civilian can receive. Additionally, an annual Rosa Parks Freedom award is sponsored annually by the SCLC (National Park Service, n.d.). Rosa Parks continued to support civil rights causes into her elder years (National Park Service, n.d.); she passed away on October 24, 2005 (The King Papers Project, 1985).
Organizations and Corporations

This section provides information on Black Lives Matter (BLM) and the National Football League (NFL). Information on BLM was provided because Colin Kaepernick is involved with this organization and this researcher believed it was important to provide background information for reference and relevance. Basic background information on the NFL was provided because the organization is a major subject-matter of Sally Jenkins’ (2020) article.

Black Lives Matter (BLM)

According to, Chelsea Fuller, who is a spokeswoman for the BLM movement, the core idea of the movement is that black lives are valuable (Del Real et al., 2020). The BLM movement began in 2012 following the killing of Trayvon Martin (Del Real et al., 2020; Hillstrom, 2018). Martin was only 17 years old and on February 26, 2012 was walking – unarmed – to his father’s house when he was shot and killed by neighborhood-watch coordinator, George Zimmerman (Graff, 2015) who was ultimately found “not guilty” for murder (Hillstrom, 2018).

Although the BLM movement began after the killing of Trayvon Martin, it further emerged and coalesced among demonstrations following the shooting death of an 18-year-old from Ferguson, Missouri, Michael Brown who was shot and killed by a white police officer (Del Real et al., 2020) and in response to multiple police killings of unarmed black citizens. The movement has developed into a force for racial justice in the United States (Hillstrom, 2018).

The National Football League (NFL)

The American Professional Football Association (APFA) was formed in September, 1920 in Dayton, Ohio (NFL, 2019). The APFA began with just 14 teams and first game was played in Rock Island, Illinois on September 26, 1920. The organization changed their name to The
National Football League (NFL) in 1922; the first president of the league was Jim Thorpe (Pro Football Hall of Fame, 2005). The NFL is an American professional football league that now (as of 2021) consists of 32 teams that are divided evenly between two divisions: the American Football Conference (AFC) and the National Football Conference (NFC) (NFL, 2021b).

**Summary of Chapter 2**

This study utilized Critical Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) as the research methodology in order to try to understand how the shifts in the dynamics of the discourse contained in an online discussion thread contribute to social conflict related to gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, or other large-scale social phenomena.

As research is intended to be flexible, this researcher was flexible in the selection of theories used to study this major communication and social issue. And, given that no major research has been conducted on the analysis of the discourse contained in online discussion threads, the research methodology itself remained fluid.

This chapter also provided a brief history and background information on several civil rights leaders – Muhammad Ali, Dr. John W. Carlos, Tommie C. Smith, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Rosa Parks – to provide readers with a better understanding of these individuals, their contributions to the civil rights movement, and the sacrifices they made for taking a stand against injustice. This researcher also provided brief information on Black Lives Matter (BLM), the Olympic Project for Human Rights (OPHR), and The National Football League (NFL) to provide readers with an understanding of why they are mentioned in the comments of the discussion thread.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This research project employed a qualitative study that utilized Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA). The researcher used RFA, as discussed by Dr. Ron Chenail (1995) because it was the best research tool and methodology by which to analyze the discourse contained in an online discussion thread. One of the reasons it was the appropriate methodology is that the data for this research is conversations (comments from a discussion thread) that are print narratives, and RFA was created for the purpose of studying conversations whether they are observed live in person, through recordings, or written transcripts.

Additionally, this researcher conducted a critical data analysis when analyzing the data through RFA, Goffman’s Framing Theory and Critical Race Theory. This portion of the methodology was designed by the researcher as analysis of the data progressed. Thus, the methodology is called Critical RFA.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research question(s):

1) Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used this discussion thread escalate conflict with those who respond? Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread de-escalate conflict with those who respond?

2) Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread contribute to conflict regarding race with those who respond?

3) What are the turning points in the conversation?
Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA)

According to Dr. Ron Chenail (1995), Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA) was created by Dr. Bradford Kenney as a method for “understanding and presenting conversations” (p. 1). RFA was later developed into a qualitative research tool by Dr. Ron Chenail for the purpose of analyzing “narratives, conversations, and other forms of discourse” (p. 1). RFA allows the researcher to conduct a sequential analysis through which they “note their perceptions of semantic shifts in a conversation” (p. 1).

According to James Paul Gee (2011), research methods and theories are tools that should be used flexibly to investigate taking into account “issues, problems, and contexts” (p. 11) and should be continually modified or transformed by the researcher to adapt to an ongoing study. This researcher utilized RFA in a flexible manner due to the fact that the researcher was investigating comments in a discussion thread, as opposed to the initial intended use of RFA, which was to analyze conversations of people in group therapy. Also, in the course of data analysis, the researcher found it advantageous to remain flexible in using RFA as a research tool because of the different types of data sets (single responses, one comment/ one response, short conversations, and long conversations). This researcher utilized steps one and two for single responses, then steps one and two, plus steps 3a and the second part of step 3b for the remainder data sets: one comment / one response, short conversations and long conversation.

Influenced by the work of Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman, RFA employs frames as the conceptual or cognitive views of the situation being analyzed. In the RFA system, the word frame is synonymous with context (Chenail, 1995). According to Adjei (2013), a person’s perception of a particular psychological phenomenon does not remain the same across time and/or different situations.
Context comes from the Middle English word "contextus," which means "coherence" or "sequence of words." The past participle of contextus is "contextere:" "to join together" or "to weave" (Chenail, 1995). According to Chenail, we build conversations by weaving words together to create context in conversations. Chenail postulated that “context does not cause that which is contextualized to have meaning; meaning is produced when the two—the context and the text, are brought together” (Chenail, 1995, p. 1). So, it is the actual joining of specifically chosen words through which contexts in conversation are built.

RFA employs a two-step process that Chenail (1995) compares to taking notes from reading an article:

1. First, see (read) the written words;
2. Then, note differences in the written words
   a. Notate frames (written words)
   b. Create galleries (words or groups of words that fit within a frame) (Chenail, 1995, p. 4).

By reading and re-reading the discourse contained in the selected discussion thread, this researcher utilized RFA in order to “present the logic of the narrative … at hand” (Chenail, 1995, p. 4) and offer details and analysis of the differences in the narrative conversation. RFA analysts attempt to uncover the “how” and “why” of conversations. Some examples of possible “where and why” [emphasis added] findings:

A. Where; and when does the content being discussed change?

B. Are questions answered?

C. Are answers questioned?
D. How does it make “sense” that one speaker says “X” after another says “Y” or vice versa?

Through RFA the researcher notated frames and created galleries from the conversations in the selected data. This was followed by a third step that is utilized when an RFA analyst utilizes RFA as a research tool. This is a key step to the process:

3. Draw up re-presentations or figures of speech to visualize how the conversation is taking place which may include some or all of the following: (Chenail, 1995, p. 5).
   a. Sequential analysis – chart the flow of conversation and notate when the conversation shifts from one chunking or gallery to another
   b. Notation of who is initiating conversational shifts and how this particular speaker is able to move the conversation from one gallery to another.

This particular shifting phenomenon is called “opening up closings” which Chenail (1995) borrowed from conversation analysis as described by Schegloff and Sacks in 1973. It basically means that “one gallery is opened up as another is closed down” (Chenail, 1995, p. 7).

**Semantic Shift Notations**

For step three of RFA, the researcher first presented the conversation (or section of conversation) which is then followed by an explanation of the semantic shift(s) in the conversation or lack thereof. These explanations are called “semantic shift notations” and include: (1) a description of the names of the galleries that the conversation switched from/to (i.e., The conversation switched from the Activists Praise/Support Gallery to the Activists Criticism Gallery); and (2) an explanation of how or why the conversation shifted from one talk gallery to another (or an explanation of why the conversation did not shift from one talk gallery to another).
When deciding the *how* or *why*, the researcher took several things into consideration, including: the language used in the comment that the user was responding to; the language used in the responding comment; and the language used in article written by Jenkins (2020).

**System for Determining Intention of Replies**

As part of the analysis process, the researcher wanted to determine whether or not a reply to a comment was “intended” to be a reply to the comment that preceded it. The researcher also wanted to determine whether or not a comment was intended to be a reply to this conversation at all (as such a reply would be considered to be “false” interactions within the thread). Additionally, the researcher wanted to determine if any comments were unrelated or out-of-context. This researcher developed the following procedures to make these determinations:

1. The researcher copied the data from the discussion thread to a Word document;
2. The researcher then created a .pdf of the discussion thread because copying it to Word did not keep the “levels” that showed who replied to who in the conversation;
3. Using the .pdf as a guideline, the researcher copied and pasted each comment of the conversation into an Excel spreadsheet; ensuring each comment was pasted into the appropriate column to mirror the indentations of the original conversation; then
4. While analyzing the data, the researcher evaluated whether or not it was logical that the responding comment was made in reply to the last comment made on the previous level (these comments would be considered “false” interactions within a thread);
5. The researcher took note if the comment began with another user’s username; indicating that was intended to be a reply to that person but the “reply” button was not used (these comments would be considered cross-comment interactions); and
6. The researcher took note if a comment appeared to be out-of-context (these comments would be considered “random”).

**Critical Data Analysis**

During the data analysis phase of this study, the researcher recognized that it would be beneficial to the study, and provide a deeper meaning of the findings to analyze the data critically by considering external factors that may have contributed to the language used in these conversations. The researcher developed a procedure that began by reading Sally Jenkins’ (2020) article several times to ensure a good understanding of the content, the language used and meaning. Each time, the researcher also paid special attention to links embedded in the article that were headlines of current events at the time the article was written. As the researcher analyzed the data, she would frequently refer back to the article for language use and embedded stories for analysis of possible relevance to the language used by commenters. This was followed by a careful analysis of the language used by commenters, including punctuation, words in all caps or emoji’s. This was followed by periods of reflection, after which the researcher drew up her findings. These analyses can are presented in chapter four.

**Museums – Taking RFA a Step Further**

In order to provide a powerful visual of the findings as related to the “two knees” analogy described by Sally Jenkins (2020) in the first paragraph of her article, this researcher took RFA a step further and chunked (Chenail, 1995) galleries into museums. This step was taken to present and discuss the findings in a manner that showcases the issues discovered in the data.

Because museums display galleries of artwork that can represent periods of history, this researcher decided to display galleries of comments in two museums called, “Knee in the Grass Museum” and “Knee to the Neck Museum.” These museum names were chosen based on the
language Sally Jenkins (2020) used in her article to describe Colin Kaepernick’s knee of protest in the grass and Derek Chauvin’s knee on George Floyd’s neck. In order to choose galleries – or data – that was appropriate for each museum, this researcher considered whether or not the language used in each comment considered for the museums, reflected the choice of support for the knee of protest in the grass or the knee on George Floyd’s neck that ultimately killed him. This process consisted of reading the comment(s) several times followed by a period of reflection before a decision was made. After the decision(s) were made, this researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) the galleries of comments into the appropriate museum. This display of the two museums is preceded by an explanation and can be found in chapter four.

**System for Naming Galleries**

The researcher developed a system for naming galleries. This system included the following:

1. The researcher read the article written by Jenkins (2020) again;
2. The researcher then read the entire conversation through 2-3 times;
3. The researcher then read each comment individually 2 times;
4. The researcher chose a gallery name based on the words and/or language use contained in the individual comment and/or the subject matter and/or language used in Jenkins (2020) article;
5. The researcher repeated step 3 with each comment until all comments with that particular conversation had a gallery name;
6. The researcher re-read the entire conversation from beginning to end to ensure each comment was appropriately labeled with a gallery name.
Avatar Analysis

To ensure consistency in the analysis of the Avatar profiles, this researcher developed the following protocol. In order to determine whether a user’s profile picture should be classified as an Avatar, a photograph or a plain binary human silhouette:

1. A profile picture was classified as an Avatar if it met any of the following criteria: (a) it was a cartoon; or (b) it appeared to be artwork whether it was drawn, painted or created digitally.

2. A profile picture was classified as a Photograph if it met the following criteria: (a) it was a photograph.

3. A profile picture was classified as being a Plain Binary Human Silhouette if it contained a plain binary human silhouette.

The researcher would like to note that the photographs utilized by users in this discussion thread were extremely small. The researcher made every effort to determine if the microscopic files contained an actual photograph or an object that would be considered artwork.

Furthermore, the researcher developed the following protocol to determine whether a user’s screenname should be classified as a pseudonym or as containing a full or partial name that could be considered a “given” full or partial name. Following the process of identifying and labeling profile pictures as an Avatar, Photograph or Plain Binary Human Silhouette, the researcher compiled a complete list of usernames along with a description of their profile picture in an Excel spreadsheet:

1. The researcher observed/read each screenname individually; and then

2. Based on the letters, words and/or numbers contained in the screen name, the researcher made a decision whether the screenname should be classified as a
pseudonym or as a possible full or partial “given” name. (E.g., “1fasthoo”,
“pacificloon”, “icedandstirred”, “TheDarkLord” and “j24w” were classified as pseudonyms; while “AdamSmith2”, “Daphne Duck”, “Luscius James”,
“wayne2861” and “Nina in Boulder” were classified as being a full or partial name that could be considered a full or partial “given” name).

The researcher used the information compiled from this data in the section on Social Identity Theory in chapter four. The researcher also used this information to create Table 6 – Profile Photo and Username Demographics.

**Data Selection**

The rationale for this data selection was that the data were obtained from a discussion thread in response to a publication related to relevant issues in our society. The rationale for this data selection is further demonstrated by the fact that the original set of data I had intended to use was from user comments in a discussion thread that were posted in response to a headline released immediately after the very controversial event of Colin Kaepernick, quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers, kneeling for the National Anthem on August 26, 2016. The article was entitled, “Colin Kaepernick refuses to stand for national anthem to protest police killings.” This story was written by Marissa Payne (2016) and was published in the *Washington Post* on August 27, 2016. However, the comments posted in response to this story are no longer available so this researcher selected user comments posted in response to the story entitled, “After Colin Kaepernick complaint, Nike reportedly pulls shoe with ‘Betsy Ross flag’ design.” This story was written by Des Bieler and Matt Bonesteel (2019) and was published on the *Washington Post* website on July 2, 2019.
This researcher read through the comments on both of the aforementioned articles and unfortunately, Colin Kaepernick’s silent, peaceful protest mostly fell on deaf ears. Kaepernick was highly criticized for kneeling for the national anthem and was again condemned by many for Nike’s decision to not sell the Betsy Ross flag design shoes. Many users that commented on these stories completely disregarded Kaepernick’s intended message and instead focused on the kneeling for the national anthem, his athletic abilities (or lack thereof) and the Betsy Ross flag design.

The event of George Floyd, an unarmed black man, being killed by Minneapolis policeman, Derek Chauvin (Forliti & Sullivan, 2020), who was caught on video kneeling on Floyd’s neck, demonstrated the continuing issue of unarmed black men being killed by white police officers. This was the very issue that Colin Kaepernick sought to protest by kneeling for the national anthem. Due to Floyd being killed, subsequent articles about Colin Kaepernick were published. Therefore, the data that was ultimately selected is user comments from the discussion thread in response to the article entitled, “This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee”, a perspective piece written by Sally Jenkins (2020), a sports columnist for The Washington Post.

Due to the recent event of an unarmed black man named George Floyd being killed by Minneapolis policeman, Derek Chauvin, who was caught on video kneeling on Floyd’s neck (Forliti & Sullivan, 2020), the BLM movement staged protests around the nation to protest police killings of unarmed black people. According to Del Real et al. (2020), “Americans have turned out for what researchers are calling the most sweeping and sustained protests in the country’s history, with demonstrations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia over two weeks” (para. 8).
These events led to writers to publish more articles about Colin Kaepernick, again thrusting him into the spotlight following another unarmed black man being killed by a white police officer. This provided this researcher with a plethora of data. Therefore, as aforementioned, this researcher chose to analyze the discourse contained in a discussion thread of user comments posted in response to a story entitled, “This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee,” written by columnist, Sally Jenkins (2020) with *The Washington Post*. Sally’s perspective piece begins with the following statement:

Two knees. One protesting in the grass, one pressing on the back of a man’s neck.

Choose. You have to choose which knee you will defend. There are no half choices; there is no room for indifference. There is only the knee of protest or the knee on the neck.

(Jenkins, 2020, para. 1)

George Floyd was killed on May 25, 2020 (Hill et al., 2020); Jenkins’ (2020) article was published “just five days later” [emphasis added] on May 30, 2020. Even though there were multiple witnesses and there is video-proof of Floyd’s murder, the discourse contained in the discussion thread in response to Jenkins’ (2020) straight-forward article provided this researcher with data that is replete with conflict regarding Floyd’s death, police policy, racism, politics, call for reform, the NFL’s decision to not re-sign Colin Kaepernick, his athletic abilities, Colin Kaepernick’s peaceful protest to the killing of unarmed black people, as well as the peaceful protests of other social justice reform leaders.

**Sampling Strategy**

Data samples (online user responses) were obtained from the discussion thread in response to the article entitled, “This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee”, a perspective piece written by Sally Jenkins (2020), a columnist for *The Washington Post*. Data contain
approximately 2,700 comments which were analyzed using Recursive Frame Analysis until data saturation was reached. This researcher took a sampling of data from four different types of responses: single responses, one comment / one response, three short conversations, and one long conversation. This data was chosen after the researcher read and re-read thousands of user comments.

**Ethics and Trustworthiness**

It was important for this researcher to be constantly mindful of ethical considerations throughout the entire research process. Ethical conflicts can arise prior to data collection, during the beginning of data collection, as well as during collection, data analysis, and data reporting, and publishing (Creswell, 2013). Given that this study was discourse analysis of printed data that is available on the World Wide Web (user comments in a discussion thread in response to a headline, posted by individuals using an Avatar and/or a pseudonym) most of the ethical considerations were related to data analysis, data reporting, and publishing the study.

According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), ethical issues can arise from using documents and artifacts. Marshall and Rossman challenged the researcher to consider ways in which analysis or writing may denigrate the producers of the document. In what way can it denigrate them? Can publishing the study produce negative effects for the researcher?

According to Creswell (2013), trustworthiness is like validation. Marshall and Rossman (2011) opine that it is important to follow procedures (specific to the type of study) in order to ensure usefulness and rigor of a qualitative study. Some of these include: engaging in reflexivity; developing an audit trail; search for discrepant evidence, and solicit feedback from strangers as well as those you know. In consideration of these research guidelines as well as researcher bias
as discussed by Stake (1995), the researcher shared a reflexive personal biography which discusses ethical and political considerations in the section entitled, Researcher Bias.

**Researcher Bias**

It was important for this researcher to remain conscious of researcher bias (Stake, 1995). There are experiences from this researcher’s background that could have possibly affected the researcher’s ability to remain neutral while interpreting the discourse contained in the discussion thread in response to the news release published in *The Washington Post,* “This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee,” written by columnist, Sally Jenkins (2020).

First, this researcher was raised in an extremely racist environment. Even as a small child, this researcher recognized that the treatment and views of people of color by the adults in her life were grossly wrong and unfair. As she grew into adulthood, she recognized the things she had been taught were completely unfounded and had no rational basis. At 18 years of age, through a conversation with a grandparent, she realized that racism was passed along to each new generation through words and actions, due to some comments made by the grandparent. In that moment, she decided to begin immediately working on herself to heal her heart, mind and soul from the poison she had absorbed and been fed all her life. Although she is now a completely different person from that 18-year-old girl, this researcher ensured that nothing from her upbringing skewed the interpretation of the data.

Second, this researcher is a very patriotic person. She has always stood for our National Anthem regardless of place or circumstance: at ball games (which is easy because the announcer asks everyone to stand and remove their hats for the singing of our National Anthem), but also in unconventional places such as restaurants and the movies (when they used to play the National Anthem at theatres before the start of movie). Her impulse to stand wherever she is/was,
especially at the movies while on dates as a teenager, often resulted in her not getting asked out by the person again, but she did not allow this to bother her.

In the wake of Colin Kaepernick refusing to stand for the National Anthem in order to protest police killings of black people, there has been a flood of hate messages, online comments and conversations, and memes where people “demand” that everyone stand for the national anthem or else…they can leave our country, be shot in the knee, or be killed. However, it has been the personal experience of this researcher that when she stands in restaurants, in bars, at the movies, or outside her car, that not ONCE EVER has anyone else stood with her, and when she sees all of these postings of Americans demanding that everyone “stand for the national anthem”, it makes her angry because she has always stood alone in “unconventional” places (“I Stand Alone”, see Appendix B). The most recent time this happened was ON veteran’s day, November 11, 2019, while eating dinner at a sports bar in southwest Florida. At the beginning of Monday Night Football, there was a huge presentation of the American Flag on the field, a military jet flyover and then a soldier sang our national anthem. An even though Facebook was flooded with “respect our flag” and “you WILL stand for our anthem” posts all day long, once again, she stood alone!

Even though this researcher is very patriotic, she has great respect and admiration for Colin Kaepernick for the stand he took against racial injustice by kneeling down. This researcher has often wondered what was going through his mind as he went to his knee. Was his heart racing? Did he think of backing out to save his career? In reality, Colin could have just continued to sit quietly on the bench behind the other players during the playing of the national anthem and maybe no one would have ever noticed. But he didn’t; he stuck his neck out for injustice.
Racial upbringing, personal patriotism, and admiration for Colin Kaepernick are some of the things this researcher kept in mind while analyzing the discourse contained in the comments of the discussion thread. This was important to ensure that these things did not skew the results of the study.

**Avatar / Pseudonym Identity Protection**

The researcher also took into consideration the issue of whether or not her research may or may not bring harm or repercussions to the persons posing with the use of an Avatar and/or a pseudonym to post comments in this discussion thread. In this consideration, the researcher would like to note that these comments were available to the public on the World Wide Web for a period of at least a year; they have since been removed as the publication only retains user comments for a specified period of time. Second, as part of the data analysis, this researcher compiled basic information about the screennames chosen by the users, as well as profile pictures. The majority of the commenters created a Pseudonym (screenname) using a combination of random letters and/or numbers, while a few created a Pseudonym that utilized a full or partial name that could potentially be a full or partial “given” name. Even in instances when a Pseudonym contained full or partial names that could be considered full or partial given names, it is not possible to know whether or not that is the actual name of the user.

Additionally, this researcher noted that there were three basic types of profile pictures used by this group of commenters: Avatars, microscopic photographs and a simple non-binary outline of a humanoid form. “Avatars are graphical self-representations in a computer-mediated environment that can reveal social information in an otherwise cue-limiting setting” (Blascovich et al., as quoted by Palomares & Lee, 2009, pp. 4-5). The Avatar profile pictures were a variety of items, as well as the photographs. In some photographs, there were human(s); all of these
were too small for identification to be possible. The majority of commenters in this group utilized the simple non-binary outline of a humanoid form. Taking into these things into consideration (public forum; Pseudonyms for user names; Pseudonyms are not presented in findings; comments have been removed from website; and the use of Avatars, microscopic photographs and plain human silhouettes for profile pictures), it is the belief of this researcher that this research project will not result in any negative repercussions to any of the commenters.

**Limitations of the Study**

It was important for the researcher to understand that every study has limitations in order to avoid making sensational claims about conclusions and applicability (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

One of the most important factors of *limitations* is context or frames. Given that this study examined the discourse contained in the comments in an online discussion thread in response to a perspective piece:

1. The context was influenced by the environment (the online platform);
2. The subject matter and language used in the perspective piece (This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee, Jenkins, 2020); and
3. That the commenters were human beings that utilized an Avatar and/or a pseudonym to engage in conversation so there was no way to determine whether a user was engaging in conversation(s) using more than one online profile.

Another limiting factor of this study was that *context* that was influenced by current events at the time the comments were posted:

1. Another black man had been murdered by a white police officer;
2. Protests were organized throughout the United States;
3. Rioting happened at some of the protest locations; and

4. The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic had just begun.

Other limitations to this study include:

1. This research project explored only one discussion thread in response to one specific article; and

2. Although the researcher created a system for determining intention of replies, utilizing this system did not guarantee that other users did not post “false” interactions within the discussion threads; or engage in cross-comment interactions.

Contribution to the Field of Conflict Resolution

The researcher entered into this research project making no assumptions or suppositions as to what information this study would bring. Rather, she heeded the advice of James Paul Gee (2011) who posited that research methods and theories are tools that should be used flexibly to investigate taking into account “issues, problems, and contexts” (p. 11) and should be continually modified or transformed by the researcher to adapt to an ongoing study.

This researcher entered into this study without making assumptions related to findings, but as anticipated, this study provided information that can be used by conflict resolutionists to potentially guide conversations away from disintegration. The findings of this study also exhibit that those that choose to engage in peaceful protests often suffer terrible and tragic consequences. Sometimes these peaceful protests result in policy changes, however the findings exhibit that these changes are not enough.

The contributions to the field of conflict resolution are:

- To this researcher’s knowledge:
  - This is the first study to use Recursive Frame Analysis as the methodology.
It is the first study of the discourse contained in an online discussion thread in response to a news story.

- The findings serve to fill the gap in existing literature related to social and cultural conflict that arises in online discussion threads where people utilize an Avatar and/or pseudonym.
- This study serves to fill the gap in existing literature related to technology, communication, language and online discussion threads that are not academic in nature.
- This study shows that peacekeepers, educators and social justice reformers should remain ever-vigilant and seek ways to continuously bring about policy change and reform.

Note: In order to provide readers and those that seek to make a difference, a framework for the findings of the data, this researcher has provided full text of the article entitled, “This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee” by Sally Jenkins (2020) in Appendix C.
Chapter 4: Findings

This research project employed a qualitative study that utilized Critical Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA). The researcher used RFA, as discussed by Dr. Ron Chenail (1995) because it was the best research tool and methodology by which to analyze the discourse contained in an online discussion thread. One of the reasons it was the appropriate methodology is that the data for this research is conversations (comments from a discussion thread) that are print narratives, and RFA was created for the purpose of studying conversations whether they are observed live in person, through recordings, or written transcripts. RFA is grounded in the works of Gregory Bateson and Erving Goffman in that data – conversations – are analyzed through frames or context. According to Chenail (1995), “context does not cause that which is contextualized to have meaning; meaning is produced when the two–the context and the text, are brought together” (para. 5). During the data analysis phase of this study, the researcher recognized that it would be beneficial to the study, and provide a deeper meaning of the findings to analyze the data critically by considering external factors that may have contributed to the language used in these conversations: thus, the methodology is called Critical RFA.

In order to complete this research project, the researcher analyzed four types of data sets. The data findings are presented in four sections: Section I: Single Responses; Section II: One Comment/One Response; Section III: Three Short Conversations; and Section IV: Long Conversation. In accordance with Gee’s (2011) opinion that research methods and theories are tools that should be used flexibly, this researcher utilized RFA in a flexible manner as appropriate for each data set. This researcher utilized steps one and two for single responses, then steps one and two, plus steps 3a and the second part of step 3b for the remainder data sets: one comment / one response, short conversations and long conversation. This research project
provides an excellent demonstration of the RFA methodology and its flexibility. The researcher conducted data analysis for each data set until data saturation was reached.

Section I - Single Responses

The first data set contains single responses that were directed to the author, Sally Jenkins (2020) or were made as a general response to the content of the article. There were no responses to these comments that would allow for a sequential analysis through which to notate the researcher’s perception of semantic shifts (Chenail, 1995, p. 5), so this researcher utilized the first two steps of RFA which Chenail (1995) compared to taking notes from reading an article: (1) See (read the written words; and (2) Note the differences in the written words. Step two consists of two parts: (a) Notate frames (written words); and (b) Create galleries (words of groups of words that fit within a frame) (Chenail, 1995, p. 4).

This researcher believed it was important to include these single replies in this study to notate the differences in the words chosen to respond to the author and content. It should be noted that some of these responses may have been intended to be a reaction to another commenter’s post however given that the “reply” button was not utilized; these comments did not appear as a reply but as a single comment.

Description of Data and Methodology for Single Responses

There were 473 “single responses” in the discussion thread and they were posted by 433 commenters. Using RFA as described by Dr. Ron Chenail (1995) this researcher achieved data saturation with 270 of the 473 comments. Then using the system for naming galleries developed by this researcher, this researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) the data (comments or portions of comments) into ten categories of galleries. A description and rationale is provided at the
beginning of each gallery. [See Table 3 for complete list of galleries for the Single Responses data].

Using the system designed by this researcher for determining intention of replies, one comment was identified as being “random” and could be considered a “false” interaction within the thread (“Influenza” is “spiderl”). This system also allowed the researcher to identify five comments posted by a singular user that appeared to have been intended for other users instead of Sally Jenkins. Each of these comments started with the username of another user that participated in the conversation followed by a similar message (I.e., “SMH IGNORED”).

**Description of Commenters for Single Responses**

As heretofore mentioned, the 473 single responses in this discussion thread were posted by 433 commenters. The information contained in this section, Description of Commenters for Single Responses, is not offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. Using the protocol designed by this researcher for Avatar analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and basic information about these commenters was compiled and is offered in the following three paragraphs. The relevance of these findings will be expanded upon in Chapter 5, Discussion of Findings.

Twenty-four of the 433 commenters utilized an Avatar for their profile picture; three of these were indistinguishable, three were cartoons, while the remaining 18 were Avatars depicting items such as an alligator, a Celtic cross, minions, a purple fluffy ball, and a skull with wings, Sylvester the Cat and other items. Nine of the commenters who utilized an Avatar chose a screensname or pseudonym that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be
categorized as a full or partial “given” name, while the remaining 15 chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

Eighty of the 433 commenters utilized a photograph for their profile picture: 12 of these photographs were blank, 17 were humans (male, female or indistinguishable); 19 were things from nature (beach, birds, bobcat, cats, dogs, the earth, flowers, landscapes, mountains, trees and a white fox); 10 are indistinguishable; and the remaining 22 are photographs of various things (“vote” buttons, Airborne logo, baseball emblem, a bicycle, a guitar, a map, a military flag and a vehicle, and other various items). Twenty-eight of the commenters who utilized a photograph for their profile picture chose a screenname or pseudonym that contains a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial given name. The remaining 52 chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers. The researcher would like to note that the photographs that contained humans (male, female or indistinguishable) were too small for any identification to be made.

Three hundred and twenty-nine of the 433 commenters utilized a simple human silhouette as their profile picture. Ninety-seven of the commenters who utilized a simple human silhouette as their profile picture chose a screenname or pseudonym that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial given name. The remaining 232 chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

**Galleries for Single Response**

The ten sets of galleries presented in this section showcase 270 responses that were condensed from a total of 473 single responses. Listing all 473 responses would have been redundant so this researcher condensed the responses at the point that data saturation was reached.
To the Author – Different Reactions Galleries

The first set of galleries presented contains responses to the author, Sally Jenkins. These galleries showcase the “differences” in reactions to the content of her perspective piece. The researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) these responses into the galleries of: Agreement, Religious Affirmation, Physical Reactions, Truth and Disagreement / Criticism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the Author Agreement</th>
<th>To the Author Religious Affirmation</th>
<th>To the Author Physical Reactions</th>
<th>To the Author Truth</th>
<th>To the Author Disagreement / Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bang on!</td>
<td>Amen</td>
<td>This piece stopped me cold. I get nauseated every time I see the video of the officer murdering George Floyd</td>
<td>So true</td>
<td>…decline of sports reporting; articles like this is one reason why.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bingo Sally.</td>
<td>Bless You</td>
<td>Your column made me cry</td>
<td>Thank you for speaking the truth to power</td>
<td>A very unfortunate small percentage of tragedies for the thousands of peaceful interactions by our Police on a daily basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boom!</td>
<td>God Bless You</td>
<td>One of the most moving articles on the issue</td>
<td>Wow, Sally! The truth has never been told more clearly or succinctly!</td>
<td>Bovine scatology!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exactly correct</td>
<td>Preach</td>
<td>Standing up and cheering</td>
<td>yay to Sally Jenkins for stating the truth</td>
<td>Silly Sally. Sigh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exactly right</td>
<td>Sing it, sister</td>
<td>Thought-provoking, sensible, and fluent</td>
<td></td>
<td>That is the silliest, nay stupidest thing ever written in the Post … wow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I could not agree more</td>
<td>Your poetic, inspired words made ME weep.</td>
<td></td>
<td>WaPo articles are becoming less and less informative.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nailed it</td>
<td>Weping.</td>
<td></td>
<td>When you proclaim an either/or to a concern as complex [sic] as the human and societal relationships between groups of people, you diminish the power of Colin's kneeling for the anthem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right on the money</td>
<td>It does make me weep. It also makes me sick with anger.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Jenkins has thrown a touchdown pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spot on</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very true</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wow - tell it Sally!!</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To the Author – Content, Two Knees and Writing Style Galleries

The second set of galleries presented also contains responses to Sally Jenkins. These galleries showcase the differences in the words commenters chose to comment on: the “content,” the two knees analogy and her “writing style.” These single reply comments contain words of praise, responses to the “two knees” analogy and observations about her writing style. These galleries are entitled: Content, Two Knees Analogy and Writing Style.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the Author</th>
<th>To the Author</th>
<th>To the Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td><strong>Two Knees Analogy</strong></td>
<td><strong>Writing Style</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing article</td>
<td>A clever device</td>
<td>Beautifully stated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best sports writing ever</td>
<td>Best encapsulation of this situation</td>
<td>Beautifully written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the best</td>
<td>Excellent perspective</td>
<td>Eloquent analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant article; a great testament</td>
<td>It can't be said any better or clearer than this!</td>
<td>This is so eloquent!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant journalism; compelling and irrefutable</td>
<td>More than a metaphor</td>
<td>Very eloquent!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant; Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Sally Jenkins leveled up sports writing by opening with this statement. Great work.</td>
<td>Most eloquent defense of Kaepernick I have read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Column of the century</td>
<td>Spot on analogy</td>
<td>Thank you for your eloquence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep thoughts</td>
<td>Striking parallelism</td>
<td>Excellent thoughts expressed well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Perspective piece</td>
<td>Succint [sic]. Powerful.</td>
<td>Excellent at organizing thoughts and presenting a logical, coherent argument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explains what is happening so well</td>
<td>Such a nuanced take on America's racial problem.</td>
<td>Outstanding writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantastic column</td>
<td>Superb analysis</td>
<td>Superbly written piece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impressive column; words resonate, are appropriate</td>
<td>That says it all. Well done.</td>
<td>Timely, well-written, and poignant article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good article</td>
<td>The framing … is perfect</td>
<td>Poignant and intelligently written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great essay</td>
<td>Tremendous lede [sic]</td>
<td>Very poignant; well thought out and written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hell of an essay</td>
<td>Two knees is right</td>
<td>Well done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finest essay</td>
<td>Which knee</td>
<td>Well written</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perfectly on point</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Powerful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulitzer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Something…to think about</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well stated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wonderful piece</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wow</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To the Author – Compliments and Thanks Gallery

The third set of galleries is another “to the author” series and contains more responses to Sally Jenkins. This set of galleries showcases words chosen by commenters to compliment her personally or offer words of thanks. These galleries are called: Personal Compliments and Words of Thanks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the Author Compliments &amp; Thanks Galleries</th>
<th>To the Author Compliments</th>
<th>To the Author Words of Thanks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sally Jenkins is the soul of sport; of character</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Thank you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant writer; highly moral</td>
<td>Thank you for finding the words</td>
<td>Thank you for this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant</td>
<td>Thank you for this</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent</td>
<td>Thank you for this apt and timely reminder</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Dad would be very proud</td>
<td>Thank you for this brilliant essay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Jenkins, you have a gift</td>
<td>Thank you for your courage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beautiful mind SJ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Identity Galleries

The fourth set of galleries is about identity and includes comments where commenters chose to identify themselves by ethnicity or professional relationship. These comments are showcased in the galleries of: Professing to be White and Military.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity Galleries</th>
<th>Identity Professing to be White</th>
<th>Identity Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a white man…</td>
<td>As a person from a military family…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Believe it or not, I'm white.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even as a nobody white man, I've been …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a 64 year old white woman…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a white liberal upper middle class female…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a white woman in her 70's and these attitudes are shocking to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a white woman…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm an 81 year-old white woman…</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I'm an old white guy and even I can see the racial injustice.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White as white can be here, I kneel with Colin and nothing can change that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pandora’s Box Galleries

The fifth set of galleries is about opening Pandora’s Box. These comments are presented in the galleries of: Status of America and Racism. Commenters’ remarks encapsulate different aspects of both categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora’s Box Galleries</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box Galleries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pandora’s Box</strong></td>
<td><strong>Status of America</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A murder on video capsulized 200 years of human tragedy and suffering born of unconscionable violence. We are not at a crossroads we face a day of reckoning.</td>
<td>America remains such a color-blind society - in all the wrong ways, it seems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a nation of immigrants we should all be ashamed of what we do to each other.</td>
<td>Black Americans still have better lives than Black Africans. All Americans are lucky to be here regardless of how they got here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalism rules all in America</td>
<td>Endemic racism … Systemic and structural racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far too many people in this country don’t want peace, just quiet.</td>
<td>Excellent article calling out NFL owners racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If only America had listened…. :(</td>
<td>High tech lynching … George Floyd suffered an actual lynching … We are all complicit until we demand an end to racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are millions of little Trumps, all over the country</td>
<td>I would like to think the human race will evolve enough so that racism ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The authoritarianism in America is sickening and I'm glad the whole world is watching.</td>
<td>Know your rights is important but not nearly as important as breaking down walls, stereotypes, and hate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism is so American that when someone protests against racism, people think they’re protesting against America. CK found that out.</td>
<td>Pence, in his white privileged, somber, holier than thou way states he is all for peaceful protests. Yet he was the first to condemn Colin Kaepernick for taking a knee to bring attention to police brutality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is about a government and a culture of the very wealthy who will do anything to make sure they don't lose a dime of their profits.</td>
<td>Powerfully righteous condemnation of the blood-sucking, wealthy hypocrites who would isolate and marginalize a brave man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfortunately, in this country, it is way better to be rich and guilty than poor and innocent.</td>
<td>Promote those who … learn to compensate for racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We live in a rotten racist country with a large number of ignorant mean people.</td>
<td>Racism is everyone's problem and anyone who is unwilling to adress [sic] it is a coward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We should all take a knee in mourning for our country and the police state it's become.</td>
<td>Racism is ingrained in a lot of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism is like an STD. It don’t [sic] get fixed until you stop/change the behavior and get a cure.</td>
<td>Racism is like an STD. It don’t [sic] get fixed until you stop/change the behavior and get a cure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism will tear this country apart</td>
<td>Racism will tear this country apart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sound law enforcement doesn't have to involve racism and excessive force</td>
<td>Sound law enforcement doesn't have to involve racism and excessive force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural racism … Systemic racism</td>
<td>Structural racism … Systemic racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cruel way that Mr. Kaepernick was treated for protesting by kneeling, showed exactly how racist many are.</td>
<td>The cruel way that Mr. Kaepernick was treated for protesting by kneeling, showed exactly how racist many are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the harvest of decades of injustice is anger, violence, and distrust</td>
<td>the harvest of decades of injustice is anger, violence, and distrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NFL decided to appease [sic] its white racist base in a sport mostly populated by wealthy African American athletes.</td>
<td>The NFL decided to appease [sic] its white racist base in a sport mostly populated by wealthy African American athletes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To [sic] much of white America, to be nonwhite is un-American</td>
<td>To [sic] much of white America, to be nonwhite is un-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you think would happen to black lawyers if every time they went to court, they took a knee when the bailiff asked that they &quot;All rise for the Honorable Judge ...&quot;?</td>
<td>What do you think would happen to black lawyers if every time they went to court, they took a knee when the bailiff asked that they &quot;All rise for the Honorable Judge ...&quot;?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;White racists don't like peaceful protests or violent protests or any protests.</td>
<td>&quot;White racists don't like peaceful protests or violent protests or any protests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Response to Content – Different Perspectives Galleries**

The sixth set of galleries showcases the ways in which commenters chose different perspectives or issues to focus on in their responses. These single reply comments are presented in the Galleries of: Indifference, Call for Reform, Constitutional Rights and George Floyd. These four aspects are just a few of the events, perspectives and realities that contributed to context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Content Indifference</th>
<th>Response to Content Call for Reform</th>
<th>Response to Content Constitutional Rights</th>
<th>Response to Content George Floyd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is not simply looking the other way. At its heart, it is the inability to see yourself in the shoes of another.</td>
<td>If we cannot agree to address injustice impacting minority children, we will never agree to help minority adults.</td>
<td>He was doing what every American has the right to do; it is our most precious right…if we take it away from one American, then we risk taking it away from all of us</td>
<td>Chauvin and Floyd worked at the same nightclub...This was a premeditated “hit” and all the cops look dirty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The result of indifference, evasion and avoidance, of stoppered ears and shaded eyes, is not benign.</td>
<td>The system and culture must change so that the good cops are encouraged and rewarded for quickly identifying, intervening and getting rid of the bad.</td>
<td>It [kneeling] shows greater respect for the important freedoms the flag represents</td>
<td>Floyd's murder was a modern day lynching and the only thing missing was a burning cross.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Even I can see the need for deep and immediate reform</td>
<td>All he [Kaepernick] got was a ruined football career and viscous, unfair criticism for simply exercising his American rights</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Politics Galleries**

The seventh set of galleries is about politics. These comments include name calling, words of hate, disgust, and address hypocrisy, erasure of progress, white privilege and the pandemic. These single reply comments are presented in the galleries of: Party, Racism and Trump.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politics Party</th>
<th>Politics Racism</th>
<th>Politics Trump</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And how many of the &quot;patriots&quot; that supported DFT had, like him, never served in the military.</td>
<td>That certainly should keep racist Don from every attending a game</td>
<td>Hypocrite, not conservative is the common trait trumps rotten core reveal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As always, events have validated the liberal position on a controversy—for all the good that seems to do.</td>
<td>Donald Trump enables, instigates and fuels racism and violence and all the worst in us.</td>
<td>I'd say Trump sacrificed his principles for his career but for the fact Trump never had any principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He [Kaepernick] was more American than Trump and his Republican minions.</td>
<td>Kaepernick was a page two story until the Racist in Chief decided to make it a national controversy. Because it pitted white middle class against ungrateful, rich black athletes.</td>
<td>Small minded evil man that Donny truly is NFL players taking a knee; Trump backers protesting with automatic rifles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kaepernick might consider endorsing the only candidate who can defeat our racist president</td>
<td>Neither Trump nor Pence appreciated the quiet protests by black football players, primarily Kaepernick, they just called him unAmerican [sic].</td>
<td>You think trump cares about the death of one black man; he doesn't care about 100,000 dead.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trump and the stupid that follow him are racists</td>
<td>This is why Trump was so determined to destroy Colin Kaepernick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trump has contributed by being a promoter of racism and hate. I can't wait until he is out of office.</td>
<td>Trump will try to make you [Sally] pay for it [the article] because he is a coward and a punk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump … is a hateful demagogue, a lover of chaos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump calling him a &quot;son of a bitch&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump did [took a position on the issue]. As usual.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump has been more critical of Colin Kaepernick and NFLers for 'taking a knee' that he has been of Derek Chauvin for killing by knee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump not only erased progress, but he put us back decades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump and his parade of Corporate Yes Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trump…has revealed how awful many people in power can be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VP Pence squandered tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars just to go to a NFL game for an orchestrated walk out when players took a knee against injustice. He and Trump represent the brutal murders and mass shootings they continue to incite.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>White privilege, alive and well in Trump's America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Speaks loudly to the mopic [sic] self-centeredness of 45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
National Football League (NFL) Galleries

The eighth set of galleries is about the National Football League (NFL). These are presented differently (visually) as there were too many galleries to place all of them side-by-side. These single response comments are presented in the galleries of: Racists, Rich White Men, Gladiator Spectacle, Injuries, Boycott, Owners, General Comments, Greed, Status of America and Call to Activism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL Galleries</th>
<th>NFL Galleries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>NFL Racists</strong></td>
<td><strong>NFL Rich White Men</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last thing the NFL needs is their minority “workers” to start staging sympathy strikes for the fans.</td>
<td>The multiple legacies of slavery permeates [sic] American life and the NFL owners are a reminder of the durability of those legacies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The majority of NFL owners are racists.</td>
<td>The NFL is a rich white man's microcosm of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NFL is clearly a racist organization that needs to be disbanded</td>
<td>The white owners don't want to have the black workers stick up for themselves because it's inconvenient to discuss while the OWNERS are hauling in the cash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are all racist hypocrites.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL Gladiator Spectacle</th>
<th>NFL Injuries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America's version of the gladiator spectacle and basically unknown to the rest of the world.</td>
<td>…NFL's total disregard for brain injury among its players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a bitter irony that the NFL has found a strategy to employ black men to uphold white supremacist culture.</td>
<td>One third of pro football players develop permanent serious brain injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ruining men's brains for money. Violence Inc. Screw it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL Boycott</th>
<th>NFL Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After Colin Kaepernick I no longer watch NFL</td>
<td>Far too kind to the NFL owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boycott NFL! I do.</td>
<td>Hope all the owners are reading this and squirming in their gated communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a diehard football fan. But WILL not watch the NFL again unless…</td>
<td>If the NFL owners had stood up for Kaepernick’s kneeling, I bet the climate in this country would feel a lot different now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am so done with the NFL</td>
<td>NFL owners are almost all Trump@nzees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I haven't seen a Super Bowl game, or any NFL football game since. I don't miss it.</td>
<td>She puts these owners in their place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I stopped watching the NFL because of the owners. No one believes them.</td>
<td>The NFL owners and general managers who speared Colin in the back are not nearly the patriots that Mr. Kaepernick is and will remain!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This is why I have stopped watching the NFL. The owners see and treat their black players as commodities rather than actual people</td>
<td>The NFL owners are complicit cowards.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Used to love the NFL, have not watched a game in a
long time, and I think it's good riddance. The NFL owners are scum.

With the pandemic putting sports on hold, I think I
may finally be able to kick the NFL habit. The owners think we fans are too stupid to see through
their bullcrap.

### NFL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Comments</th>
<th>NFL Greed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A re-opening of the NFL camps and season should be interesting...</td>
<td>“Greed is good”. It is their motto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NFL kowtowed to Trump and MAGA folk.</td>
<td>NFL owners doing the right thing? That's a little much to ask of the idiot children of the idle rich, don't you think?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NFL really look like fools</td>
<td>NFL owners think they know their audience, and won't risk their bottom line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They chose to be on the wrong side of history</td>
<td>That made a lot of them <em>very</em> uncomfortable, and that hit the league's bottom line.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 25 years, the NFL will create &quot;Colin Kaepernick Day” and have a giant blindness-inducing circle of self congratulations [sic].</td>
<td>The greedy racist owners do not deserve another dollar from me ever again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yet people still line these owners [sic] pockets. Just stop watching.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### NFL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America</th>
<th>NFL Call to Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NFL owners’ response was that of the nation.</td>
<td>If NFL management had a brain, it would have urged all players to genuflect during the national anthem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same cowardice and intentional blindness exhibited by the NFL exists everywhere else in American society.</td>
<td>Instead of pulling together, the league bowed to the orange menace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL needs to man up and create an award for players who excel at making the world a better place through social action.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Quotes by Others Gallery**

The ninth set of galleries contains quotes by others and includes nine quotes that were posted in response to this article. These single reply comments were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the galleries of: Inaction, Call to Activism, Racism, Revolution and Stupidity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes by Others Inaction</th>
<th>Quotes by Others Call to Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Whether Caucasian or a poor Asian Racism is a weapon of mass destruction  Whether inflation or globalization Fear is a weapon of mass destruction  Whether Haliburton, Enron or anyone Greed is a weapon of mass destruction  We need to find courage, overcome Inaction is a weapon of mass destruction” Mass Destruction – Faithless</td>
<td>“ ‘Do not blink it out of sight,’ the great abolitionist Sen. Charles Sumner warned of racial violence at the end of the Civil War. ‘Approach it. Contemplate it. Study it. Deal with it.’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How many times can a man turn his head...and pretend he just doesn't see?” (Blowing in the Wind)</td>
<td>You can always count on Americans to do the right thing - after they've tried everything else. Churchill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Proverbs 31:8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quotes by Others

Racism

The plague of racism is insidious, entering into our minds as smoothly and quietly and invisibly as floating airborne microbes enter into our bodies to find lifelong purchase in our bloodstreams. Maya Angelou

"Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable." JFK - March 13, 1962

Revolution

Gil Scott-Heron in The Revolution Will Not Be Televised said, "There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down brothers on the instant replay."

Quotes by Others

Stupidity

"Think of how stupid the average person is, and realize half of them are stupider than that." - G. Carlin

Colin Kaepernick Galleries

The tenth set of galleries is about the Colin Kaepernick. This set of galleries showcases the differences in the words chosen to speak about Colin Kaepernick and are presented in four galleries: Praise/Support, Criticism of Kaepernick, Comparing Kaepernick to Others and Minnesota.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Praise / Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Criticism of Kaepernick</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brave reformer who sacrificed his career for the higher purpose of racial awareness.</td>
<td>He's a terrible quarterback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the anger of the protesters, but I think Kaepernick has a ton more bravery</td>
<td>Kap had good social justice intent but he used it as a weapon against his employer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is a patriot.</td>
<td>Ok let Colin bask in his glory, WGAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He took his team to the Super bowl and lost in a close game. Don't tell me he's not qualified to play in the NFL.</td>
<td>Taking a knee is fine. Supporting democratic change is even better. He did the first and was ambivalent, at best, about the second.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick has shown wisdom and strength of character well beyond his years.</td>
<td>Ugh, still remember that Kap said their [sic] was no difference between Hillary and Trump.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Kap!</td>
<td>Why did he wear the pigsocks [sic]?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is an American hero.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is an inspiration to us all.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick took a huge risk.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have always respected his activism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick had courage.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaep is a civil rights leader!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin was right.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick should receive the Nobel Peace Prize!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kaepernick deserves a full-throated public apology.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty years from now, I likely will not remember any current NFL's Quarterback's name…but I will never forget Colin Kaepernick's name and his important stand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali was another great American banished from his sport by racists, all because he refused to go halfway around the planet to kill the yellow man.</td>
<td>And this is why the Minnesota Vikings should sign and activate him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is an American Hero, no less so, than Muhammed Ali was for taking a stand against systemic bigotry, evil and government abuse of power</td>
<td>He recommends that some NFL team hire Kaepernick, and he specifically recommends that the Minnesota Vikings do it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were they alive, Ali, Dr. King, and Mandela would be kneeling aside Kaepernick. All paid a heavy price for standing up for the truth.</td>
<td>Lockhart ended his column by calling for change and suggesting the Vikings, who are located in the center of the controversy in Minnesota—offer Kaepernick a contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick is no Frederick Douglass.</td>
<td>The Vikings should hire Kaepernick and the entire team should take a knee before every game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kap is keeping Dr. King’s Dream alive.</td>
<td>The Vikings should offer Kaepernick a contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Kap, [Muhammad] Ali was deemed by the establishment as “anti-patriotic,” and like Kap too, he suffered the consequence of being forced into exile during the prime of his professional athletic career.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s a case to be made that Kaepernick is the Muhammad Ali of our times.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is our generation’s Rosa Parks.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary of Single Response Galleries**

As previously mentioned, there were no responses to these single reply comments that would allow for a sequential analysis through which to notate the researcher’s perception of semantic shifts (Chenail, 1995, p. 5), so this researcher utilized the first two steps of RFA which Chenail (1995) compared to taking notes from reading an article.

This researcher included these single reply comments in this study to notate the differences in the words chosen by commenters to respond to the author Sally Jenkins and the content of her perspective piece. These galleries also showcase the difference in focus of each commenter as it relates to aspect or context. It should be noted that some of these responses may have been intended as a reaction to another commenter’s post however given that the “reply” button was not utilized; these comments did not appear as a reply but as a single comment.
Table 3

**Galleries for Single Responses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Galleries for Single Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Religious Affirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Physical Reactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Disagreement / Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Two Knees Analogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Writing Style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Personal Compliments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author Words of Thanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Professing to be White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identity Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box Status of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Content Indifference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Content Call for Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Content Constitutional Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Content George Floyd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics Trump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Racists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Rich White Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Gladiator Spectacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Boycott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Owners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL General Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Greed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Status of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL Activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes by Others Inaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes by Others Call to Activism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes by Others Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes by Others Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotes by Others Stupidity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Praise / Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Minnesota</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Gallery Set 1 – Contains responses directed at Sally Jenkins and showcase the differences in reactions to the content of her perspective piece. These galleries include Agreement, Religious Affirmation, Physical Reactions, Truth and Disagreement / Criticism.

2. Gallery Set 2 – Contains responses directed at Sally Jenkins and showcases how commenters chose to comment on the “content,” the “two knees” analogy and her “writing style.” These galleries are: Content, Two Knees Analogy and Writing Style.

3. Gallery Set 3 – Contains responses directed at Sally Jenkins and showcases personal compliments and words of thanks. These comments are presented in the galleries of: Personal Compliments and Words of Thanks.

4. Gallery Set 4 - is about identity. This gallery contains comments where commenters chose to identify themselves by ethnicity or profession. These comments are showcased in the galleries of: Professing to be White and Military.

5. Gallery Set 5 - Pandora’s Box. These comments encapsulate different aspects and are presented in the galleries of: Status of America and Racism.

6. Gallery Set 6 – is about Perspective and showcases different perspectives or issues. These are presented in the galleries of: Indifference, Call for Reform, Constitutional Rights and George Floyd.

7. Gallery Set 7 – is about politics. These comments are presented in the galleries of: Party, Racism and/or Trump.

8. Gallery Set 8 - is about the National Football League (NFL). These comments were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the galleries of: Boycott, Owners, Racists, Rich White
Men, General Comments, Greed, Gladiator Spectacle, Injuries, Status of America and Call to Activism.

9. Gallery Set 9 - is quotes by others. These were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the galleries of: Inaction, Call to Activism, Racism, Revolution and Stupidity.

10. Gallery Set 10 - is about the Colin Kaepernick. These galleries are: Praise/Support, Criticism of Kaepernick, Comparing Kaepernick to Others and Minnesota.

A discussion of these findings can be found in chapter five where the researcher discusses these findings through theories and other issues that may have contributed to the context in which these comments were made. This discussion will provide further understanding of the content of the comments and the language used in the comments.

**Section II - One Comment / One Response**

The second set of data contains comments that received only a single response. The researcher grouped the data selected for this section by similarity of content as there was only the possibility of no semantic shift or just one semantic shift in the brief conversations. By grouping these data sets, the methodology showcases the differences in how commenters responded to one another in the same set of galleries.

**Recursive Frame Analysis**

For the “one comment / one response” data set, the researcher utilized the first two steps of RFA. Through this two-step process that Chenail (1995) compared to taking notes from an article, the researcher notated frames and created galleries. Through this process, the researcher read the written words multiple times and then noted differences in the written words and then chunked the written words into galleries.
The researcher identified 14 sets of galleries through this process. Three of these sets are presented here as presenting all fourteen would have been redundant. The three sets of galleries chosen by the researcher to be presented are: Law Enforcement, Colin Kaepernick and Status of America.

The researcher then utilized step 3 of RFA (Chenail, 1995), drawing up re-presentations or figures of speech to visualize how the conversation is taking place may include “some or all of the following” (referring to steps 3a and 3b). For the purpose of this study, this researcher utilized step 3a and the second part of step 3b. Step 3a is a Sequential Analysis to chart the flow of conversation and notate when the conversation shifts from one chunking gallery to another (Chenail, 1995). Given that commenters posed as Avatars – utilizing Avatars, microscopic photographs or a plain human silhouette as their profile picture – and utilized pseudonyms for their screennames, this researcher did not utilize the first part step 3b, which is notation of who initiated conversational shifts. This researcher did, however, utilize the second part of step 3b: notation of how or why a commenter was able to move the conversation from one gallery to another (Chenail, 1995).

**Law Enforcement Galleries**

**Law Enforcement Galleries - Description of Data and Commenters**

The first set of data in One Comment / One Response contains a total of 12 comments - six original posts and one reply for each of them. The data fall into the Law Enforcement Galleries and given that there is only one reply to each original comment, all of these do not exhibit a semantic shift in conversation.

The information contained in this section is not offered as statistics but rather information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this discussion
thread. These comments were posted by 11 commenters. Using the protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that one commenter utilized an Avatar for their profile picture (a blue check mark); three utilized a photograph (one indistinguishable, one blank, and one was a human man); and the remaining seven utilized the plain human silhouette. Only two of these commenters chose a screenname or pseudonym that contains a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; both utilized a photograph for their profile picture (indistinguishable and blank). The remaining nine chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

**Law Enforcement Galleries**

The first set of galleries in the one comment / one response category is Law Enforcement and the data are displayed in seven galleries. These galleries showcase the language used by commenters to talk about law enforcement and the issues on which they focused. The names of these galleries were determined or chosen through the system for naming galleries that was designed by this researcher. They are called: Call for Reform, Stay in Your Lane, Police Brutality, Accountability, Killer Cops, Support and Racists Cops.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Galleries</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Stay in Your Lane</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Police Brutality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protest if you want, but demand that our politicians reform the damned system.</td>
<td>The NFL has stuck their nose into too many social things as it is. Their job is to play football and run a football league. Try doing that, and letting the law, courts, politicians, etc. worry about theirs.</td>
<td>If anything police seen [sic] to have gotten more brazen with attacks on minorities in the name of law and order</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…mass firing must take place and the culture completely changed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem is our's, the voters, who decide whether a problem exists and then voting for leaders to fix it, whether it be a dilapidated bridge, or police brutality.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Accountability</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Killer Cops</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
In the name of entitlement and brazen lack of accountability…17 complaints. …Kaepernick’s protest was about the abuse and murder of black Americans by white American police officers… It is nice to see so many police officers taking a knee alongside protesters.

| Remember Rodney King? [Murdered by cops in LA] | So simple but so powerful. |
| Innocent? HE wasn't innocent. his crime doesn't warrant a death penalty, but not innocent. | |

| Law Enforcement Racists Cops |
| And more innocent black Americans will die at the hands of racist cops. |

Conversations, Semantic Shift Notations & Visual Re-Presentations

Conversation No. 1

[1] There is systematic nastiness in many police forces and copy [sic] kill plenty of people each year who don't deserve to die. No more Cop killings of those in custody. Protest if you want, but demand that our politicians reform the damned system. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Call for Reform]

[2] It's hard to support good cops when they won't speak out against the bad ones. Unfortunately, since that's the case mass firing must take place and the culture completely changed. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Call for Reform]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number one falls into the Law Enforcement Call for Reform gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation.

Visual Re-Presentation:

| Law Enforcement Call for Reform | No Shift | Law Enforcement Call for Reform |
| Protest if you want, but demand that our politicians reform the damned system. | | …mass firing must take place and the culture completely changed. |

Conversation No. 2

[1] Don't expect the NFL in any way to solve the problem of police brutality. The problem is our's [sic], the voters, who decide whether a problem exists and then voting
for leaders to fix it, whether it be a dilapidated bridge, or police brutality. Time for local citizens to change their local leadership, through voting, and stop looking to celebrities, the NFL or others with no power to make the change. Its [sic] our problem - VOTE!

[Gallery: Law Enforcement Call for Reform]

[2] Another wise person. Well said. The NFL has stuck their nose into too many social things as it is. Their job is to play football and run a football league. Try doing that, and letting the law, courts, politicians, etc. worry about theirs. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Stay in your Lane]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number two began in the Law Enforcement Call for Reform gallery and then shifted to the Law Enforcement Stay in Your Lane gallery. This semantic shift falls into the why category because the responding commenter thinks the NFL should stick to football and keep their nose out of politics.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Stay in your Lane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don't expect the NFL in any way to solve the problem of police brutality. The problem is our's [sic], the voters, who decide whether a problem exists and then voting for leaders to fix it, whether it be a dilapidated bridge, or police brutality.</td>
<td>The NFL has stuck their nose into too many social things as it is. Their job is to play football and run a football league. Try doing that, and letting the law, courts, politicians, etc. worry about theirs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 3

[1] The NFL didn't have a problem with him kneeling till trump made it one. What he was protesting by taking that knee is a major problem then and now. If anything police seen [sic] to have gotten more brazen with attacks on minorities in the name of law and order. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Police Brutality]
In the name of entitlement and brazen lack of accountability... 17 complaints.

[Gallery: Law Enforcement Accountability]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number three began in the Law Enforcement Police Brutality gallery and then shifted to the Law Enforcement Accountability gallery. This semantic shift falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus to the lack of accountability for the 17 complaints lodged against the officer who murdered George Floyd.

Visual Re-Presentation:

Law Enforcement Police Brutality
If anything police seem [sic] to have gotten more brazen with attacks on minorities in the name of law and order.

Law Enforcement Accountability
In the name of entitlement and brazen lack of accountability...17 complaints.

Conversation No. 4

[1] What got forgotten early on and never clarified was that Kaepernick's protest was about the abuse and murder of black Americans by white American police officers, not members of any branch of the American military. But good luck trying to explain that at the time. And does anyone apart from Trump and other police officers think this guy in Minnesota is being treated unfairly? What's going to happen when/if this guy gets acquitted and reinstated? [Gallery: Law Enforcement Killer Cops]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number four falls into the Law Enforcement Killer Cops gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation. The responding commenter drew attention to the case of Rodney King who was murdered by police in Los Angeles.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Killer Cops</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Killer Cops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What got forgotten early on and never clarified was that Kaepernick’s protest was about the abuse and murder of black Americans by white American police officer.</td>
<td>No Shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remember Rodney King?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 5

[1] Of course this is why Kaepernick took the knee. But a lot of people ignored that and let Trump/Fox/Rush whip them up into a pseudo-patriotic frenzy. And they will let the same thing happen again if we let them. And more innocent black Americans will die at the hands of racist cops. Thank you for this piece. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Racist Cops]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number five began in the Law Enforcement Racist Cops gallery and then shifted to the Law Enforcement Killer Cops gallery. This semantic shift falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus to George Floyd. The responding commenter stated that “his crime doesn’t warrant a death penalty” and at the same time proclaimed, “HE wasn’t innocent” which is quite an accusation on the part of the commenter given that George Floyd never made it to a court of law; in America, we are innocent until proven guilty.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Racist Cops</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Killer Cops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And more innocent black Americans will die at the hands of racist cops.</td>
<td>Innocent? HE wasn’t innocent. His [sic] crime doesn’t warrant a death penalty, but not innocent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversation No. 6

[1] It is nice to see so many police officers taking a knee alongside protesters. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Support]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number four falls into the Law Enforcement Support gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation. The responding complimented the poster of the original comment.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Support</th>
<th>No Shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is nice to see so many police officers taking a knee alongside protesters. .</td>
<td>Law Enforcement Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So simple but so powerful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colin Kaepernick Galleries

Colin Kaepernick Galleries - Description of Data and Commenters

The second set of data in One Comment / One Response contains a total of 38 comments - 19 original posts and one reply for each of them. The data fall into the Colin Kaepernick Galleries and given that there is only one reply to each original comment, all of these conversations do not exhibit a semantic shift.

The information contained in this paragraph, is not intended to be offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. These 38 comments were posted by 37 commenters. Using the protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that two of these commenters utilized an Avatar for their profile picture (an emoji and the Yin-Yang symbol); seven utilized a photograph
(one was blank, two were human, and the rest were a tree, a map, a lighthouse and a beach); and the remaining 28 utilized the plain human silhouette. Only 11 of these commenters chose a screenname or pseudonym that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; 3 of these utilized a photograph for their profile picture (tree, blank, human) while the remaining 8 utilized the plain human silhouette. The remaining 26 chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers. Of these 26, two utilized an Avatar as their profile picture (an emoji and the Yin-Yang symbol); four utilized a photograph (map, lighthouse, beach, human man); and the remaining 20 utilized the plain human silhouette.

**Colin Kaepernick Galleries**

The second set of galleries in the One Comment / One Response category is Colin Kaepernick and the data is displayed in 10 galleries. These galleries showcase the differences in the language used by commenters to talk about Colin Kaepernick and the differences in the issues on which they focused. The names for these galleries were chosen using the system for naming galleries that was developed by this researcher; these galleries are called: Support, Criticism of Kaepernick, Confusion, Politics, Disagreement, Random, Call to Activism, Reciprocal, Comparing Kaepernick to Others and Agreement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Galleries</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Galleries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Colin Kaepernick Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kaepernick deserves our gratitude.</td>
<td>Mr. Kaepernick should give up on a sports career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And may the respect he is due be given.</td>
<td>What a stupid stretch. If you ask him, I doubt he can verbalize why he did it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d rather have more Kapernick’s [sic] in this world, than republican boot-licking Trump’s supporters every day of the week and twice on Sundays!</td>
<td>Um, Kaepernick never won a Super Bowl -- he lost to the Ravens. But even if he had, that was seven years ago.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The price of standing up for what is right...most white, aggrieved nfl fans couldn’t/wouldn’t acknowledge he was right...</td>
<td>Enough on the big K. Quarterback, I see hisoint, but he represents NFL not place for personal stuff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice on Sundays!</td>
<td>yeah.. CK did not make one bit of difference, did he?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is never a mistake to speak the truth to power. History will vindicate him and his actions.</td>
<td>it is proved for him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Colin Kaepernick is a decent and righteous man who made the mistake of speaking up in an era that is neither decent nor righteous.

Colin is a hero, but although he gets attention, he wields no real power. The lack of such a hero is the national tragedy.

Colin, the profoundly honest statement of his respectful and humble protest, is bigger than the NFL.

I suppose angering a franchise's sports fans by acting in an unAmerican manner is a good strategy to effect change. Not "Taking a knee" did a poor job of connecting that action to what they were protesting. So it was easily converted into a protest against the US, the military or democracy.

He wasn’t good enough to start you say?? Yeah, because winning a Super Bowl Championship Ring after taking over a team in the middle of a season and then winning the NFC Championship the next season means he was not a good starter for any team. Yet there are teams that start the same lousy qb’s every year that have never made it to a Super Bowl.

Colin is a man that future generations will read about in history books. There will be awards and honors named after him.

I do believe Colin Kaepernick proved his point.

He would never do it. He is a peaceful man.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Disagreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who is him?</td>
<td>Didn't we just have one as a President?</td>
<td>Uhhh...what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Converted by who?</td>
<td>Only unAmerican here is Trump trash.</td>
<td>He didn't? Do you know the whole sweep of history already? Neat. Who wins next year's super bowl?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Random</td>
<td>Call to Activism</td>
<td>Reciprocal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Also, how do they feel about NASCAR's parting ways with Kyle Larson over his use of the N-word?</td>
<td>To me, Colin Kaepernick … is the only one that can tell the crowds to stop the violence.</td>
<td>The only thing that would resolve this craziness. Let Colin Kapernick kneel on that cops neck for 9 minute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, he was a prophet and has a great role to play in this crisis.</td>
<td>Kaepernick needs to take a knee ---- to Fat Donnie's groin.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comparing Kapernick to Others</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hope Kaep is remembered alongside some of the most important civil rights heroes.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ali also made that statement, with the same consequences</td>
<td>Wishful thinking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does all this vindicate the great Tommie Smith and John Carlos? They protested the same thing as Colin Kapernick.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all of that have a problem with politics in sports let me ask. Did you have a problem with: Branch Rickey's political statement in hiring Jackie Robinson. Muhammad Ali's protest of the Vietnam war. Tommy Smith and John Carlos power salute in protest of America's blatant, racism at the time. Shawn Green is Jewish and devoted to his faith. So much so, that he refused to play baseball on Yom Kippur each year. Bill Russell said he was inspired to get politically involved by the racism he encountered in his own home of Boston, despite the NBA titles he helped deliver to the city. In honor of his skill on the basketball court and activism off it, Russell was given a statue in Boston in 2013. Brandon Marshall, NFL player holds his hands out, palms up in prayer, in bringing attention to the plight of mental illness of many current and former players. These are but a few. But the fact is that each in its' own way used the sports platform to help change America with the hopes of moving it towards the ideal that it was founded on.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversations, Semantic Shift Notations & Visual Re-Presentations

Conversation No. 1

[1] Mr. Kaepernick deserves our gratitude. He has suffered as a result of his sense of Duty and Honor. It is truly unfortunate he was scoffed. I thank him for trying. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

[2] And may the respect he is due be given. He's still among us, and though I agree with the author that the NFL missed their chance, they could still give Kaepernick a voice today. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

Semantic Shift Notations:
Conversation number one falls into the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kaepernick deserves our gratitude.</td>
<td>No Shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And may the respect he is due be given.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 2

[1] I'd rather have more Kapernick's in this world, than republican boot-licking Trump's supporters every day of the week and twice on Sundays! [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

[2] Twice on Sundays! Maybe the two Kaeps could play each other. Like a Manning bowl, but better. Now we just gotta find two NFL teams who would hire them both. So I guess we'll never get to see it. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

Semantic Shift Notations:
Conversation number two falls into the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'd rather have more Kapernick's in this world, than republican boot-licking Trump's supporters every day of the week and twice on Sundays!</td>
<td>No Shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice on Sundays!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 3

[1] Colin Kaepernick is a decent and righteous man who made the mistake of speaking up in an era that is neither decent nor righteous. He called out institutional evil, but into the faces of those institutions and individuals who created, supported, profited from and maintained the evil. It did not work out for Colin Kaepernick just as it did not work out for Jesus. The current nastiness is just a standard, routine recrudescence of the same problem. Just more of the same bad behavior by the privileged, the self-righteous and the powerful. I am disgusted but I am not surprised, and sympathetic to the best of my liberal middle-class white male ability. The current administration in Washington does not offer either solace or promise for a better future. We are on the threshold of an election which offers some promise of improvement. If the American electorate is alert enough and wise enough, a better class of leadership can be put in place and genuine effort put to the task of creating a nation "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the principle that all men are created equal." LJsloss [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

[2] It is never a mistake to speak truth to power. History will vindicate him and his actions. "The time is always right to do what is right." Martin Luther King. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number three falls into the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is a decent and righteous man who made the mistake of speaking up in an era that is neither decent nor righteous.</td>
<td>It is never a mistake to speak the truth to power. History will vindicate him and his actions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conversation No. 4**

[1] So very tired of this! Colin is a man that future generations will read about in history books. There will be awards and honors named after him - and rightfully so. So, give him back his job already! [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

[2] Colin, the profoundly honest statement of his respectful and humble protest, is bigger than the NFL. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number four falls into the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery. There was no semantic shift in this conversation.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin is a man that future generations will read about in history books. There will be awards and honors named after him.</td>
<td>Colin, the profoundly honest statement of his respectful and humble protest, is bigger than the NFL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conversation No. 5**

[1] I made these comments the other day, so rather than write something new, I will repost. The first comment is what started someone else writing that the reason Kaepernick was no longer in the NFL was because he wasn’t good enough to be a starting quarter in the NFL. Colin Kaepernick was called an SOB by trump for kneeling in protest to the kind of police brutality that took the life of Mr. Floyd. Kaepernick was ostracized by the owners in the NFL that thought his method of protest was too political. One must wonder would the owners of the Minnesota Vikings prefer to see a non-violent
protest like Kaepernick’s or watch Minneapolis burn. The reason he was run out of the NFL is because the cowardly owners did not want to stand up against trump. The mere fact trump called Kaepernick a SOB for taking a knee and got away with it was all the reason they needed to ostracize Kaepernick it didn’t have jack to do with his talent. He wasn’t good enough to start you say?? Yeah, because winning a Super Bowl Championship Ring after taking over a team in the middle of a season and then winning the NFC Championship the next season means he was not a good starter for any team. Yet there are teams that start the same lousy qb’s every year that have never made it to a Super Bowl. Kap didn’t create the drama, the cops he was protesting created it by doing the same thing as the killer of Mr. Floyd. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support] [2] Um, Kaepernick never won a Super Bowl -- he lost to the Ravens. But even if he had, that was seven years ago. He is in his thirties now. There are a lot of former championship caliber quarterbacks from seven years ago that are out of the league now. Can't defeat Father Time. And Kaepernick was struggling with his performance and surgeries in the years following 2013. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick] Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number five began in the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery. The semantic shift falls into the how category because the responding commenter criticized Colin Kaepernick.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He wasn’t good enough to start you say?? Yeah, because winning a Super Bowl Championship Ring after taking over a team in the middle of a season and then winning the NFC Championship the next season means he was not a good starter for any team. Yet there are teams that start the same lousy qb’s every year that have never made it to a Super Bowl.</td>
<td>Um, Kaepernick never won a Super Bowl -- he lost to the Ravens. But even if he had, that was seven years ago.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 6

[1] Mr [sic] Kaepernick should give up on a sports career. The NFL will never forgive him for challenging the status quo. He might want to think about a career in politics. He is clearly a thoughtful person with a lot of charisma. I think from the right district, he could become a very effective Congressman. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]

[2] The price of standing up for what is right...most white, aggrieved nfl fans couldn’t/wouldn’t acknowledge he was right.... [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number six began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to the fact that Colin Kaepernick sacrificed his career to stand up for what is right.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr [sic] Kaepernick should give up on a sports career.</td>
<td>The price of standing up for what is right...most white, aggrieved nfl fans couldn’t/wouldn’t acknowledge he was right...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversation No. 7

[1] Colin is a hero, but although he gets attention, he wields no real power. Where is a hero with power? One who will sacrifice his career for the truth. A truth that is obvious and tragic? The lack of such a hero is the national tragedy. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]

[2] Didn't we just have one as President? Recently? Wasn't he blocked at every turn by a Republican from Kentucky? Wasn't he replaced by his polar opposite? [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Politics]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number seven began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Politics gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to politics: referring to President Obama.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin is a hero, but although he gets attention, he wields no real power. The lack of such a hero is the national tragedy.</td>
<td>Didn't we just have one as a President?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 8

[1] I suppose angering a franchises sports fans by acting in an unAmerican manner is a good strategy to effect change. Not. For all the blabber that has come since, you can;'t say Police on black violence has improved. of course B on B crime hasn't improvement much either. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Like conversation number seven, conversation number eight began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Politics gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to politics by combining politics with a personal insult.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suppose angering a franchises sports fans by acting in an unAmerican manner is a good strategy to effect change. Not</td>
<td>Only unAmerican here is Trump trash.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 9

[1] What a stupid stretch. If you ask him, I doubt he can verbalize why he did it. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number nine began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Confusion gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter posted a comment, “who is him?” indicating that they were confused. This comment is either genuine or sarcasm.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What a stupid stretch. If you ask him, I doubt he can verbalize why he did it.</td>
<td>Who is him?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversation No. 10

[1] "Taking a knee" did a poor job of connecting that action to what they were protesting. So it was easily converted into a protest against the US, the military or democracy. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Similar to conversation number nine, conversation number ten began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Confusion gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because the responding commenter posted a comment, “Converted by who?” indicating that they were confused. This commenter seems to be genuinely confused.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Taking a knee&quot; did a poor job of connecting that action to what they were protesting. So it was easily converted into a protest against the US, the military or democracy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Confusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Converted by who?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 11

[1] Enough on the big K. Quarterback, I see his oint [sic], but he represents NFL not place for personal stuff. N e could get stuff on mass media with no display @ game @ time National Anthem, I was R.N. / nurse 20 years. Professional behavior is #1. 😁 Forget about him, he made a million he did not need NFL anymore. angry William, RN. 😃. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number eleven began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Disagreement gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because the responding commenter disagreed with the original poster. The statement, “Uhhh…what?” seems simple – maybe even confusion – but the responder was clearly mystified by something the original poster wrote. Perhaps it was the fact that the original poster saw the issues that Kaepernick was protesting as “personal”; or what is the relevance of the original poster being an R.N. for 20 years; or they were confused by the misspelled words of the original poster; or how was Kaepernick making a million relevant to his peaceful silent protest? Perhaps it was all of the above.

Visual Re-Presentation:

Colin Kaepernick
Criticism of Kaepernick

| Enough on the big K. Quarterback, I see his oint [sic], but he represents NFL not place for personal stuff. |

Colin Kaepernick
Disagreement

| Uhhh...what? |

Conversation No. 12

[1] yeah.. CK did not make one bit of difference, did he? [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Like conversation number eleven, conversation number twelve began in the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Disagreement gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because
the responding commenter disagreed with the original poster. The statement was a combination of disagreement and sarcasm.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yeah.. CK did not make one bit of difference, did he?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He didn't? Do you know the whole sweep of history. already? Neat. Who wins next year's super bowl?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 13

[1] I do believe Colin Kaepernick proved his point. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support]

[2] It is proved for him. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number thirteen began in the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because the responding commenter disagrees with the original poster.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do believe Colin Kaepernick proved his point.</td>
<td>It is proved for him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 14

[1] I hope Kaep is remembered alongside some of the most important civil rights heroes. The guy gave up everything and endured withering criticism and hate to make a statement...one that sadly proves to be relevant with every passing week. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number fourteen falls into the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery. There is no semantic shift in this conversation.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</th>
<th>No Shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hope Kaep is remembered alongside some of the most important civil rights heroes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ali also made that statement, with the same consequences [sic].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 15

[1] Does all this vindicate the great Tommie Smith and John Carlos? They protested the same thing as Colin Kaepernick. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number fifteen began in the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Agreement gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the commenter agrees with the first post.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does all this vindicate the great Tommie Smith and John Carlos? They protested the same thing as Colin Kaepernick.</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 16

[1] For all of that have a problem with politics in sports let me ask. Did you have a problem with: Branch Rickey's political statement in hiring Jackie Robinson (of course he was a great player, but so were hundreds of Black players during and before his time who wouldn't be hired). Muhammad Ali's protest of the Vietnam war (a war which pretty
much everyone now believes was wrong). Tommy Smith and John Carlos power salute in protest of America's blatant, racism at the time. Shawn Green is Jewish and devoted to his faith. So much so, that he refused to play baseball on Yom Kippur each year, which is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. Bill Russell said he was inspired to get politically involved by the racism he encountered in his own home of Boston, despite the NBA titles he helped deliver to the city. In honor of his skill on the basketball court and activism off it, Russell was given a statue in Boston in 2013. Brandon Marshall, NFL player holds his hands out, palms up in prayer, in bringing attention to the plight of mental illness of many current and former players. These are but a few. But the fact is that each in its' own way used the sports platform to help change America with the hopes of moving it towards the ideal that it was founded on. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number sixteen began in the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Random gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the commenter shifted the conversation to an unrelated sport (NASCAR) and to a performer who used his “platform” to spew racist rhetoric – the polar opposite of using one’s platform to take a stand against racial inequalities and police violence against black people.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For all of that have a problem with politics in sports let me ask. Did you have a problem with: Branch Rickey's political statement in hiring Jackie Robinson. Muhammad Ali's protest of the Vietnam war. Tommy Smith and John Carlos power salute in protest of America's blatant, racism at the time. Shawn Green is Jewish and devoted to his faith. So much so, that he refused to play baseball on Yom Kippur each year. Bill Russell said he was inspired to get politically involved by the racism he encountered in his own home of Boston, despite the NBA titles he helped deliver to the city. In honor of his skill on the basketball court and activism off it, Russell was given a statue in Boston in 2013. Brandon Marshall, NFL player holds his hands out, palms up in prayer, in bringing attention to the plight of mental illness of many current and former players. These are but a few. But the fact is that each in its' own way used the sports platform to help change America with the hopes of moving it towards the ideal that it was founded on.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Random</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Also, how do they feel about NASCAR's parting ways with Kyle Larson over his use of the N-word?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 17

[1] To me, Colin Kaepernick, because of the symbolism of the kneeling is the only one that can tell the crowds to stop the violence. The energy they have needs to go to the ballot box. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Call to Activism]

[2] Yes, he was a prophet and has a great role to play in this crisis. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Call to Activism]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number seventeen falls into the Colin Kaepernick Call to Activism gallery.

There was no semantic shift in this conversation.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Call to Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To me, Colin Kaepernick … is the only one that can tell the crowds to stop the violence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Call to Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, he was a prophet and has a great role to play in this crisis.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversation No. 18

[1] The only thing that would resolve this craziness. Let Colin Kapernick [sic] kneel on that cops neck for 9 minute. Show it on live TV. Make sure the cop stops breathing 6 minutes into it. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number eighteen began in the Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Support gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because the commenter disagrees with the first poster of the original comment.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The only thing that would resolve this craziness. Let Colin Kapernick [sic] kneel on that cops neck for 9 minute.</td>
<td>He would never do it. He is a peaceful man.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 19

[1] Kaepernick needs to take a knee ---- to Fat Donnie's groin. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number nineteen began in the Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal gallery and then shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Agreement gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because the commenter agrees with the first poster of the original comment.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick needs to take a knee ---- to Fat Donnie's groin.</td>
<td>Wishful thinking.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Status of America Galleries**

**Status of America Galleries - Description of Data and Commenters**

The third set of data in One Comment / One Response contains a total of 12 comments - six original posts and one reply for each of them. The data fall into the Status of America Gallery set and even though there is only one reply to each original comment, all of these conversations exhibit a semantic shift.

The information contained in this section, is not intended to be offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. These 12 comments were posted by 12 commenters. Using protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that only one of these commenters utilized an Avatar for their profile picture (a cartoon dog); three utilized a photograph (dog, human man, trees); and the remaining eight utilized the plain human silhouette. Four of these commenters chose a screenname or pseudonym that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; lone of these used an Avatar for their profile picture (a cartoon dog); two of these utilized a photograph for their profile picture (dog, human man); and one utilized the plain human silhouette. The remaining eight chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers. Of these eight, one utilized a photograph as their profile picture (tree); and the remaining seven utilized the plain human silhouette.
### Status of America Galleries

The third set of galleries in the One Comment / One Response category is Status of America and the data is displayed in seven galleries. These galleries showcase the differences in the language used by commenters and the differences in the issues on which they focused. The names of these galleries were also chosen through the system for naming galleries designed by this researcher and are called: We’ve Had Enough, Chaos, Complacency, Listen!, Political, Call to Action, and Patriotism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America Galleries</th>
<th>Status of America Galleries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>We've Had Enough</strong></td>
<td><strong>Chaos</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I knew this would come. It was just a matter of time. This bomb had a short fuse on it. It just needed one more thing to happen to detonate it. As soon as I saw the video, I knew this was it. I envisioned it all because I was around pre-Emmitt Till, pre-Rosa Parks, pre-MLK, pre-Medgar Evers and pre-Selma. Pre-church bombings. As the commercial says; &quot;I know a thing or two because I've seen a thing or two.&quot; What are we to do? Black America need to understand that after 400 years of slavery, after over 3,000 &quot;unresolved&quot; lynchings in the first 100 years after slavery, church bombings, blatant discrimination of every kind, even to this day; We are tired of it! What you're seeing is the result of a people who have had enough and ain't taking it no more!!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our country is in chaos, cities are ablaze, thousands are desperately ill and dying from an out-of-control contagion, and the fat man is sitting in our White House fantasizing about turning dogs and the U.S military on protesters and punishing purveyors of truth. and meanwhile ... you have non-mask wearing &quot;peaceful patriots&quot; armed to the teeth (brandishing automatic weapons), festooned with confederate/don't tread on me flags storming state houses across the government because they want to &quot;get back to normal&quot;...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Complacency**             | **Listen!**                 |
| More of America is listening now than in the past (I'm 66), it seems to me. 'Murka, however, is pretty dug in on this topic, unfortunately, based on some of the comments about this column. They have chosen the wrong knee and in doing so could not be more un-American or less patriotic. |
| I think the problem is there is no real ‘being present with another’ listening going on. There is a form of listening going on, but it’s the kind of listening the two sides have for each other that unwittingly keeps the entire dynamic in place. |
| Hey, why didn’t the cops go after these guys, was it because they were armed, white, they were friends, or all of the above? |
| We ignore the lessons of history, repeating the awful examples of intolerance while we look the other way. We are all enablers. |

| **Political**               | **Call to Action**          |
| Vote totally Blue.          | The problem is people who need and people who can provide are never in the same room, and when meetings do happen where both parties agree there is a problem to be solved, no one leaves with any actual actions to be taken, monitored, audited etc. |
| I'm patriotic for the America that will not have a Trump living in it. |
| You can thank Deadbeat Trump, he's our fake, weak leader. |
Conversations, Semantic Shift Notations and Re-Presentations

Conversation No. 1

[1] America's original sin of slavery still has a knee on the nation's neck. We live in denial of reality, but the video has made us all eye witnesses to the disgrace of ingrained discrimination. We make poor choices, trading our integrity and dignity for electing legislators who dismantle the goals of our democracy in exchange for a few points on the stock market and enough money in our pockets to eat out more often. We ignore the lessons of history, repeating the awful examples of intolerance while we look the other way. We don't notice the quiet plans to strip our freedoms through ballot manipulation, gerrymandering, disguising school segregation as "school choice", marketing second amendment protections as protection of rights when it really is intimidation of minorities, and more. Time after time we see these awful abuses by cops and nothing seems to change. We are all enablers. We can confront it and put ourselves [sic] on a 10 step plan to set our country back on the right path. Serious choices must be made in the election booth this year, in our communities and churches and schools. It can no longer fester - this open wound must be healed or we are doomed as a nation. [Gallery: Status of America Complacency]


Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number one began in the Status of America Complacency gallery and then shifted to the Status of America Politics gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to voting.
Conversation No. 2

[1] The USA is a mess. It's in a load of trouble. I don't think many people are feeling very patriotic right now. The truth has finally been laid bare. Trump is a symptom. How much blame can be given when the country is sick. [Gallery: Status of America Patriotism]

[2] I'm patriotic for the America that will not have a Trump living in it. The whole grifter clan needs to go live in Indonesia or Russia. [Gallery: Status of America Politics]

Semantic Shift Notations:
Conversation number two began in the Status of America Patriotism gallery and then shifted to the Status of America Politics gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of their vision of a Trump-free America.

Conversation No. 3

[1] Our country is in chaos, cities are ablaze, thousands are desperately ill and dying from an out-of-control contagion, and the fat man is sitting in our White House fantasizing about turning dogs and the U.S military on protesters and punishing purveyors of truth. Colin Kaepernick is a hero. *Cry, The Beloved Country.* [Gallery: Status of America Chaos]
You can thank Deadbeat Trump, he's our fake, weak leader. Said being Pres. was going to be easy. WTF! [Gallery: Status of America Politics]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number three began in the Status of America Chaos gallery and then shifted to the Status of America Politics gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to blaming Trump for the chaos described by the original commenter.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America Chaos</th>
<th>Status of America Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our country is in chaos, cities are ablaze, thousands are desperately ill and dying from an out-of-control contagion, and the fat man is sitting in our White House fantasizing about turning dogs and the U.S military on protesters and punishing purveyors of truth.</td>
<td>You can thank Deadbeat Trump, he's our fake, weak leader. Said being Pres. was going to be easy. WTF!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 4

[1] And meanwhile (a couple of weeks ago) you have non-mask wearing "peaceful patriots" armed to the teeth (brandishing automatic weapons), festooned with confederate/don't tread on me flags storming state houses across the government because they want to "get back to normal"... [Gallery: Status of America Chaos]

[2] Hey, why didn't the cops go after these guys, was it because they were armed, white, they were friends, or all of the above? [Gallery: Status of America Complacency]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number four began in the Status of America Chaos gallery and then shifted to the Status of America Complacency gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation by
pointing out the fact that the police did not stop the armed protestors that were protesting shut-
downs and mandatory mask-wearing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chaos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And meanwhile ... you have non-mask wearing &quot;peaceful patriots' armed to the teeth (brandishing automatic weapons), festooned with confederate/don't tread on me flags storming state houses across the government because they want to &quot;get back to normal&quot;...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complacency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, why didn't the cops go after these guys, was it because they were armed, white, they were friends, or all of the above?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation No. 5

[1] Kaep is a genius!! I knew this would come. It was just a matter of time. This bomb had a short fuse on it. It just needed one more thing to happen to detonate it. As soon as I saw the video, I knew this was it. I envisioned it all because I was around pre-Emmitt Till, pre-Rosa Parks, pre-MLK, pre-Medgar Evers and pre-Selma. Pre-church bombings. As the commercial says; "I know a thing or two because I've seen a thing or two." What are we to do? White America need to understand that after 400 years of slavery, after over 3,000 "unresolved" lynchings in the first 100 years after slavery, church bombings, blatant discrimination of every kind, even to this day; We are tired of it! What you're seeing is the result of a people who have had enough and ain't [sic] taking it no more!! 45 is being his normal, ignorant self. Just ignore him. He is just campaigning since he cannot get his base together. We've tried peaceful, non-violent protest. We got beat to death, fire hosed, dog attacked, and assassinated for being peaceful. We got lynched, and lost jobs just for standing up for our rights to be treated like any other decent human being would want to be treated. We felt as if there was no choice but to take to the streets. I am not down with the destruction of property and looting!! That bothers me to no end that people who look like me would do such a vile thing as to steal and loot. We are playing right
into the hands of the stereotype that other people have of us. This is why I say that Kaep is a genius. He peacefully demonstrated and believe it or not, he got his point across. When people hurled insults at him, he took it and kept moving and stayed on point. He gave up a lot for standing up (or kneeling) for his convictions. The question is; America, are you listening now? Again, we sent a powerful message, but I definitely don't agree with the way it was sent. Violence is nothing but compounded ignorance. [Gallery: Status of America We’ve Had Enough]

[2] White America need to understand that after 400 years of slavery, after over 3,000 "unresolved" lynchings in the first 100 years after slavery, church bombings, blatant discrimination of every kind, even to this day; We are tired of it! What you're seeing is the result of a people who have had enough and ain't [sic] taking it no more!! Wonderful, impassioned comment. Thanks Griff-Griff. More of America is listening now than in the past (I'm 66), it seems to me. 'Murka [sic], however, is pretty dug in on this topic, unfortunately, based on some of the comments about this column. They have chosen the wrong knee and in doing so could not be more un-American or less patriotic. [Gallery: Status of America Complacency]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number five began in the Status of America Chaos gallery and then shifted to the Status of America Complacency gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the how category because the responding commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to comments made by other commenters in this discussion thread that indicate they have chosen the wrong knee.
Visual Re-Presentation:

Status of America
We’ve Had Enough

I knew this would come. It was just a matter of time. This bomb had a short fuse on it. It just needed one more thing to happen to detonate it. As soon as I saw the video, I knew this was it. I envisioned it all because I was around pre-Emmitt Till, pre-Rosa Parks, pre-MLK, pre-Medgar Evers and pre-Selma. Pre-church bombings. As the commercial says; "I know a thing or two because I've seen a thing or two." What are we to do? White America need to understand that after 400 years of slavery, after over 3,000 "unresolved" lynchings in the first 100 years after slavery, church bombings, blatant discrimination of every kind, even to this day; We are tired of it! What you're seeing is the result of a people who have had enough and ain't [sic] taking it no more!!

Status of America
Complacency

More of America is listening now than in the past (I'm 66), it seems to me. 'Murka [sic], however, is pretty dug in on this topic, unfortunately, based on some of the comments about this column. They have chosen the wrong knee and in doing so could not be more un-American or less patriotic.

Conversation No. 6

[1] I don’t think the problem is lack of attention on the topic of enforcement agencies relationship to the black community, ie [sic] people have been silent. You have to be living under a rock not to have heard about the injustices felt be the community. I think the problem is there is no real ‘being present with another’ listening going on. There is a form of listening going on, but it’s the kind of listening the two sides have for each other that unwittingly keeps the entire dynamic in place; it’s the kind of listening the spawns the actions both sides take that the other side chronically complains about . . and indeed, the dysfunctional relationship remains in place, which is heart breaking Alter the listening we qeach [sic] have for ‘ the other’ no matter who the other happens to be, and chronic dysfunctions in relationships will be altered. This is where breakthroughs come from - listening. [Gallery: Status of America Listen!]

[2] Sort of. The problem is people who need and people who can provide are never in the same room, and when meetings do happen where both parties agree there is a problem to be solved, no one leaves with any actual actions to be taken, monitored, audited etc.
Everyone wants to talk about it. Kneeling, sitting, talking, hand wringing, praying, wishing, hoping, etc., are not plans. And as long as people purposely divide themselves from the rest, they will be left on their own and will never get that commitment from those they have divided from. Its [sic] that easy. Big movements get results because all are involved. Small exclusive movements get publicity and Sally Jenkins articles. [Gallery: Status of America Call to Action]

Semantic Shift Notations:

Conversation number six began in the Status of America Listen! gallery and then shifted to the Status of America Call to Action gallery. The semantic shift in this conversation falls into the why category because the responding commenter partially agrees with the original poster, but believes the real problem is that – regardless of whether the parties are listening or not – no action is taken or implemented.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America Listen!</th>
<th>Status of America Call to Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I think the problem is there is no real ‘being present with another’ listening going on. There is a form of listening going on, but it’s the kind of listening the two sides have for each other that unwittingly keeps the entire dynamic in place.</td>
<td>The problem is people who need and people who can provide are never in the same room, and when meetings do happen where both parties agree there is a problem to be solved, no one leaves with any actual actions to be taken, monitored, audited etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of One Comment / One Response Galleries

The second set of data contains comments that received only a single response. By grouping these small data sets, the researcher was able to demonstrate how the RFA methodology, as discussed by Dr. Chenail (1995) showcases the differences in how different commenters responded to one another on similar subjects.

Through chunking (Chenail, 1995) data into galleries, this researcher identified 14 sets of galleries that could have been included in the One Comment / One Response category however
presenting all 14 would have resulted in redundancy. Therefore, the researcher chose three sets of galleries once data saturation was reached: Law Enforcement, Colin Kaepernick and Status of America. Given that the data sets were small, some of the sets had a semantic shift in conversations, while others did not.

**Section III - Three Short Conversations**

The third set of data contains comments from three short conversations. Using RFA, the researcher analyzed these conversations individually. The comments contained in Three Short Conversations are notated with numbers ([1], [2], [3], [4], [5], and [6]) to indicate the level of response. The first comment ([1]) is the original comment followed by layered replies; [2] is a reply to the original level ([1]) comment; [3] is a reply to level [2]; [4] is a reply to level [3]; [5] is a reply to level [4]; and [6] is a reply to level [5].

**Recursive Frame Analysis**

For the “three short conversations” data set, the researcher utilized the same steps of the RFA methodology as she did for the “one comment / one response” data set. This process included steps 1, 2, 3a and the second part of 3b (Chenail, 1995). The researcher provided a description of the galleries at the beginning of each of these short conversations, as they vary from conversation to conversation.

**Three Short Conversations No. 1 - Description of Data and Commenters**

The first set of data in Three Short Conversations contains a total of eight comments - one original post and seven responses. The data fall into six galleries. The names for these galleries were chosen using the system for naming galleries that was designed by this researcher. They were named: Criticism of Kaepernick, Racism, Denial, Shiny Object, White Privilege, and Racial Injustice.
The information contained in this section, is not offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. These eight comments were posted by seven commenters. Using the protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that all seven utilized the plain human silhouette as their profile pictures. Three of these commenters chose a screenname or pseudonym that contains a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; the remaining four chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

### Galleries for Three Short Conversations No. 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Racism</th>
<th>Denial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possible earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.</td>
<td>Wow... was your white hood at the cleaners?</td>
<td>There is no justification for looting and property destruction.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shiny Object</th>
<th>White Privilege</th>
<th>Racial Injustice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Look!!! Shiny object!!! LOL</td>
<td>Colin knelt for the rights of black people. us white people will never understand nor relate to white privilege versus black suppression.</td>
<td>The faux patriotism of waving and/or saluting the American flag does nothing to right the wrongs of racial injustice in this country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorry, but no white person would ever say &quot;us white people&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And your excuse that he should do it while not getting paid millions is just that... a white person trying to rationalize.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Conversation, Semantic Shift Notations and Visual Re-Presentation

Conversation begins:

[1] What an incredibly dumb column. Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possible earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single
NFL team is willing to touch him. Nobody wants police brutality but a lot of people resent the riots, thugs and thieves looting, setting fires to public and private property, beating up old women in wheel chairs, and costing tax payers a lot of money for totally irresponsible behavior on the part of much of the black community. [Gallery: Criticism of Kaepernick]

[2] Wow... was your white hood at the cleaners? My gawd [sic]... does that much ignorance come naturally or do you hvw [sic] to work at it? [Gallery: Racism]

Semantic Shift Notations:

This conversation began in the Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and then shifted to the Racism gallery when the Level [2] commenter asked, “Wow...was your white hood at the cleaners?” This conversational shift falls into the category of how because the Level [2] responder basically accused the poster of the Level [1] comment of being a racist and being in the Ku Klux Klan.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possible earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.</td>
<td>Wow... was your white hood at the cleaners?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] There is no justification for looting and property destruction -- particularly in minority neighborhoods, that serve minority communities and when owned by minorities. Just really stupid. [Gallery: Denial]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a semantic shift in the conversation from the Racism gallery to the Denial gallery and then to the Shiny Object gallery. The semantic shift from the Racism gallery to the Denial gallery falls into the *how* category because the Level [3] commenter shifted the conversation to the looting and property destruction that was happening around the United States, while denying that peaceful protests had failed and that lives are more important. The semantic shift to the Shiny Object gallery falls into the *why* category because the Level [4] commenter accused the Level [3] commenter of being distracted.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denial</th>
<th>Shiny Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no justification for looting and property destruction.</td>
<td>Look!!! Shiny object!!! LOL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[2] If not for the 17 year old willing to stand there for 5 minutes and video the cop murdering a black man, nothing would have happened. Colin knelt for the rights of black people. *us white people* will never understand nor relate to white privilege versus black suppression. *if nobody wants police brutality, why is it still allowed*? [Gallery: White Privilege]

[3] Sorry, but *no white person* would ever say "us white people". [Gallery: Shiny Object]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Shiny Object gallery to the White Privilege gallery and then back to the Shiny Object gallery. The semantic shift from the Shiny Object gallery to the White Privilege gallery falls into the *how* category because the Level [2] commenter redirected the conversation by responding to the Level [1] comment and focused
their remarks on white privilege and black oppression. The semantic shift to the Shiny Object gallery falls into the *why* category because the Level [3] commenter was totally distracted by Level [2] commenter using the words “us white people” in a conversation where this criticism is irrelevant to the issues.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>White Privilege</th>
<th>Shiny Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin knelt for the rights of black people. us white people will never understand nor relate to white privilege versus black suppression.</td>
<td>Sorry, but no white person would ever say “us white people”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[2] The faux patriotism of waving and/or saluting the American flag does nothing to right the wrongs of racial injustice in this country. Kaepernick's non-violent protest was a symbol for what he was thinking and did no one harm. Whether he got paid $1 or millions is none of your business! The craven cowardice of the NFL owners is clear and this op-ed was brilliantly written. Clearly, what you really wanted to talk about was the rioting and looting. You did. Now shut up. [Gallery: Racial Injustice]

[2] What an incredibly dumb comment. Many, if not most were not fine with his kneeling. And your excuse that he should do it while not getting paid millions is just that... a white person trying to rationalize. What he got paid had nothing to do with the issue, or you. And mentioning the rioting that wasn't going on when he knelted is irrelevant. [Gallery: Shiny Object]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Shiny Object gallery to the Racial Injustice gallery and then, once again, back to the Shiny Object gallery. The semantic shift from the Shiny Object gallery to the Racial Injustice gallery falls into the *how* category because the Level [2]
commenter redirected the conversation by responding to the Level [1] comment and focused their remarks the reason Colin Kaepernick staged a non-violent protest. The semantic shift to the Shiny Object gallery falls into the why category because this Level [2] commenter also replied to the Level [1] commenter and pointed out that he was focused on an irrelevant issue: Colin Kaepernick’s salary.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racial Injustice</th>
<th>Shiny Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The faux patriotism of waving and/or saluting the American flag does nothing to right the wrongs of racial injustice in this country.</td>
<td>And your excuse that he should do it while not getting paid millions is just that... a white person trying to rationalize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three Short Conversations No. 2 - Description of Data and Commenters

The second set of data in Three Short Conversations contains a total of six comments - one original post and five responses. The data fall into five galleries – the names for which were chosen through the system for naming galleries as set forth by this researcher: Criticism of Kaepernick, Politics, Racism, Derek Chauvin is a Pig and Killer Cops.

The information contained in this section, is not intended to be offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. These six comments were posted by six commenters. Using the protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that one of these six commenters utilized a photo (human woman) as their profile picture; the remaining five utilized the plain human silhouette as their profile pictures. Two of these commenters chose a screenname or pseudonym that contains a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; both utilized the plain human silhouette for their profile picture. The remaining four chose screennames or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers; one
of them utilized a photo (human woman) for their profile picture; the remaining three utilized the plain human silhouette.

**Galleries for Three Short Conversations No. 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking the knee was not the problem. The problem was the &quot;pig&quot; socks.</td>
<td>How's the weather in Moscow?</td>
<td>The problem is YOUR bigotry. Too bad YOU haven't been stopped and frisked just for being a WHITE RACIST.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oink, oink Trumplicker.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Derek Chauvin is a Pig</th>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.... isn't Derek Chauvin a pig? And that's being nice.</td>
<td>Call him what he is........Murderer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conversation, Semantic Shift Notations and Visual Re-Presentation**

Conversation begins:

[1] Taking the knee was not the problem. The problem was the "pig" socks. Don't you get that? Stop glorifying this man. [Gallery: Criticism of Kaepernick]


Semantic Shift Notations:

There is a shift in the conversation from the Criticism of Kaepernick gallery to the Politics gallery when the Level [2] commenter asked, “How’s the weather in Moscow?” This conversational shift falls into the category of *how* because the Level [2] responder basically made a snarky remark, alluding to the political climate of the United States at the time (Trump’s relationship with Putin).

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taking the knee was not the problem. The problem was the &quot;pig&quot; socks.</td>
<td>How's the weather in Moscow?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversation continues:

[2] The problem is YOUR bigotry. Too bad YOU haven't been stopped and frisked just for being a WHITE RACIST. [Gallery: Racism]

[2] ..... isn't Derrek Chauvin a pig? And that's being nice. [Gallery: Derek Chauvin is a Pig]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Politics gallery to the Racism gallery and then to the Derek Chauvin is a Pig gallery. The semantic shift from the Politics gallery to the Racism gallery falls into the how category because the Level [2] commenter called the Level [1] commenter a WHITE RACIST. The semantic shift to the Derek Chauvin is a Pig gallery falls into the why category because this Level [2] commenter responds to the Level [1] commenter who sees the “pig socks” as the problem, with “isn’t Derrek [sic] Chauvin a pig?” Though using these words, this Level [2] commenter is letting the Level [1] commenter know that Derek Chauvin is the problem; not the socks.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racism</th>
<th>Derek Chauvin is a Pig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The problem is YOUR bigotry. Too bad YOU haven't been stopped and frisked just for being a WHITE RACIST.</td>
<td>..... isn't Derrek Chauvin a pig? And that's being nice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] Call him what he is.......Murderer. [Gallery: Killer Cops]


Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Derek Chauvin is a Pig gallery to the Killer Cops gallery and then to the Politics gallery. The semantic shift from the Derek Chauvin is
a Pig gallery to the Killer Cops gallery falls into the how category because the Level [3] commenter responded to the Level [2] comment and call out Derek Chauvin for what he is; a murderer. The semantic shift to the Politics gallery falls into the how category because the Level [2] commenter responded to the Level [1] commenter with a political insult, “Oink, oink. Trumplicker”.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
<th>Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call him what he is........Murderer.</td>
<td>Oink, oink Trumplicker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Three Short Conversations No. 3 - Description of Data and Commenters

The third set of data in Three Short Conversations contains a total of 13 comments - one original post and 12 responses. The data fall into seven galleries which were named through the system for naming galleries designed by this researcher: George Floyd was a Criminal, Sarcasm, Irrelevance, Killer Cops, Disagreement, Personal (Insults) and Offering Information.

The information contained in this section, is not intended to be offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. These 13 comments were posted by 12 commenters. Using protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that two of these twelve commenters utilized a photo as their profile picture (both photos were indistinguishable). The remaining ten utilized the plain human silhouette as their profile pictures. Five of these commenters chose a screenname or pseudonym that contains a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; one utilized an indistinguishable photo as their profile picture and the other four utilized the plain human silhouette. The remaining seven chose screennames
or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers; one of them utilized a photo (indistinguishable) for their profile picture; the remaining six utilized the plain human silhouette.

**Galleries for Three Short Conversations No. 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>George Floyd was a Criminal</th>
<th>Sarcasm</th>
<th>Irrelevance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Floyd had a criminal record.</td>
<td>We don't talk about that he was an innocent man the media told me so.</td>
<td>..and? So what?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Irrelevant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>So?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
<th>Personal (Insults)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death penalty for misdemeanors? At least in Saudi Arabia and Iran they make it official.</td>
<td>so everyone with a criminal record can/should get a knee on his/her neck for 8:46 mins 'till they are dead ???.</td>
<td>And you are criminally stupid, yet we don’t execute you for it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He did not deserve to have the cop be grand jury, prosecutor, judge, jury, and hangman.</td>
<td>The wife of the police officer arrested for Mr. Floyd's murder had a criminal record too. Should she be killed?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant. Unarmed, handcuffed George Floyd was murdered by police.</td>
<td>BS Laz!!! Stop trying to find a shiny object!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conversation, Semantic Shift Notations and Visual Re-Presentation**

Conversation begins:

[1] George Floyd had a criminal record. [Gallery: George Floyd was a Criminal]

[2] We don't talk about that he was an innocent man the media told me so. [Gallery: Sarcasm]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a semantic shift in the conversation from the George Floyd was a Criminal gallery to the Sarcasm gallery when the Level [2] commenter made a snarky remark about the media. This conversational shift falls into the category of *how* because the Level [2] responder used sarcasm to agree with the Level [1] commenter.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>George Floyd was a Criminal</th>
<th>Sarcasm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Floyd had a criminal record.</td>
<td>We don't talk about that he was an innocent man the media told me so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:


Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Sarcasm gallery to the Irrelevance gallery and then another shift to the Killer Cops gallery. The semantic shift from the Sarcasm gallery to the Irrelevance gallery falls into the how category because the Level [2] commenter – through the use of specific words – lets the Level [1] commenter know that their argument is null. The semantic shift to the Killer cops gallery falls into the why category because this Level [2] commenter shifts the conversation to the death penalty at the hands of law enforcement.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irrelevance</th>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>..and? So what?</td>
<td>Death penalty for misdemeanors? At least in Saudi Arabia and Iran they make it official.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:


Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Killer Cops gallery to the Offering Information gallery and then another shift to the Irrelevance gallery. The semantic shift from the Killer Cops gallery to the Offering Information gallery falls into the how category because Level [2] commenter offered some sort of information by posting an URL. The comment also seemed to be random because the URL did not work. The semantic shift to the Irrelevance gallery falls into the how category because the Level [2] commenter used a simple word to rebuff the Level [1] commenter.

Visual Re-Presentation:

```
Offering Information
| Posted URL [that does not seem to work] |
```

```
Irrelevance
| Irrelevant. |
```

Conversation continues:

[2] And you are criminally stupid, yet we don’t execute you for it. [Gallery: Personal (Insults)]

[2] So everyone with a criminal record can\should get a knee on his\her neck for 8:46 mins 'till they are dead ??? [Gallery: Disagreement]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Irrelevance gallery to the Personal (Insults) gallery and then another shift to the Disagreement gallery. The semantic shift from the Irrelevance gallery to the Personal (Insults) gallery falls into the how category because Level [2] commenter insulted the Level [1] commenter. The semantic shift to the Disagreement gallery falls into the why category because the Level [2] commenter disagrees with Level [1] commenter.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal (Insults)</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And you are criminally stupid, yet we don’t execute you for it.</td>
<td>So everyone with a criminal record can/should get a knee on his/her neck for 8:46 mins ‘till they are dead ???</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:


[2] The wife of the police officer arrested for Mr. Floyd's murder had a criminal record too. Should she be killed? [Gallery: Disagreement]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Disagreement gallery to the Irrelevance gallery and then another shift to the Disagreement gallery. The semantic shift from the Disagreement gallery to the Irrelevance gallery falls into the how category because Level [2] commenter redirected the conversation to the irrelevance of the Level [1] comment. The semantic shift to the Disagreement gallery falls into the why category because the Level [2] commenter disagrees with the Level [1] commenter.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irrelevance</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>So?</td>
<td>The wife of the police officer arrested for Mr. Floyd's murder had a criminal record too. Should she be killed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[2] He did not deserve to have the cop be grand jury, prosecutor, judge, jury, and hangman. [Gallery: Killer Cops]

[2] BS Laz!!! Stop trying to find a shiny object! [Gallery: Disagreement]
Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Disagreement gallery to the Killer Cops gallery and then another shift back to the Disagreement gallery. The semantic shift from the Disagreement gallery to the Killer Cops gallery falls into the *why* category because Level [2] commenter does not believe the Level [1] commenter makes a valid point. The semantic shift back to the Disagreement gallery falls into the *why* category because the Level [2] commenter is telling the Level [1] commenter that they are distracted with irrelevant information and therefore they do not agree with them.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
<th>Disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He did not deserve to have the cop be grand jury, prosecutor, judge, jury, and hangman.</td>
<td>BS Laz!!! Stop trying to find a shiny object!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[2] Irrelevant. Unarmed, handcuffed George Floyd was murdered by police. [Gallery: Killer Cops]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was one final shift in the conversation from the Disagreement gallery to the Killer Cops gallery. The semantic shift falls into the *why* category because Level [2] commenter re-focused the conversation on the fact that George Floyd was unarmed and handcuffed when he was murdered by police.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant. Unarmed, handcuffed George Floyd was murdered by police.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Three Short Conversation Galleries

The third set of data contains comments from three short conversations. Using RFA (Chenail, 1995) the researcher analyzed these conversations individually.

Through chunking data into galleries (Chenail, 1995), collectively, this researcher identified 15 galleries for three short conversations. These galleries were named using the system for naming galleries that was designed by this researcher: Criticism of Kaepernick, Derek Chauvin is a Pig, Denial, Disagreement, George Floyd was a Criminal, Irrelevance, Killer Cops, Offering Information, Personal (Insults), Politics, Racial Injustice, Racism, Sarcasm, Shiny Objects, and White Privilege.

Section IV - Long Conversation

Recursive Frame Analysis – Steps 1 and 2

The fourth data set is a Long Conversation that contains 60 comments that were made by 48 commenters. This researcher utilized the same steps of the RFA methodology for analysis of “long conversation” as she did for the “one comment / one response” and “three short conversations” data sets. This process included steps 1, 2, 3a and the second part of 3b (Chenail, 1995).

Galleries for Long Conversation

Through the RFA process, the researcher identified seven categories of galleries in long conversation: Colin Kaepernick, Activists, Veterans, The Flag, Pandora’s Box, Law Enforcement and Rights. (These seven categories include a total of 19 galleries and the names were chosen utilizing the system for naming galleries that was developed by this researcher).
Colin Kaepernick

The first category is “Colin Kaepernick” and contains the three galleries entitled: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick, Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick and Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back.</td>
<td>This narrative that Kaep isn’t good enough is absolutely pathetic.</td>
<td>Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is because he is pathetic as a QB.</td>
<td>I have been with Colin K. all along.</td>
<td>And like Kaepernick, he [Ali] was vilified was vindictively denied the right to make a living through his sport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He could be a backup but he is no starter. He is delusional and people that don't know football believe him.</td>
<td>Average Qb doesn't make the super bowl. Average Qb doesn't run Alex Smith out of town.</td>
<td>My understanding of Muhammad Ali's position is the same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin was not a good passing QB.</td>
<td>To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not “a good enough passing QB” is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, and at worst, flat out racist.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If he was removed from the game for his lack of talent, why did the NFL settle?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not hard. Just google the facts</td>
<td>The fact that you guys are trying so hard is hilarious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Activists

The second category is called “Activists” and contains three galleries entitled: Activists Support/Praise, Activists Criticism and Activists Disagreement with Criticism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activists Support/Praise</th>
<th>Activists Criticism</th>
<th>Activists Disagreement with Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too.</td>
<td>Yeah, Cassius Clay, the Draft Dodger.</td>
<td>The last thing anyone of principle would do is conflate Ali’s open, vocal, willing-to-go-to-jail stand with any other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ali was no draft dodger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Veterans

The third category is called “Veterans” and contains two galleries entitled: Veterans Identity and Veterans Veteran Support. In some instances, commenters identified as a veteran and continued with a statement of support.
Shut up. I AM one of those soldiers, and I will decide if I was disrespected, not you.

I served

He asked a Navy Seal to help him protest in the most respectful way, and was told the Seals take a knee in respect at the coffins of their fallen and that that would honor his country and his ideals.

I am a soldier and you are wrong.

Which is why he discussed with his teammate—who was a veteran—and his teammate said he didn’t find it offensive at all.

No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action

Under the direction of his good friend, a veteran, who wanted to be sure that no disrespect of the flag could possibly be inferred

Most in the military entirely understand and respect what he did.

The Flag

The fourth category is called “The Flag” and contains three galleries entitled: The Flag Disrespect, The Flag Disagreement / Rebut of Disrespect Comment and The Flag Personal (Insults). One user accused Colin of showing disrespect; all other comments in this gallery are commenters disagreeing with the comment about disrespect or responding with words of insult and accusations of racism (towards the original commenter).
Pandora’s Box

The fifth category is called “Pandora’s Box” and contains three galleries entitled:

Pandora’s Box America Exposed, Pandora’s Box Racism and Pandora’s Box Call to Activism.

Pandora’s Box has been opened and the ugliness has been revealed. The data for this the categories of galleries showcases how commenters believed that America’s sin was exposed; some use language about racism while others call for activism.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora’s Box America Exposed</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box Racism</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box Call to Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick’s sin was to point it out.</td>
<td>Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl?</td>
<td>Colin wanted to bring attention to black lives that were being ended by police over enforcement and that’s why he took a knee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside.</td>
<td>… and at worst, flat out racist.</td>
<td>But black athletes [sic] have to take the lead for others to be perceived as authentic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Colin] helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. That box was lined with mirrors, so that we could all see our reflections.</td>
<td></td>
<td>We all have skin in this game, and we should all be trying to “keep the box open.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our original sin was slavery. And it hasn’t gone completely away yet. That sin belongs to all of us until it is completely expunged. We all own it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

died or any other reason you selfishly project.

Law Enforcement

The sixth category is called “Law Enforcement” and contains three galleries entitled:

Law Enforcement Killer Cops, Law Enforcement Police Brutality and Law Enforcement Call for Reform.
You don't think cops killing people are disrespecting the flag, the country and the Constitution?

His intention which was to protest brutality, supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture.

It was all about police brutality.

**Rights**

The seventh category is called “Rights” and contains two galleries entitled: Rights Constitutional Rights and Rights Corporate Rights.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights - Constitutional Rights</th>
<th>Rights - Corporate Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>He has just as much right to protest in the manner that he chose than the armed protestors in Michigan or in Richmond earlier this year.</td>
<td>Public Relations and brand damage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They fought and died for the constitution, not the flag, for things like the first amendment.</td>
<td>The knee-down stopped because white owners prevailed within the NFL.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Long Conversation - Description of Commenters**

The information contained in this section, Description of Commenters, is not offered as statistics but rather as information related to social identity and how the commenters chose to present themselves in this particular discussion thread. Basic information about these commenters was compiled by the researcher and is offered in the following two paragraphs. The relevance of this information will be expanded upon in Chapter 5, Discussion of Findings.

Using protocol designed by this researcher, Avatar Analysis, profile pictures for users were classified and the researcher determined that four of the 48 commenters utilized an Avatar for their profile picture, including a unicorn, a bee, a cat and Spiderman. Eight of the 48 commenters utilized a photograph for their profile picture; four of the photos were indistinguishable while the other four were photos of a bird, a philosopher, a lighthouse and a train. The remaining 36 commenters utilized a plain outline of a human (head and shoulders silhouette). Only 13 of these 48 commenters utilized a screenname or pseudonym that contains a full or partial name that could possibly be a given name; one of these 13 utilized an indistinguishable photo as their profile picture while the remainder utilized the human silhouette.
The other 25 commenters that used a human silhouette as their profile picture utilized online screen names that they created using letters, words and/or numbers (E.g., Graybeardscientist, Bodyman, pacific loon, TakeALookInTheMirror2 and fullofopinionsjustask).

**Long Conversation - Description of Data**

Long Conversation contains 60 comments made by 48 commenters. The researcher presented all words contained in the comments, or excerpts from the comments, as some of the comments were extremely long. The comments from this portion of the discussion thread are notated with numbers ([1], [2], [3], [4], [5], and [6]) to indicate the level of response. The first comment ([1]) is the original comment followed by layered replies; [2] is a reply to the original level [1] comment; [3] is a reply to level [2]; [4] is a reply to level [3]; [5] is a reply to level [4]; and [6] is a reply to level [5].

**Conversation, Semantic Shift Notations and Re-Presentations**

Conversation begins:

[1] Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]

[2] Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too. [Gallery: Activists Support/Praise]

Semantic Shift Notations:

This conversation began in the Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery and then shifted to the Activists Support/Praise gallery when a commenter mentioned Muhammad Ali. This conversational shift falls into the category of *why*. 
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora's Box America Exposed</th>
<th>Activists Support/Praise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americas original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.</td>
<td>Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:


Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Activists Support/Praise gallery to the Activists Criticism gallery when a commenter called Muhammad Ali, Cassius Clay and a Draft Dodger. This conversational shift falls into the category of how as the commenter took the conversation from the perspective of support/praise to the perspective of criticism.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activists Support/Praise</th>
<th>Activists Criticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too. (previous comment)</td>
<td>Yeah, Cassius Clay, the Draft Dodger.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[4] The last thing anyone of principle would do is conflate Ali’s open, vocal, willing-to-go-to-jail stand with any other. Oh also: his name was Muhammad Ali. You can call him by his name. [Gallery: Activists Disagreement with Criticism]

[4] Ali was no draft dodger. He didn’t come up with some spurious medical excuse, or get Daddy to arrange a billet in the Air National Guard for the duration. And like Kaepernick, he was vilified by those who’d never had to experience the daily de-humanising [sic] racism that he faced, and he was vindictively denied the right to make a
living through his sport. [Gallery: Activists Disagreement with Criticism and Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others]

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a shift in the conversation from the Activists Criticism gallery to the Activists Disagreement with Criticism gallery when a commenter called Muhammad Ali Cassius Clay and a Draft Dodger. The first commenter that disagreed with the criticism calls into question the principles of the commenter that called Muhammad Ali a Draft Dodger and referred to him as Cassius Clay. This semantic shift falls into the *why* category because the commenter has reasons to disagree with the level [3] comment.

The second commenter that disagreed with the criticism, first made a statement of disagreement with the criticism, and then shifted the conversation to the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery by pointing out that Ali, “like Kaepernick was vilified by those who’d never had to experience the daily de-humanising [sic] racism that he faced, and he was vindictively denied the right to make a living through his sport.”

The first portion of the comment made by the second commenter falls into the *why* category because the commenter has reasons to disagree with the level [3] comment. The second portion of the comment falls into the *how* category because the commenter shifted the conversation to mentioning Colin Kaepernick and comparing him to another activist that was denied the right to make a living through his sport.

Visual Re-Presentation:
Colin Kaepernick
Comparing Kaepernick to Others

And like Kaepernick, he [Ali] was vilified was vindictively denied the right to make a living through his sport.

Conversation continues:

[2] No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected. [Gallery: The Flag Disrespect]

Semantic Shift Notations:

This commenter shifted the conversation from the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery to The Flag Disrespect gallery by responding to the original, first Level [1] comment (that was in the Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery). By responding to the first Level [1] comment, this commenter shifted the “original sin” of America to the “sin” of Colin Kaepernick, claiming that he disrespected “the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected.” This semantic shift falls under the category of how as the commenter shifted the conversation from the subject of America to the subject of disrespecting the flag. Because this commenter responded to the original Level [1] comment, the visual re-presentation shows the conversational semantic shift as going from the Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery to The Flag Disrespect gallery.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora’s Box America Exposed</th>
<th>The Flag Disrespect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Americas original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.</td>
<td>No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] You're the one disrespecting the flag by disregarding the constitution it represents.

[Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment].

Semantic Shift Notations:

The first of these two commenters shifted the conversation from The Flag Disrespect gallery to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery by responding to the level [2] comment where the commenter claimed that he (Colin Kaepernick) disrespected “the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected. This semantic shift falls under the category of why because these two commenters disagree with that statement. The next comment, “You’re the one disrespecting the flag by disregarding the constitution it represents” does not create a semantic shift in the conversation.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Flag Disrespect</th>
<th>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it…</td>
<td>Oh palease!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You’re the one disrespecting the flag by disregarding the constitution it represents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining 31 responses to the Level [2] comment, “No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected” will be presented in sections designed to fit the width of the page. First, the selected responses will be presented under a header entitled, Conversation continues, followed by Semantic Shift Notations that provide explanations of the shifts, and by then a Re-presentation that visually showcases the shifts. Each visual Re-presentation of semantic shifts in this conversation begins with the last comment in the previous Re-presentation and continues with the following responses.
Conversation continues:

[3] Brian, you are an i.diot, probably a racist i.diot. You should be ashamed of yourself. [Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)]


[3] Hey, dude -- OUR FLAG is not just for soldiers. When the government doesn't pledge the same allegiance to its citizens then its [sic] deserves a knee. YOU disrespect the flag for giving it such a narrow meaning. [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment]

[3] @brian is one of those effing "patriots" who slapped a "support the troops" bumper sticker on their gas guzzling SUVS and went shopping with tax rebate checks when some of the troops were blown to pieces in Iraq, in a financed war. [Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)]


[3] It was never about disrespecting the flag. It was never about disrespectsing soldiers. [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment]. I can't understand the mentality and values of anyone who cares more about the flag than the treatment of the citizens of the country it represents. [Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Beginning with the previous response in The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery, the conversation shifted to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. The conversation then shifted back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment
gallery (2 comments) and then again to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. The conversation shifted once again to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery and then back to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery (2 comments).

The first commenter said, “Brian, you are an i.diot [sic], probably a racist i.diot [sic]”. This shift to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery falls into the why category because the commenter voices his opinion about Brian and believes he is a racist.

The next comment, “Huge BS” shifts the conversation back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery. This comment falls into the how category because the commenter was able to shift the conversation by disagreeing with the level [2] comment.

The next comment that begins with, “Hey, dude” stays in the same gallery, The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment.

The poster of the following comment that begins with, “@brian” shifts the conversation back to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. This comment falls into the how category because the commenter insulted Brian and his lifestyle.

The next comment, “Brian, no one fights for a flag. Your reasoning is nothing but a racist excuse” created two semantic shifts in the conversation. The first portion of this comment, “Brian, no one fights for a flag” shifted the conversation back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery and falls into the how category because the commenter returned the conversation to the flag. Then the second portion of the comment, “Your reasoning is nothing but a racist excuse” shifted the conversation back to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. This portion falls into the why category as the commenter believes Brian is racist.

The first portion, “It was never about disrespecting the flag. It was never about disrespecting soldiers” shifted the conversation back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of
Disrespect Comment gallery. This comment falls into the *how* category because, again, a commenter returned the conversation to the flag. The second portion of the comment, “I can't understand the mentality and values of anyone who cares more about the flag than the treatment of the citizens of the country it represents” shifted the conversation back to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. This portion falls into the *why* category as the commenter questions Brian’s mentality and values.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment</th>
<th>The Flag Personal (Insults)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You're the one disrespecting the flag by disregarding the constitution it represents.  (Last comment in previous re-presentation)</td>
<td>Brian, you are an i.diot, probably a racist i.diot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huge BS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, dude -- OUR FLAG is not just for soldiers. YOU disrespect the flag for giving it such a narrow meaning.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian, no one fights for a flag.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was never about disrespecting the flag. It was never about disrespecting soldiers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>@brian is one of those effing &quot;patriots&quot; who slapped a &quot;support the troops&quot; bumper sticker on their gas guzzling SUVs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your reasoning is nothing but a racist excuse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can't understand the mentality and values of anyone who cares more about the flag than the treatment of the citizens of the country it represents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] He asked a Navy Seal to help him protest in the most respectful way, and was told the Seals take a knee in respect at the coffins of their fallen and that that would honor his country and his ideals. [Gallery: Veterans Veteran Support].


[3] Which is why he discussed with his teammate--who was a veteran--and his teammate said he didn't find it offensive at all. [Gallery: Veterans Veteran Support].
[3] He showed us the greatest sin and it turns out it is YOU! [Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)].


[3] I'll pay to $500 to walk up to one of those athletes while they are kneeled on the field, and tell them what you think. Watching them kick your traitorous arse [sic] into the next zip code would be the best entertainment value around. [Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)].

Semantic Shift Notations:

The next visual re-presentation of semantic shifted in this conversation, again, begins with the last comment from the previous re-presentation and continues by showcasing the semantic shifts in the next six level [3] comments.

Following last response in the previous re-presentation, “I can’t understand the mentality and values of anyone who cares more the flag than the treatment of the citizens of the country it represents” [The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery] there was a semantic shift in the conversation to the Veterans Veteran Support gallery when a commenter posted, “He asked a Navy Seal to help him protest in the most respectful way, and was told the Seals take a knee in respect at the coffins of their fallen and that that would honor his country and his ideals.” This semantic shift falls into the how category because the commenter focused the conversation on a Navy Seal and how they show respect to their fallen comrades by kneeling.

There is a semantic shift in the conversation when the next commenter responded simply, but loudly, with the word, “WRONG.” This response in the discussion thread shifted the conversation back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebut of the Disrespect Comment gallery. The
semantic shift falls into the *how* category as this one word shifted the focus of the conversation back to the flag.

There is another semantic shift in the conversation when the next commenter posted, “Which is why he discussed with his teammate--who was a veteran--and his teammate said he didn't find it offensive at all”. This comment shifted the conversation back to the Veterans Veteran Support gallery. This comment falls into the *how* category because the commenter was able to shift the conversation by mentioning Colin Kaepernick’s teammate who was a veteran.

The next commenter shifted the conversation from the Veterans Veteran Support gallery to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery by proclaiming, “He showed us the greatest sin and it turns out it is YOU!” This comment falls into the *how* category because the commenter insulted the poster of the level [2] comment.

The next comment is, “lolololol”. This is another simple, one-word response in the discussion thread that shifted the conversation back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebut of the Disrespect Comment gallery. The semantic shift falls into the *how* category as this one word shifted the focus of the conversation back to the flag.

The next commenter shifted the conversation back to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery with the comment, “I'll pay to $500 to walk up to one of those athletes while they are kneeled on the field, and tell them what you think. Watching them kick your traitorous arse [sic] into the next zip code would be the best entertainment value around.” This comment falls into the *how* category because the commenter insulted the poster of the level [2] comment by calling them a “traitorous arse” [sic].
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Flag Personal (Insults)</th>
<th>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment</th>
<th>Veterans Veteran Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can’t understand the mentality and values of anyone who cares more about the flag than the treatment of the citizens of the country it represents. (Last comment in previous presentation)</td>
<td>→ → → →</td>
<td>→→→→→</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He showed us the greatest sin and it turns out it is YOU!</td>
<td>← ← ← ← ← ←</td>
<td>← ← ← ← ← ←</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Watching them kick your traitorous arse into the next zip code would be the best entertainment value around. | lolololol | |}

Conversation continues:

[3] It was all about police brutality. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Police Brutality].


[4] Not only that, when you get *any* kind of award or recognition from the queen of England -- knighthood, OBE, MBE, etc. -- you kneel before the monarch. ...definitely not a sign of disrespect. [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following last response in the previous re-presentation, “I'll pay to $500 to walk up to one of those athletes while they are kneeled on the field, and tell them what you think. Watching them kick your traitorous arse [sic] into the next zip code would be the best entertainment value around,” there is a semantic shift in the conversation from The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery to the Law Enforcement Police Brutality gallery when a commenter posted, “It was all about police
brutality.” This semantic shift falls into the how category because the commenter shifted the conversation by changing the subject to police brutality.

This is followed by another semantic shift to the The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery when a commenter disagreed with the Level [2] comment about Colin Kaepernick disrespecting the flag by stating, “How is going down on his knee a sign of disrespect? That’s how a lot of people pray to God.” This comment falls into the why category because the commenter disagrees with the person who believes Colin Kaepernick showed disrespect by kneeling.

The next comment remained in the same gallery (The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery). The poster affirmed the perspective that kneeling is a sign of respect by posting, “Not only that, when you get *any* kind of award or recognition from the queen of England -- knighthood, OBE, MBE, etc. -- you kneel before the monarch. ...definitely not a sign of disrespect”.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Flag Personal (Insults)</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Police Brutality</th>
<th>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Watching them kick your traitorous arse into the next zip code would be the best entertainment value around. (Last comment in previous representation)</td>
<td>It was all about police brutality</td>
<td>How is going down on his knee a sign of disrespect? That’s how a lot of people pray to God.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↓</td>
<td>↓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>When you get <em>any</em> kind of award or recognition from the queen of England you kneel before the monarch...definitely not a sign of disrespect.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] I served, and have my CIB, Bronze Star and Purple Heart [Gallery: Veterans Identity] and did so that people like Kapernick [sic] could do what he did. [Gallery: Veterans Veteran Support].
[3] But that is you applying your own interpretation to an action, rather than sincerely seeking to understand his intention which was to protest brutality, not to disrespect the flag. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Police Brutality].

[3] You are part of the problem. You should learn to think. [Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)].

[3] No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action.

[Gallery: Veterans Veteran Support].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following last response in the previous re-presentation, “Not only that, when you get *any* kind of award or recognition from the queen of England -- knighthood, OBE, MBE, etc. -- you kneel before the monarch. ...definitely not a sign of disrespect,” there were two a semantic shifts in the conversation from The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery to the Veterans Identify gallery and then to the Veterans Veteran Support gallery. The commenter stated, “I served, and have my CIB, Bronze Star and Purple Heart and did so that people like Kapernick [sic] could do what he did.” The first portion of the comment, “I served, and have my CIB, Bronze Star and Purple Heart,” falls into the Veterans Identity gallery. The second part of the comment, “and did so that people like Kapernick [sic] could do what he did” falls into the Veterans Veteran Support gallery. This semantic shift falls into both the how and why categories because of how the commenter shifted the conversation by abruptly proclaiming that they have served in the military and received several commendations: a CIB (Combat Infantry Badge), Bronze Star and Purple Heart. This is followed by the why: “so that people like Kapernick [sic] could do what he did.”

The next comment created another semantic shift in the conversation from the Veterans Veteran Support gallery to the Law Enforcement Police Brutality gallery when a commenter
posted, “But that is you applying your own interpretation to an action, rather than sincerely seeking to understand his intention which was to protest brutality, not to disrespect the flag”. This comment falls into the *how* category when the commenter shifted the focus of the conversation to the protest of police brutality.

There was another semantic shift in the conversation with the next comment: “You are part of the problem. You should learn to think”. This comment shifted the conversation from the Law Enforcement Police Brutality gallery to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. This shift falls into the category of *why* because the commenter believes the poster of the Level [2] comment is part of the problem; plus the commenter insults their ability to think.

The next comment shifted the conversation back to the Veterans Veteran Support gallery when a commenter posted, “No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action”. This comment falls into the *how* category because it shifted the focus of the conversation back to the subject of veterans and their support.

Visual Re-Presentation:
Conversation continues:

[3] You don't think cops killing people are disrespecting the flag, the country and the Constitution? Nope, guess not as long as they're killing blacks, right? [Gallery: Law Enforcement Killer Cops].

[3] Horsehockey [sic]. He never disrespected the flag. Not once. Under the direction of his good friend, a veteran, who wanted to be sure that no disrespect of the flag could possibly be inferred, he took a knee during the *National Anthem* to protest how we not only fail to meet, but how many deliberately set out to sabotage, the ideals set forth in the *National Anthem*. [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment].


[3] No!! He did not disrespect [sic] the flag! He has just as much right to protest in the manner that he chose than the armed protestors in Michigan or in Richmond earlier this year. [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment] then [Gallery: Rights Constitutional Rights].


Semantic Shift Notations:

Following last response in the previous re-presentation, “No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action,” which is in the Veterans Veteran Support gallery, there was a semantic shift in the conversation to the Law Enforcement Killer Cops gallery. This
shift happened when a commenter posted, “You don't think cops killing people are disrespecting the flag, the country and the Constitution? Nope, guess not as long as they're killing blacks, right?” This shift falls into the *how* category because the commenter wrote about cops killing people.

The next comment shifted the conversation to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect gallery when a commenter shouts, “Horsehockey [sic]. He never disrespected the flag. Not Once.” This shift falls into the category of *why* because the commenter disagrees with the poster of the Level [2] comment.

The next comment did not create a semantic shift. The comment, “Bullsh*t. @Brian” is in the same gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect gallery.

The next commenter posted, “No!! He did not disrespect [sic] the flag! He has just as much right to protest in the manner that he chose than the armed protestors in Michigan or in Richmond earlier this year.” The first portion of this comment remains in The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect gallery, but there was a semantic shift to the Rights Constitutional Rights gallery when the commenter said, “He has just as much right to protest in the manner that he chose than the armed protestors in Michigan or in Richmond earlier this year.” This shift falls into the *how* category because the commenter was able to shift the conversation by mentioning Colin Kaepernick’s Constitutional Rights.

The next comment, “What exactly, did his taking a knee have to do with soldiers love ones?” shifted the conversation back to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect gallery. This shift falls into the *why* category because the commenter disagrees with the Level [2] comment.
The next comment shifted the conversation back to the Veterans Veteran Support gallery. The commenter posted, “Most in the military entirely understand and respect what he did,” expressing his belief of military (veteran) support. This shift falls into the how category because the commenter shifted the conversation from the Rights Constitutional Rights gallery to the Veterans Veteran Support gallery by mentioning the military and their understanding and respect for Colin Kaepernick taking a knee during the National Anthem.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veterans Veteran Support</th>
<th>Law Enforcement Killer Cops</th>
<th>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuке Of Disrespect</th>
<th>Rights Constitutional Rights</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action. (Last comment in previous re-presentation)</td>
<td>You don’t think cops killing people are disrespecting the flag, the country and the Constitution?</td>
<td>Horsehockey. He never disrespected the flag. Not once.</td>
<td>He has just as much right to protest in the manner that he chose than the armed protestors in Michigan or in Richmond earlier this year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most in the military entirely understand and respect what he did.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bullsh*t. @Brian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No!! He did not disrespect [sic] the flag!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What exactly, did his taking a knee have to do with soldiers love ones? Nothing. Absolutely nothing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].

[3] They fought and died for the constitution, not the flag, for things like the first amendment. [Gallery: Rights Constitutional Rights].
[3] Shut up. I AM one of those soldiers, and I will decide if I was disrespected, not you.

[Gallery: Veterans Identity].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following last response in the previous re-presentation, “Most in the military entirely understand and respect what he did,” which was in the Veterans Veteran Support gallery, there was a semantic shift in the conversation to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery. This shift happened when a commenter posted, “I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us.” This shift falls into the how category because the commenter shifted the conversation to praise for Kaepernick.

There was a semantic shift in the conversation when the next commenter shifted the conversation to the Rights Constitutional Rights gallery. The commenter did this by clarifying what they (soldiers) fought and died for: “They fought and died for the constitution, not the flag, for thing like the first amendment.” This shift falls into the how category because the commenter shifted the conversation by mentioning the first amendment.

The next commenter angrily shifted the conversation by shouting, “Shut up. I AM one of those soldiers, and I will decide if I was disrespected, not you.” This comment shifted the conversation from the Rights Constitutional Rights gallery to the Veterans Identity gallery. This shift falls into the how category with the command, “Shut up” followed by identifying as a soldier.
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veterans</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Rights Constitutional Rights</th>
<th>Veterans Identity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veteran Support</td>
<td>Most in the military entirely understand and respect what he did. (Last comment in previous re-presentation)</td>
<td>I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us.</td>
<td>They fought and died for the constitution, not the flag, for things like the first amendment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] My understanding of Muhammad Ali’s position is the same: he took a principled stand against a war policy he found morally repugnant, and he was willing to go to jail for his beliefs and to lose a critical part of his career as a boxer for his beliefs. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others].

[3] Colin wanted to bring attention to black lives that were being ended by police over enforcement and that's why he took a knee. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Call to Activism].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following last response in the previous re-presentation, “Shut up. I AM one of those soldiers, and I will decide if I was disrespected, not you,” which was in the Veterans Identity gallery, there was a semantic shift in the conversation to the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery. The commenter shifted the conversation when they posted, “My understanding of Muhammad Ali's position is the same: he took a principled stand against a war policy he found morally repugnant, and he was willing to go to jail for his beliefs and to lose a critical part of his career as a boxer for his beliefs.” This shift falls into the how category by mentioning Muhammad Ali and his “principled stand against a war policy he found morally repugnant” and his willingness “to go to jail for his beliefs.”
There was another semantic shift in the conversation when the next commenter stated that, “Colin wanted to bring attention to black lives that were being ended by police over enforcement and that's why he took a knee.” This shift took the conversation from the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery to the Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery. This shift falls into the why category as the commenter posted a comment in disagreement to the Level [2] comment.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veterans Identity</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box Call to Activism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shut up. I AM one of those soldiers, and I will decide if I was disrespected, not you. (Last comment in previous re-presentation)</td>
<td>My understanding of Muhammad Ali’s position is the same.</td>
<td>Colin wanted to bring attention to black lives that were being ended by police over enforcement and that's why he took a knee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[3] I am a soldier and you are wrong. He made it clear why he takes a knee and it has nothing to do with soldiers who died or any other reason you selfishly project. [Gallery: Veterans Identity then, Gallery: Veteran Veteran’s Support gallery, then Gallery: The Flag Personal (Insults)].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following the last response in the previous re-presentation, “Colin wanted to bring attention to black lives that were being ended by police over enforcement and that's why he took a knee,” which was in the Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery, there were three semantic shifts in the same comment made by the next poster.

This commenter posted, “I am a soldier and you are wrong. He made it clear why he takes a knee and it has nothing to do with soldiers who died or any other reason you selfishly project.” With the first portion of the statement, “I am a soldier,” the commenter first shifted the
conversation from the Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery to the Veterans Identity gallery. This shift falls into the *how* category because the commenter identified as a soldier.

With the next portion of the comment, “He made it clear why he takes a knee and it has nothing to do with soldiers who died or any other reason…,” the commenter shifted the conversation to The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect gallery. This shift falls into the *why* category because the commenter expressed disagreement with the Level [2] comment.

With the last four words, “… as you selfishly project,” the commenter shifted the conversation to The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery. This shift also falls into the *why* category because the commenter believes the poster of the Level [2] comment is selfishly projecting their opinion.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora’s Box Call to Activism</th>
<th>Veterans Identity</th>
<th>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect</th>
<th>The Flag Personal (Insults)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin wanted to bring attention to black lives that were being ended by police over enforcement and that’s why he took a knee. (Last comment in previous re-presentation)</td>
<td>I am a soldier and you are wrong. …</td>
<td>… He made it clear why he takes a knee and it has nothing to do with soldiers who died or any other reason…</td>
<td>…you selfishly project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 33 replies to the Level [2] comment, “No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected” [Gallery: The Flag Disrespect]. The researcher attempted to present all of these replies in one visual re-presentation in order to display the multiple semantic shifts however there were too many semantic shifts between the galleries to display within the width of this paper. Therefore these shifts were re-presented singularly or in small groups.
Conversation continues:

[2] Kaepernick helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed].

[3] Why should it be black athletes’ or black anybody's job? We all have skin in this game, and we should all be trying to "keep the box open." [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Call to Activism].

[4] I have no objection. But black athletes [sic] have to take the lead for others to be perceived as authentic. In the time since Colin Kaepernick put his knee down, why did it stop? ...then knees still should be hitting the ground all the time. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Call to Activism].


Semantic Shift Notations:

The section began with a Level [2] comment that followed a Level [5] comment, so this section began (what could be considered) a new conversation within the discussion thread. This comment, “Kaepernick helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside,” shifted the conversation from The Flag Personal (Insults) gallery to Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery. This shift falls into the how category because the commenter used a metaphor to compare the reactions of Americans to Colin Kaepernick’s kneeling before the flag, for the National Anthem to a box being opened and Americans being faced with what is inside that box.

The next comment, “Why should it be black athletes’ or black anybody's job? We all have skin in this game, and we should all be trying to ‘keep the box open,’” shifted the conversation the Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery. This shift falls into the why category as the
commenter calls for activism and challenges readers to consider “why should black athletes’ or black anybody’s” be the only ones responsible for reform.

The next comment is in the same gallery (Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery) and therefore did not create a semantic shift. The commenter however placed the burden of the call to activism back onto the shoulders of black athletes.

The next comment, “The knee-down stopped because white owners prevailed within the NFL” shifted the conversation to the Rights Corporate Rights gallery as the commenter alludes to the fact that the NFL owners exercised their rights to run their business as they see fit. This shift falls into the how category because the commenter mentioned the NFL.

Visual Re-Presentation:

Conversation continues:

[3] Colin was not a good passing QB. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick].

[4] If he was removed from the game for his lack of talent, why did the NFL settle? [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].

[5] Public Relations and brand damage. He could still be playing in the NFL but he is not interested in being a backup QB. So he’s not playing. [Gallery: Rights Corporate Rights].
[4] Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl? [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Racism].

[4] To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not “a good enough passing QB” is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, and at worst, flat out racist. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].

[5] Google QB rankings and let the numbers tell you the story. Average QB's don't win in the NFL. He could be a backup but he is no starter. He is delusional and people that don't know football believe him. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick].

[6] Average Qb doesn't make the super bowl. Average Qb doesn't run Alex Smith out of town. End of you ignorant argument and lack of knowledge of the game. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following the last response in the previous re-presentation, “The knee-down stopped because white owners prevailed within the NFL” [Gallery: Rights Corporate Rights], there was a semantic shift in the conversation to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery when a commenter posted, “Colin was not a good passing QB.” This shift falls into the how category because the commenter drastically shifted the focus of the conversation by criticizing Colin Kaepernick’s ability as a football player.

The next comment created a semantic shift as well when a commenter replied with, “If he was removed from the game for his lack of talent, why did the NFL settle?” This comment shifted to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery. This shift falls into the why category because the poster disagreed with the criticism of Kaepernick.
The next commenter replied with, “Public Relations and brand damage” which shifted the conversation from the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery to the Rights Corporate Rights gallery. This semantic shift falls into the how category because the commenter was able to return the focus of the conversation to the subject of the NFL.

The next commenter replied to the Level [3] comment of “Colin was not a good passing QB”, with a question: “Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl?” This comment created a semantic shift in the conversation, taking it from the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery to the Pandora’s Box Racism gallery. This shift falls into the how category because the commenter – through the use of specific language - suggested that the poster of the Level [3] comment is racist.

There are two semantic shifts in the conversation when the next commenter retorted to the Level [3] comment with, “To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not ‘a good enough passing QB’ is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, and at worst, flat out racist.” The first portion of this comment (“To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not ‘a good enough passing QB’ is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted”) shifted the conversation from Pandora’s Box Racism gallery to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery. The second portion of this comment (“…and at worst, flat out racist”) shifted the conversation back to the Pandora’s Box Racism gallery. Both shifts fall into the why category because the commenter explained why he disagreed with the poster of the Level [3] comment.

The conversation shifted back to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery with the next comment, “He could be a backup but he is no starter. He is delusional and people
that don't know football believe him.” This shift falls into the *how* category because the commenter criticized Colin Kaepernick.

The next comment shifted the conversation back to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery with another retort from a commenter that stated, “Average Qb doesn’t make the super bowl. Average Qb doesn’t run Alex Smith out of town. End of you ignorant argument and lack of knowledge of the game.” This shift falls into the *why* category because the commenter disagrees with the Level [3] comment that criticizes Colin Kaepernick’s ability as a quarterback.

**Visual Re-Presentation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights Corporate Rights</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The knee-down stopped because white owners prevailed within the NFL. (Last comment in previous re-presentation).</td>
<td>Colin was not a good passing QB.</td>
<td>If he was removed from the game for his lack of talent, why did the NFL settle?</td>
<td>Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Relations and brand damage.</td>
<td>← ← ← ← ← ←</td>
<td>→ → → → → →</td>
<td>... and at worst, flat out racist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not “a good enough passing QB” is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, …</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He could be a backup but he is no starter. He is delusional and people that don’t know football believe him.</td>
<td>← ← ← ← ← ←</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Average Qb doesn’t make the super bowl. Average Qb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conversation continues:

[3] ... helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. That box was lined with mirrors, so that we could all see our reflections. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed].

Semantic Shift Notations:

Following the last response in the previous re-presentation, “Average Qb doesn’t make the super bowl. Average Qb doesn't run Alex Smith out of town. End of you ignorant argument and lack of knowledge of the game.” [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick], there was a semantic shift in the conversation to the Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery when a commenter posted, “... helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. That box was lined with mirrors, so that we could all see our reflections.” This shift falls into the *how* category because the commenter compared the reactions of America to Colin Kaepernick kneeling for the National Anthem to him opening a box lined with mirrors so Americans could see their reflections (who they really are). (This researcher would like to note that the three ellipses points at the beginning of this comment do not indicate that the researcher truncated this comment; this is exactly how the commenter posted their remark).

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box America Exposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average Qb doesn't make the super bowl. Average Qb doesn't run Alex Smith out of town. (Last comment in previous re-presentation)</td>
<td>... helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. That box was lined with mirrors, so that we could all see our reflections.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:

[2] Americas original sin is there for all to see. Not mine. I have been with Colin K. all along. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].
[3] Our original sin was slavery. And it hasn't gone completely away yet. That sin belongs to all of us until it is completely expunged. We all own it. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed].

[4] Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture. [Gallery: Law Enforcement Call for Reform].

Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a semantic shift in the conversation with the next (Level [2]) comment where the commenter wrote, “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Not mine. I have been with Colin K. all along.” Here the conversation shifted from The Flag Disrespect gallery to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery. This shift falls into the why category because the commenter does not believe they should be included in “America’s sin” and proclaimed that “It” was not their sin because the commenter claims to have “been with Colin K. all along”.

The next comment, “Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture,” shifted the conversation from the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery to the Law Enforcement Call for Reform gallery. This shift falls into the how category because the commenter re-focused the conversation on issues of reform.

Visual Re-Presentation:
Conversation continues:

[2] No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back. Colin K decides in this party environment and in a team sport that he is going to be different even as it was obvious he was not a very good QB as his passing sucked. Even as the average person is spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars to attend the game and by the way Colin was making millions for bad play. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick].


[4] It is because he is pathetic as a QB. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick].

[5] The fact that you guys are trying so hard is hilarious. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].


Semantic Shift Notations:

There was a semantic shift in the conversation with the next (Level [2]) comment when the commenter wrote, “No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back. Colin K decides in this party environment and in a team sport that he is going to be different even as it was obvious he was not a very good QB as his passing sucked. Even as the average person is spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars to attend the game and by the way Colin was making millions for bad play.” Here the conversation shifted from the Law Enforcement Call for Reform gallery to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery.
This semantic shift falls into the how category because the commenter criticized Colin Kaepernick.

The next comment shifted the conversation to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery. The commenter rebutted with, “This narrative that Kaep [sic] isn’t good enough is absolutely pathetic.” This shift falls into the why category because the commenter disagrees with the criticism of Kaepernick.

With the following comment, “It is because he is pathetic as a QB” the conversation again shifted back to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery. This shift falls into the how category because the commenter criticized Colin Kaepernick.

The next comment was a retort, “The fact that you guys are trying so hard is hilarious”. This comment shifted the conversation, once again, back to the Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery. This shift falls into the why category because the commenter disagrees with the criticism of Kaepernick.

The last comment in this section shifted the conversation from Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick gallery, back to the Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery. The commenter posted, “It’s not hard. Just google the facts.” This shift falls into the how category because the commenter suggested that the previous commenter should do some research, returning to the fact that he believes Colin Kaepernick is not a good quarterback.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture. (Last comment in previous representation)</td>
<td>No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back.</td>
<td>This narrative that Kaep isn’t good enough is absolutely pathetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is because he is pathetic as a QB.</td>
<td>The fact that you guys are trying so hard is hilarious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of Long Conversation

Long Conversation consisted of 60 comments made by 48 commenters. This researcher utilized RFA (Chenail, 1995) to notate frames and create galleries to analyze the data contained in the comments. Using RFA, this researcher read the written words contained in long conversation multiple times and then noted differences in the written words and then chunked the written words into galleries. The researcher identified seven categories of galleries in long conversation and they are: Colin Kaepernick, Activists, Veterans, The Flag, Pandora’s Box, Law Enforcement and Rights. These seven categories contain 19 different galleries; the names for the galleries were chosen through the system for naming galleries that was developed by this researcher. They are presented in the section entitled, Galleries for Long Conversation and are presented in Table 4 for reference.

Table 4

Galleries for Long Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Galleries for Long Conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists Support/Praise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activists Disagreement with Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans Veteran Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect Comment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Personal (Insults)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box America Exposed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The researcher then utilized the third step of RFA. This was a key step to the process:

3. Draw up re-presentations or figures of speech to visualize how the conversation is taking place which may include some or all of the following:

   a. Sequential analysis – chart the flow of conversation and notate when the conversation shifts from one chunking or gallery to another

   b. Notation of who is initiating conversational shifts and how this particular speaker is able to move the conversation from one gallery to another. (Chenail, 1995, p. 5)

This particular shifting phenomenon is called “opening up closings” which Chenail (1995) borrowed from conversation analysis as described by Schegloff and Sacks in 1973. It basically means that “one gallery is opened up as another is closed down” (Chenail, 1995, p. 7).

As mentioned in step 3 of RFA (Chenail, 1995), drawing up re-presentations or figures of speech to visualize how the conversation is taking place may include “some or all of the following” (referring to steps 3a and 3b). For the purpose of this research project, this researcher utilized step 3a and the second part of step 3b. Step 3a is a Sequential Analysis to chart the flow of conversation and notate when the conversation shifts from one chunking gallery to another (Chenail, 1995). Given that commenters posed as Avatars – utilizing Avatars, photographs or a plain human silhouette as their profile picture – and utilized pseudonyms for their screennames, this researcher did not utilize the first part step 3b, which is notation of who initiated
conversational shifts. This researcher did, however, utilize the second part of step 3b: notation of *how or why* a commenter was able to move the conversation from one gallery to another (Chenail, 1995).

In accordance with RFA as described by Chenail (1995), immediately following a shift in the conversation, notations are presented as written explanations of “how” or “why” a particular speaker was able to move the conversation from one gallery to another, followed by sequential analyses that are re-presented visually. Using this process, sequential analysis of the 60 comments in this portion of the discussion thread revealed 38 semantic shifts between the seven categories of galleries [see Table 5].

Throughout this discussion thread, this researcher utilized step 3a RFA to present a sequential analysis that charts the flow of the conversation and notated when the conversation shifts from one *chunking* gallery to another and the second part of step 3b to notate *how* a particular speaker was able to move the conversation from one gallery to another (Chenail, 1995).

Analysis of this data set, utilizing RFA (Chenail, 1995), revealed 38 semantic shifts between the seven categories of galleries. These shifts vividly demonstrate the strong difference of opinions of the commenters and showcase the differences of what they believe to be more important. More pointedly, these shifts showcase that there are two sides – or two knees – and these commenters make it clear as to which one they chose. The semantic shifts will be discussed further in Chapter 5, Discussion of Findings. [See table 5].
Table 5

Summary of Categorical Semantic Shifts for Long Conversation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora’s Box</th>
<th>Activists</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
<th>Pandora’s Box</th>
<th>The Flag</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>The Flag</td>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>The Flag</td>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>The Flag</td>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>The Flag</td>
<td>Veterans</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
<td>Law Enforcement</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Theories – Findings through Theories

Goffman’s Framing Theory

A critical analysis of the discourse in this online discussion thread using Goffman’s framing theory allowed exploration of theoretical or rational views of a specific circumstance or situation (Chenail, 1995). Goffman’s theory on framing posits that significances of everyday life can be most efficaciously dealt with taking into consideration the way in which these experiences are framed because these significances, or meanings “are the projection of the structure or form of the experiences in which they are embodied” (Jameson, 1976, p. 119).

There were several circumstances or situations that this researcher explored as a theoretical or rational view of this specific situation. The primary rational view is that these comments were posted to an online discussion thread in response to a specific article, *This is Why Colin Kaepernick took a Knee* (Jenkins, 2020). As part of the critical analysis, this
researcher also considered that theoretically, current events at the time contributed to the context in which these comments were made; some of these were the COVID-19 pandemic, political controversy, protests over the murder of George Floyd and rioting and property destruction by individuals that showed up at these protests.

Two Knees

Rationally, this researcher posits that the commenters’ choice of language and words was influenced by the content and language of this specific article. Jenkins’ (2020) article begins with the following paragraph,

Two knees. One protesting in the grass, one pressing on the back of a man’s neck.

Choose. You have to choose which knee you will defend. There are no half choices; there is no room for indifference. There is only the knee of protest or the knee on the neck.

(para. 1)

There were 16 comments related to the “two knees” analogy in the comments that were directed to the author, Sally Jenkins. The language in these comments was used to praise Jenkins for her use of the “two knees” metaphor to present a serious social problem in our society.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the Author</th>
<th>Two Knees Analogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A clever device</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best encapsulation of this situation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent perspective</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can't be said any better or clearer than this!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than a metaphor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Jenkins leveled up sports writing by opening with this statement. Great work.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spot on analogy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Striking parallelism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succint [sic]. Powerful.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Such a nuanced take on America's racial problem.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Superb analysis
That says it all. Well done.
The framing … is perfect
Tremendous lede [sic]
Two knees is right
Which knee

There were other comments related to kneeling or taking a knee that fell into other frames. This researcher offers 16 of these comments as examples, along with a brief explanation. The language in these comments was used to bring attention to several issues. For example, in one comment, the poster praised law enforcement officers for taking a knee alongside protesters [Law Enforcement Support gallery].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is nice to see so many police officers taking a knee alongside protesters.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language in three comments [Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick gallery] was used to criticize Kaepernick for taking a knee. The first commenter complains that “taking a knee” did not do a good job of connecting the action to what was being protested. The second commenter is bitter about the fact that Colin protested while “getting paid millions of dollars,” while the third commenter sees the “pig” socks as the problem (as opposed to the kneeling).

Two comments [Colin Kaepernick Reciprocal gallery] call for Kaepernick to take revenge or respond in kind. The first commenter posted that Kaepernick should kneel on the cop’s (Derek Chauvin) neck for nine minutes while the second commenter wants him to take a knee to “Fat Donnie’s groin.”

In the next comment [Colin Kaepernick Call to Activism gallery], the poster believes Colin Kaepernick is the only person who can ask the crowds to stop the violence. This commenter is referring to the rioters that showed up at protests (that were meant to be peaceful
protests following the murder of George Floyd) and destroyed property, looted and wreaked havoc through violence.

**Colin Kaepernick**

**Criticism of Kaepernick**

“Taking a knee” did a poor job of connecting that action to what they were protesting. So it was easily converted into a protest against the US, the military or democracy.

Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possible earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.

Taking the knee was not the problem. The problem was the “pig” socks.

**Colin Kaepernick**

**Reciprocal**

The only thing that would resolve this craziness. Let Colin Kapernick [sic] kneel on that cops neck for 9 minute.

Kaepernick needs to take a knee ---- to Fat Donnie's groin.

**Colin Kaepernick**

**Call to Activism**

To me, Colin Kaepernick, because of the symbolism of the kneeling is the only one that can tell the crowds to stop the violence.

In the next two comments offered as examples of comments that mention kneeling [Veterans Veteran Support gallery], the commenters speak about Kaepernick getting advice from a Navy Seal. Both commenters bring attention to the fact that Colin sought and received advice from a friend who had been in the military; his friend told him that kneeling was more respectful than sitting on the bench.

**Veterans**

**Veteran Support**

He asked a Navy Seal to help him protest in the most respectful way, and was told the Seals take a knee in respect at the coffins of their fallen and that that would honor his country and his ideals.

No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action.

In the next comment offered as an example [Status of America Complacency gallery], the commenter talks about some of the other commenters in the discussion thread. Based on the comments of others, this commenter believes “they have chosen the wrong knee.”
More of America is listening now than in the past (I'm 66), it seems to me. 'Murka, however, is pretty dug in on this topic, unfortunately, based on some of the comments about this column. They have chosen the wrong knee and in doing so could not be more un-American or less patriotic.

The next comment [Disagreement gallery], is simply a statement of disagreement with another commenter.

In the next four comments offered as examples of comments that mention kneeling [The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment gallery], were posted by commenters that disagreed with another commenter that believed Kaepernick’s kneeling was disrespectful to the flag. The last comment in this section also fell into the Veterans Veteran support gallery.

In last comment offered as an example of a comment that mentions kneeling [Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery], was posted by a commenters that brought attention to the fact that Kaepernick took a knee to protest “black lives that were being ended by police over-enforcement.”

There were also two comments about indifference. These comments were in the Single Responses data set: comments that were directed to the author, Sally Jenkins (2020). This
researcher chunked (Chenail, 2020) these comments into the Response to Content Indifference gallery.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Content Indifference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is not simply looking the other way. At its heart, it is the inability to see yourself in the shoes of another.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The result of indifference, evasion and avoidance, of stoppered ears and shaded eyes, is not benign.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NFL**

The article then continued with paragraph two that explains how the NFL chose the wrong knee “when they collectively ostracized Colin Kaepernick for his protests against police brutality on unarmed black citizens” (Jenkins, 2020, para. 2). Later in the article (para. 8), Jenkins wrote about how the NFL caved into Trump after he called Kaepernick a “son of a bitch and suggested any player who took a knee be thrown out of the country”. The called it an “ugly political version of a chokehold and called out the owners for not resisting this aggressive bullying. Then in paragraph 13, Jenkins quoted Senator Charles Sumner, an abolitionist that warned of racial violence following the Civil War, “Do not blink it out of sight. Approach it. Contemplate it. Study it. Deal with it” (para. 13). She then remarked about the NFL, “

Too many of us have tried to blink it out of sight, and NFL owners more than most. Time and again they have placed race into a separate compartment, tried to soundproof it like their glass-paneled limos, gate it like their subdivisions and say, “This isn’t our problem, it has nothing to do with the game, and don’t make it the problem of our audience, either. (Jenkins, 2020, para. 13)

Sally Jenkins definitely opened a proverbial “can of worms” by writing a perspective piece about the NFL. There were 46 made about the NFL in the Single Responses that were made to the author. These comments were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into ten NFL Galleries:
Racists, Rich White Men, Gladiator Spectacle, Injuries, Boycott, Owners, General Comments, Greed, Status of America and Call to Activism. It is rational that this researcher believes that the words and language chosen and written in paragraphs two, eight and thirteen provided context and frame for the content of these comments written by posters in this discussion thread.

---

**The NFL
Racists**

Last thing the NFL needs is their minority "workers" to start staging sympathy strikes for the fans.

The majority of NFL owners are racists.

The NFL is clearly a racist organization that needs to be disbanded.

They are all racist hypocrites.

---

**The NFL
Rich White Men**

The multiple legacies of slavery permeates [sic] American life and the NFL owners are a reminder of the durability of those legacies.

The NFL is a rich white man's microcosm of America.

The white owners don't want to have the black workers stick up for themselves because it's inconvenient to discuss while the OWNERS are hauling in the cash.

---

**The NFL
Gladiator Spectacle**

America's version of the gladiator spectacle and basically unknown to the rest of the world.

It is a bitter irony that the NFL has found a strategy to employ black men to uphold white supremacist culture.

---

**The NFL
Injuries**

...NFL's total disregard for brain injury among its players.

One third of pro football players develop permanent serious brain injury.

Ruining men's brains for money. Violence Inc. Screw it.
The NFL Boycott

After Colin Kaepernick I no longer watch NFL.

Boycott NFL! I do.

I am a diehard football fan. But WILL not watch the NFL again unless….

I am so done with the NFL

I haven't seen a Super Bowl game, or any NFL football game since. I don't miss it.

I stopped watching the NFL because of the owners. No one believes them.

This is why I [sic] have stopped watching the NFL. The owners see and treat their black players as commodities rather than actual people

Used to love the NFL, have not watched a game in a long time, and I think it's good riddance.

With the pandemic putting sports on hold, I think I may finally be able to kick the NFL habit.

The NFL Owners

Far too kind to the NFL owners.

Hope all the owners are reading this and squirming in their gated communities.

If the NFL owners had stood up for Kaepernick's kneeling, I bet the climate in this country would feel a lot different now.

NFL owners are almost all Trump@nzees [sic].

She puts these owners in their place.

The NFL owners and general managers who speared Colin in the back are not nearly the patriots that Mr. Kaepernick is and will remain!

The NFL owners are complicit cowards.

The NFL owners are scum.

The owners think we fans are too stupid to see through their bullcrap [sic].

The NFL General Comments

A re-opening of the NFL camps and season should be interesting...

The NFL kowtowed to Trump and MAGA folk.

The NFL really look like fools.

They chose to be on the wrong side of history

In 25 years, the NFL will create "Colin Kaepernick Day" and have a giant blindness-inducing circle of self congratulations [sic].
"Greed is good". It is their motto.

NFL owners doing the right thing? That's a little much to ask of the idiot children of the idle rich, don't you think?

NFL owners think they know their audience, and won't risk their bottom line.

That made a lot of them *very* uncomfortable, and that hit the league's bottom line.

The greedy racist owners do not deserve another dollar from me ever again.

Yet people still line these owners [sic] pockets. Just stop watching.

NFL owners' response was that of the nation.

The same cowardice and intentional blindness exhibited by the NFL exists everywhere else in American society.

IF NFL management had a brain, it would have urged all players to genuflect during the national anthem.

Instead of pulling together, the league bowed to the orange menace.

NFL needs to man up and create an award for players who excel at making the world a better place through social action.

While this researcher rationally posits that the commenters’ choice of language and words when commenting about the NFL was influenced by the content and language of this specific article, she also theoretically posits that the language and words chosen by commenters was influenced by other factors and/or contexts. These factors and/or contexts include personal feelings, personal experience and having an open mind and an understanding of the issues that plague our social justice system.

**Colin Kaepernick**

In paragraph three, Sally Jenkins (2020) stated that “Kaepernick is still so present in the American consciousness that he might as well be playing in the league” (para. 3). She then paints a picture, through language, of Kaepernick’s peaceful protest: “But the image of the kneeling,
bow-headed Kaepernick becomes newly indicting each time someone is pinned down by a brute in a blue uniform and dies pleading in a street” (para. 3). Also, in paragraph 12, Sally Jenkins mentioned Frederick Douglass.

The truth about Kaepernick is that he’s not a radical or a SOB. He’s a reformer, in the great American tradition. As Frederick Douglass said of reformers, “They see what ought to be by the reflection of what is, and endeavor to remove the contradiction.” The NFL might have been proud of that, but it wasn’t. (Jenkins, 2020, para 12)

It is rational for this researcher to posit that the language in paragraphs three and twelve provided the framework or context that lead some commenters to praise Kaepernick for his silent peaceful protest and to compare Kaepernick to other great social reformers or to disagree with Jenkins.

There were 24 comments made directly to Sally Jenkins that were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into Colin Kaepernick galleries; 16 comments were chunked into the Colin Kaepernick Praise / Support gallery and eight were chunked into the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery. All of the commenters who offered words of praise or support, talked about his bravery as a civil rights leader while one of the commenters talked about Kaepernick’s ability as a football player.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Praise / Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brave reformer who sacrificed his career for the higher purpose of racial awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the anger of the protesters, but I think Kaepernick has a ton more bravery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is a patriot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick has shown wisdom and strength of character well beyond his years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go Kap!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is an American hero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is an inspiration to us all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick took a huge risk.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I have always respected his activism.

Colin Kaepernick had courage

Kaepernick is a civil rights leader!

Colin was right.

Kaepernick should receive the Nobel Peace Prize!

Mr. Kaepernick deserves a full-throated public apology.

Twenty years from now, I likely will not remember any current NFL's Quarterback's name... but I will never forget Colin Kaepernick's name and his important stand.

He took his team to the Super bowl and lost in a close game. Don't tell me he's not qualified to play in the NFL.

There were eight comments made directly to Sally Jenkins that were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others gallery. Seven of these commenters compare Kaepernick to others in a positive light, while one compares him in a disapproving manner by stating, “Kaepernick is no Frederick Douglass”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali was another great American banished from his sport by racists, all because he refused to go halfway around the planet to kill the yellow man.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is an American Hero, no less so, than Muhammed Ali was for taking a stand against systemic bigotry, evil and government abuse of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were they alive, Ali, Dr. King, and Mandela would be kneeling aside Kaepernick. All paid a heavy price for standing up for the truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaepernick is no Frederick Douglass.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kap is keeping Dr. King's Dream alive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Like Kap, [Muhammad] Ali was deemed by the establishment as &quot;anti-patriotic,&quot; and like Kap too, he suffered the consequence of being forced into exile during the prime of his professional athletic career.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There's a case to be made that Kaepernick is the Muhammad Ali of our times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is our generation's Rosa Parks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 19 similar comments that used language to praise and / or support Kaepernick in the One Comment / One Response data as well as the Long Conversation data. This researcher offers eight of them as examples:
Mr. Kaepernick deserves our gratitude.

And may the respect he is due be given.

I'd rather have more Kapernick's [sic] in this world, than republican boot-licking Trump's supporters every day of the week and twice on Sundays!

The price of standing up for what is right...most white, aggrieved nfl [sic] fans couldn't/wouldn't acknowledge he was right.

It is never a mistake to speak the truth to power. History will vindicate him and his actions.

Colin Kaepernick is a decent and righteous man who made the mistake of speaking up in an era that is neither decent nor righteous.

To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not “a good enough passing QB” is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, and at worst, flat out racist.

I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us.

There were seven similar comments that used language to compare Kaepernick to others in the One Comment / One Response data as well as the Long Conversation data. This researcher offers six of them as examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Praise / Support</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Kaepernick deserves our gratitude.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And may the respect he is due be given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’d rather have more Kapernick's [sic] in this world, than republican boot-licking Trump's supporters every day of the week and twice on Sundays!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The price of standing up for what is right...most white, aggrieved nfl [sic] fans couldn’t/wouldn’t acknowledge he was right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is never a mistake to speak the truth to power. History will vindicate him and his actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick is a decent and righteous man who made the mistake of speaking up in an era that is neither decent nor righteous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not “a good enough passing QB” is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, and at worst, flat out racist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparing Kaepernick to Others</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hope Kaep [sic] is remembered alongside some of the most important civil rights heroes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ali also made that statement, with the same consequences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does all this vindicate the great Tommie Smith and John Carlos? They protested the same thing as Colin Kaepernick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For all of (you) that have a problem with politics in sports let me ask. Did you have a problem with: Branch Rickey's political statement in hiring Jackie Robinson. Muhammad Ali's protest of the Vietnam war. Tommy Smith and John Carlos power salute in protest of America's blatant, racism at the time. Shawn Green is Jewish and devoted to his faith. So much so, that he refused to play baseball on Yom Kippur each year. Bill Russell said he was inspired to get politically involved by the racism he encountered in his own home of Boston, despite the NBA titles he helped deliver to the city. In honor of his skill on the basketball court and activism off it, Russell was given a statue in Boston in 2013. Brandon Marshall, NFL player holds his hands out, palms up in prayer, in bringing attention to the plight of mental illness of many current and former players. These are but a few. But the fact is that each in its' own way used the sports platform to help change America with the hopes of moving it towards the ideal that it was founded on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And like Kaepernick, he [Ali] was vilified was vindictively denied the right to make a living through his sport.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Law Enforcement

Paragraph four of Sally Jenkins’ (2020) article used language such as: indifference, evasion, avoidance, stopped ears and shaded eyes. She went on to write about several athletes that were the victims of brute force at the hands of police officers:

Former NFL player Desmond Marrow was body-slammed to the ground and choked by a Georgia cop, though he was already in handcuffs, over a simple roadside argument. “I thought I was going to die,” he said. Retired tennis star James Blake was tackled and cuffed on a New York City sidewalk simply because his skin color met a criminal description. Jaylan Butler, the only black member of the Eastern Illinois University swim team, had a police gun put to his forehead for wandering too far from a team bus. Matthias Askew, a retired NFL defensive lineman, was plied with a stun gun in front of his 7-year-old daughter during a traffic stop. (Jenkins, 2020, para 4)

Then in paragraph five Jenkins (2020) mentioned a study at Stanford that “black drivers are 20 percent more likely to get pulled over than white drivers (para. 5). Then in paragraph six, Jenkins asked, “How is this not the NFL’s problem? Seventy-five percent of the league’s players are black” (para. 6). Then in paragraph seven, she asked, “How are Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd not the NFL’s problem, too?” (para. 7). Then in paragraph nine, she demands to know,

All those who vilified Kaepernick, where is the same demand for banishment, the same level of ugly feeling, the same red-faced, foaming sense of injury over the insult to America in that video of Floyd’s death, three white cops with all of their weight on his burdened back, grinding him into that pavement? (para. 9)
It is rational for this researcher to posit that the language used in these five paragraphs provided the frame (context) for the words and language used by commenters to post comments about law enforcement.

There were three comments directed to Sally Jenkins [Response to Content Call for Reform Gallery]; one of these comments specifically talks about law enforcement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response to Content Call for Reform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The system and culture must change so that the good cops are encouraged and rewarded for quickly identifying, intervening and getting rid of the bad.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 19 comments in Law Enforcement galleries in the One Comment / One Response, Short Conversations and Long Conversation data sets. These comments were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the Law Enforcement galleries of: Call for Reform, Stay in Your Lane, Police Brutality, Accountability, Derek Chauvin is a Pig, Killer Cops, Support and Racists Cops. It is rational to posit that the language used in the Stay in Your Lane gallery was elicited by Jenkins’ (2020) comments in paragraphs six, seven and nine. This researcher lists these comments below with the exception of the two in the Support gallery, as they are listed in the “two knees” section above. Additionally, two of these comments are showcased separately because the language used sends a strong message and really speaks to the serious situation of police brutality (Derek Chauvin is a Pig and Killer Cops).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protest if you want, but demand that our politicians reform the damned system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>…mass firing must take place and the culture completely changed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The problem is our’s [sic], the voters, who decide whether a problem exists and then voting for leaders to fix it, whether it be a dilapidated bridge, or police brutality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stay in Your Lane

The NFL has stuck their nose into too many social things as it is. Their job is to play football and run a football league. Try doing that, and letting the law, courts, politicians, etc., worry about theirs.

Police Brutality

If anything police seen [sic] to have gotten more brazen with attacks on minorities in the name of law and order.

His intention which was to protest brutality.

It was all about police brutality.

Accountability

In the name of entitlement and brazen lack of accountability…17 complaints.

Killer Cops

… Kaepernick's protest was about the abuse and murder of black Americans by white American police officers…

Remember Rodney King? [Murdered by cops in LA].

Death penalty for misdemeanors? At least in Saudi Arabia and Iran they make it official.

He did not deserve to have the cop be grand jury, prosecutor, judge, jury, and hangman.

Irrelevant. Unarmed, handcuffed George Floyd was murdered by police.

You don't think cops killing people are disrespecting the flag, the country and the Constitution?

Innocent? HE wasn't innocent. his crime doesn't warrant a death penalty, but not innocent.

Racists Cops

And more innocent black Americans will die at the hands of racist cops.

This researcher showcased the next two comments about law enforcement separately – in the form of a re-presentation of a conversational semantic shift - because the language used sends a strong message and really speaks to the serious situation of police brutality. The first comment was made as a retort to another commenter who had a problem with some “pig socks” worn by Kaepernick but the second commenter really put the situation into perspective by
saying, “Call him what he is.......Murderer.” It is rational for this researcher to posit that this conversation truly encapsulates the context and frame in which these comments were made.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement</th>
<th>Law Enforcement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derek Chauvin is a Pig</td>
<td>Killer Cops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>..... isn't Derrek Chauvin a pig? And</td>
<td>Call him what he is.......Murderer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>that's being nice.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pandora’s Box

In the final paragraph (14), Jenkins (2020) said a lot. She wrote about Kaepernick “opening the box.” She wrote about how the NFL’s missed an opportunity to make a difference and how they chose the wrong knee.

Colin Kaepernick’s real offense was to open the box and hold up what is in front of the audience, instead of the triumphalist, self-congratulatory image the NFL wanted. The league owners had a chance, with Kaepernick, to be more than hucksters guarding their brands and bottom line. They might have been tremendous influencers on the problem of injustice in this burning moment. They might have been real allies of — and advocates for — their great players. They might have been examples of true, righteous Americanism. They might have been bonders rather than dividers, healers of mistrust. But who would ever buy that now? They missed their chance. They chose the wrong knee. It was a terrible choice. One that may even make you weep. (Jenkins, 2020, para. 14)

It is rational for this researcher to posit that the words and language in this paragraph provided multiple contexts and frames in which comments were made throughout the entire discussion thread. This researcher has provided some examples (that were not listed above) beginning with Jenkins’ (2020) reference to Kaepernick opening a box.
There were 34 comments made directly to the author that this researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) in Pandora’s Box galleries. Twelve were chunked into the Pandora’s Box Status of America gallery; the remaining 22 were chunked into the Pandora’s Box Racism gallery.

### Pandora’s Box Status of America

A murder on video capsulized 200 years of human tragedy and suffering born of unconscionable violence. We are not at a crossroads we face a day of reckoning.

As a nation of immigrants we should all be ashamed of what we do to each other.

Capitalism rules all in America.

Far too many people in this country don't want peace, just quiet.

If only America had listened…:(

There are millions of little Trumps, all over the country.

The authoritarianism in America is sickening and I'm glad the whole world is watching.

Racism is so American that when someone protests against racism, people think they're protesting against America. CK found that out.

This is about a government and a culture of the very wealthy who will do anything to make sure they don't lose a dime of their profits.

Unfortunately, in this country, it is way better to be rich and guilty than poor and innocent.

We live in a rotten racist country with a large number of ignorant mean people.

We should all take a knee in mourning for our country and the police state it's become.

Innocent? HE wasn't innocent. his crime doesn't warrant a death penalty, but not innocent.

### Pandora’s Box Racism

America remains such a color-blind society - in all the wrong ways, it seems.

Black Americans still have better lives than Black Africans. All Americans are lucky to be here regardless of how they got here.

Endemic racism … Systemic and structural racism.

Excellent article calling out NFL owners racism.

High tech lynching … George Floyd suffered an actual lynching … We are all complicit until we demand an end to racism.

I would like to think the human race will evolve enough so that racism ends.

Know your rights is important but not nearly as important as breaking down walls, stereotypes, and hate.
Pence, in his white privileged, somber, holier than thou states he is all for peaceful protests. Yet he was the first to condemn Colin Kaepernick for taking a knee to bring attention to police brutality.

Powerfully righteous condemnation of the blood-sucking, wealthy hypocrites who would isolate and marginalize a brave man.

Promote those who … learn to compensate for racism.

Racism is everyone's problem and anyone who is unwilling to adress [sic] it is a coward.

Racism is ingrained in a lot of people.

Racism is like an STD. It don’t [sic] get fixed until you stop/change the behavior and get a cure.

Racism will tear this country apart.

Sound law enforcement doesn't have to involve racism and excessive force.

Structural racism … Systemic racism.

The cruel way that Mr. Kaepernick was treated for protesting by kneeling, showed exactly how racist many are.

The harvest of decades of injustice is anger, violence, and distrust.

The NFL decided to apease [sic] its white racist base in a sport mostly populated by wealthy African American athletes.

To [sic] much of white America, to be nonwhite is un-American.

What do you think would happen to black lawyers if every time they went to court, they took a knee when the bailiff asked that they "All rise for the Honorable Judge ..."?

"White racists don't like peaceful protests or violent protests or any protests.

The next comment was made in the Three Short Conversations data set and was chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the Racism gallery:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The problem is YOUR bigotry. Too bad YOU haven't been stopped and frisked just for being a WHITE RACIST.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were another nine comments made in the Long Conversation data set that was analyzed for this research project. This researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) these comments in Pandora’s Box galleries of America Exposed, Racism and Call to Activism.
Pandora's Box
America Exposed

Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick’s sin was to point it out.

Kaepernick helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside.

[Colin] helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. That box was lined with mirrors, so that we could all see our reflections.

Our original sin was slavery. And it hasn't gone completely away yet. That sin belongs to all of us until it is completely expunged. We all own it.

Note: this researcher only listed two of the three comments made in the Pandora’s Box Call to Activism gallery because one of them is already listed in the “two knees” category above.

Pandora's Box
Racism

Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl?

… and at worst, flat out racist

Other Factors and Contexts

Theoretically, in addition to the words and language written by Sally Jenkins (2020), there are other circumstances, situations and/or factors that possibly provided context and frame for the commenters’ choice of language and words posted in this discussion thread. Examples of these other contextual factors are: the political climate of the United States at the time the article was written; the COVID-19 pandemic, protests and ensuing riots in response to the murder of George Floyd, and personal beliefs of the individuals that posted comments to this discussion thread. The first example can be seen in these three links to other news stories embedded in the article written by Sally Jenkins (2020):

[Live updates: Outrage over George Floyd death sparks protests across the U.S.](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/30/george-floyd-protests-live-updates/)
There were two comments made in the One Comment / One Response data set that were theoretically influenced by the context of Jenkins’ (2020) article as well as current events in the United States at the time. These were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the Status of America Chaos gallery:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America Chaos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our country is in chaos, cities are ablaze, thousands are desperately ill and dying from an out-of-control contagion, and the fat man is sitting in our White House fantasizing about turning dogs and the U.S military on protesters and punishing purveyors of truth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and meanwhile ... you have non-mask wearing &quot;peaceful patriots&quot; armed to the teeth (brandishing automatic weapons), festooned with confederate/don't tread on me flags storming state houses across the government because they want to &quot;get back to normal&quot;...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were 26 comments made about politics in the Single Replies data set: comments directed to the author, Sally Jenkins (2020). These were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the following galleries: Politics Party (4 comments), Politics Racism (6 comments) and Politics Trump (16 comments). It is both rational and theoretical for this researcher to posit that commenters posted these comments to this discussion thread through the context and frame of Sally Jenkins’ article as well as the political climate of the United States at the time the article was written.
Politics

Party

And how many of the "patriots" that supported DFT had, like him, never served in the military.

As always, events have validated the liberal position on a controversy—for all the good that seems to do.

He [Kaepernick] was more American than Trump and his Republican minions.

Mr. Kaepernick might consider endorsing the only candidate who can defeat our racist president.

Politics

Racism

That certainly should keep racist Don from every attending a game.

Donald Trump enables, instigates and fuels racism and violence and all the worst in us.

Kaepernick was a page two story until the Racist in Chief decided to make it a national controversy. Because it pitted white middle class against ungrateful, rich black athletes.

Neither Trump nor Pence appreciated the quiet protests by black football players, primarily Kaepernick, they just called him unAmerican [sic].

Trump and the stupid that follow him are racists.

Trump has contributed by being a promoter of racism and hate. I can’t wait until he is out of office.

Politics

Trump

Hypocrite, not conservative is the common trait trumps rotten core reveal.

I’d say Trump sacrificed his principles for his career but for the fact Trump never had any principles.

Small minded evil man that Donny truly is NFL players taking a knee; Trump backers protesting with automatic rifles.

You think trump cares about the death of one black man; he doesn’t care about 100,000 dead.

This is why Trump was so determined to destroy Colin Kaepernick.

Trump will try to make you [Sally] pay for it [the article] because he is a coward and a punk.

Trump … is a hateful demagogue, a lover of chaos.

Trump calling him a "son of a bitch".

Trump did [took a position on the issue]. As usual.

Trump has been more critical of Colin Kaepernick and NFLers for ‘taking a knee’ that he has been of Derek Chauvin for killing by knee.

Trump not only erased progress, but he put us back decades.

Thump and his parade of Corporate Yes Men.
Trump…has revealed how awful many people in power can be.

VP Pence squandered tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars just to go to a NFL game for an orchestrated walk out when players took a knee against injustice. He and Trump represent the brutal murders and mass shootings they continue to incite.

White privilege, alive and well in Trump's America.

Speaks loudly to the mopic [sic] self-centeredness of 45.

Additionally, there were two comments made about politics in the Three Short Conversations data set. This researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) these comments into the Politics gallery:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Politics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How's the weather in Moscow?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oink, oink Trumplicker.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were nine comments posted to this discussion thread in which the commenters quoted others. These comments were in the Single Responses data set; responses made directly to the author, Sally Jenkins (2020). Given that Sally Jenkins quoted others in her article, it is rational for this researcher to posit that this provided context for commenters to quote others. One commenter posted one of the quotes from Jenkins’ article. Theoretically, these commenters may have chosen to share these quotes because of other contexts. These comments were chunked (Chenail, 1995) into the Quotes by Others Galleries of: Inaction, Call to Activism, Racism, Revolution, and Stupidity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes by Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Whether Caucasian or a poor Asian Racism is a weapon of mass destruction Whether inflation or globalization Fear is a weapon of mass destruction Whether Haliburton, Enron or anyone Greed is a weapon of mass destruction We need to find courage, overcome Inaction is a weapon of mass destruction” Mass Destruction – Faithless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How many times can a man turn his head…and pretend he just doesn't see?” (Blowing in the Wind)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quotes by Others
Call to Activism

“‘Do not blink it out of sight,’ the great abolitionist Sen. Charles Sumner warned of racial violence at the end of the Civil War. ‘Approach it. Contemplate it. Study it. Deal with it.’”

You can always count on Americans to do the right thing - after they've tried everything else. Churchill

Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. Proverbs 31:8

Quotes by Others
Racism

The plague of racism is insidious, entering into our minds as smoothly and quietly and invisibly as floating airborne microbes enter into our bodies to find lifelong purchase in our bloodstreams. -Maya Angelou

Quotes by Others
Revolution

“Those who make peaceful revolution impossible will make violent revolution inevitable.” JFK - March 13, 1962

Gil Scott-Heron in The Revolution Will Not Be Televised said, “There will be no pictures of pigs shooting down brothers on the instant replay.”

Quotes by Others
Stupidity

“Think of how stupid the average person is, and realize half of them are stupider than that.” - G. Carlin

The last set of examples provided by this researcher in Goffman’s Framing theory is about Rights. Theoretically these comments were posted in the context of the words and language written by Sally Jenkins (2020), law and personal beliefs. The first three comments were in the Single Responses data set; the last two were in the Long Conversation data set.

Response to Content
Constitutional Rights

He was doing what every American has the right to do; it is our most precious right…if we take it away from one American, then we risk taking it away from all of us.

It [kneeling] shows greater respect for the important freedoms the flag represents.

All he [Kaepernick] got was a ruined football career and viscous, unfair criticism for simply exercising his American rights
He has just as much right to protest in the manner that he chose than the armed protestors in Michigan or in Richmond earlier this year.

They fought and died for the constitution, not the flag, for things like the first amendment.

Goffman’s theory applies universal rules to human interactions or reciprocities in that his theory posits: life events as well as the role players (people involved) affect or determine the lens through which an individual views a particular situation in the playing of games (Gonos, 1977).

A matrix of possible events and a cast of roles through whose enactment the events occur constitute together a field for fateful dramatic action, a plane of being, an engine of meaning, a world in itself, different from all other worlds, except the ones generated when the same game is played at other times. (Goffman, 1961, pp. 26-27, as quoted by Gonos, 1977, p. 857)

**Social Identity Theory**

Abigail De Kosnik (2019) wrote an essay entitled, *Is Twitter a Stage? Theories of Social Media Platforms as Performance Spaces*, in which she discussed Goffman’s (1959) work entitled, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Goffman (1959) postulated that every individual performs roles in their everyday lives and have many motives for attempting to control the impression they make on others. He further proposed that our patterns of actions that we present through “play” can actually constitute a “part.” In this essay, De Kosnik (2019) pointed out that Goffman is not concerned with the content of the performance, but rather the “fact that performance takes place, and how performance works, in social interaction” (2019, p. 20). De Kosnik wrote that our performance in everyday life, as described by Goffman, can be used to describe how we perform on digital media platforms and that the impressions that we seek to make upon others and the parts that we play while do so, are our online identities.
According to Wood and Smith (2005), an individual’s “identity is a complex personal and social construct, consisting in part of who we think ourselves to be, how we wish others to perceive us, and how they actually perceive us” (p. 52).

Social identity is defined as “the sense of identity we get from belonging to a larger social group” (Folger et al., 2009, p. 92). Analysis of the discourse in an online discussion thread through *social identity theory* allowed a better understanding of social context or “belonging” (Folger et al., 2009). Understanding context is an important component of conflict resolution because the core of any conflict is grounded in the perception of the individuals engaged in conflict.

To understand how the conflict in the discourse of this discussion thread was grounded in the perception of the individuals engaged in conflict or “communication wars” this researcher considered the context in which these comments were made. The main context is the fact that these comments were made in a discussion thread in response to the perspective piece entitled; *This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee*, written by Sally Jenkins (2020), a sports columnist. This researcher rationally posits that the commenters’ choice of language and words when commenting were influenced by the content and language of this specific article.

The next contextual factor is the fact that George Floyd had just been murdered five days prior; his murder was videoed by a by-stander and was made public. This researcher theoretically posits that comments in this discussion thread were made in the context of other issues such as: personal feelings; personal experience; open-mindedness and an understanding of the issues that plague our social justice system; closed-mindedness; and current events of the time (the COVID-19 pandemic; the political climate of the United States at the time the article was written; and protests and ensuing riots in response to the murder of George Floyd).
Given the definition of social identity provided by Folger et al. (2009), “the sense of identity we get from belonging to a larger social group” this researcher proposes that these individuals in this discussion thread identify through belonging to a large social group of individuals that posted comments to this discussion thread. Also, considering that this discussion thread was the third one that this researcher read through (while engaging in the data selection process), some of these commenters posted comments to all three articles. So it is reasonable to believe that (at least) some of these commenters identify through belonging to large social groups of individuals that post comments to discussion threads on a regular basis.

Wood and Smith (2005), described an individual’s identity as “a complex personal and social construct, consisting in part of who we think ourselves to be, how we wish others to perceive us, and how they actually perceive us” (p. 52). In a discussion of Goffman’s (1959) work entitled, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, De Kosnik (2019) wrote that our performance in everyday life can be used to describe how we perform on digital media platforms and that the impressions that we seek to make upon others and the parts that we play while do so, are our online identities.

In order to analyze and understand how these individuals wished to be perceived, this researcher analyzed the data offered in their profiles above each comment using a protocol she developed. The information provided about these commenters is not intended to be statistical information but is provided by the researcher to provide understanding of how these individuals chose to present themselves in this social setting.

There were 2,682 comments made in this discussion thread by 1,136 commenters. Of these 1,136 commenters, this researcher utilized the protocol she developed to determine that 74
utilized an Avatar as their profile picture; 229 utilized a photograph as their profile picture; while the remaining 833 utilized a plain human silhouette.

The individuals that posted comments in this discussion thread performed on this digital media platform with online identities (screennames) that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers. Using the protocol designed by this researcher, it was determined that some of these individuals utilized an Avatar for their profile picture, while others used a photograph or a plain human silhouette. The findings were:

**Avatars**

Of the 74 commenters that utilized an Avatar as their profile picture only 21 utilized an online identity (screenname) that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name. The remaining 53 utilized screennames that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

Commenters that utilized an Avatar as their profile picture chose the following: Alligator (1); atom symbol (1); bats (1); bee (1); blank grey square (1); blue check mark (1); cartoon boy (2); cartoon cat (2); cartoon dog (1); cartoon duck (1); cartoon girl (1); cartoon human (4); cartoon princess (1); cartoon T-Rex (1); cartoon wizard (1); cat (1); cat woman (1); Celtic cross (1); Celtic knot (1); crest (3); crow (1); Democratic logo (1); dog (1); donkey (1); dragon (1); emoji (4); frog (1); green apple (1); heart (1); human silhouette with fire (1); indistinguishable (13); letter “W” (2); letters BHVbum (1); letters RUN DMV (1); minions (1); Ninja Turtle (1); numbers (1); purple fluffy ball (1); question mark (1); red stapler (1); scales of justice (1); shamrock (1); skull with wings (1); Spiderman (1); sunflower (1); Sylvester the Cat (1); tent at campground (1); unicorn (1); Vietnam Veteran (1); white mouse (1); and Yin-Yang symbol (1).
Photographs

Of the 229 commenters that utilized a photograph as their profile picture 103 utilized an online identity (screenname) that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name. The remaining 126 utilized screennames that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

These 229 commenters that utilized a photograph as their profile picture chose to utilize photographs of the following:

“Surrender Donald” (1); “Vote” buttons (1); Abraham Lincoln (1); Airborne logo (1); alligator (1); American flag (6 – 4 hanging properly; 2 upside down); ape (1); Barack Obama (1); baseball emblem (1); beach (2); bicycle (1); bird (3); black cat (1); blank (22); bobcat (1); Bono (of U2) (1); bull (1); butterfly (1); cactus (1); car (2); cartoon (1); cat (6); coat of arms (2); dog (15); Don’t Tread of Me (1); Earth (2); Flag (3); flower(s) (3); goat (1); Greek statue (1); guitar (1); hands (1); heart (1); historic (2); humans (52); Indian (1); indistinguishable (52); jet (1); Joe Biden (1); landscape (6); lighthouse (1); map (3); military flag (1); moon (1); mountains (2); Mr. T. (1); mule (1); NFL Patriots logo (1); nuts (1); philosopher (1); rain on window (1); Washington Redskins logo (1); Republican elephant (1); sunflower (2); train (1); tree(s) (1); truck (1); USA flag upside down (2); vehicle (1); white fox (1); and Zeno the Stoic (1).

Of the photographs that contained humans, this researcher would like to note that the photo tiles were microscopic making any identification impossible. The photographs contained: girl with Snoopy toy (1); indistinguishable (7); a couple (1); man (32); multiple humans (3); silhouette (1); woman (7);
Silhouettes

Of the 833 commenters that utilized a plain human silhouette as their profile picture 367 utilized an online identity (screenname) that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name. The remaining 466 utilized screennames that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

In order to analyze and understand how these commenters chose to identify in this social media setting, this researcher totaled the number of commenters that utilized a screenname or pseudonym that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name. There is no way to know whether the full or partial names are “actually” the names of the individuals that posted the comments to the discussion thread. This researcher also totaled the number of commenters that utilized a pseudonym that was created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

Overall, of the 1,136 commenters in this discussion thread, 491 utilized a screenname or pseudonym that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full or partial “given” name; while the remaining 645 utilized a pseudonym that was created with random letters, words and/or numbers. Given these numbers and the fact 833 commenters utilized a plain human silhouette as their profile picture and that no identification can be made from the photographs utilized as profile pictures, this researcher concludes that commenters chose anonymity. An overwhelming majority of these commenters (833) chose a plain human silhouette as their profile picture; 229 chose photographs that are too small for identification to be made; while the remaining 74 chose to pose as an Avatar (Table 6).

These photographs and Avatars utilized as profile pictures for these commenters may provide small clues as to things these individuals like or activities they engage in however they
are essentially anonymous. So, even though these individuals were forthright in giving their opinions they engaged facelessly in conversations and fought their battles like warriors at an online Masquerade Ball holding in their hands the almighty devices by which they engage in their own *keyboard revolution* (personal conversation, Dr. Jorge Rice) where in their minds they are changing their world one keystroke at a time.

Table 6 provides an overview of the demographics of profile photo usage and selection of usernames and/or pseudonyms.

**Table 6**

*Profile Photo and Username Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profile Photo Type</th>
<th>Full/Partial Screenname</th>
<th>Pseudonym Screenname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avatars - 74</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photograph - 229</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silhouette - 833</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>466</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Critical Race Theory**

Hylton (2009) summarized critical race theory as a “framework from which to explore and examine the racism in society that privileges whiteness as it disadvantages others because of their ‘blackness’” (p. 22). Critical race theory challenges policy and practice that promotes race neutrality while it recognizes the valuable black voice that is often marginalized in mainstream theory, policy and practice.

According to Delgado and Stefancic (2017), critical race theorist study and seek ways to transform the relationship among race, racism and power. While the critical race theory movement takes into consideration the same issues as conventional civil rights and ethnic studies discourses, they view the issues through broader perspectives including “economics, history,
setting, group and self-interest, and emotions and the unconscious” (p. 3). While traditional civil rights discourse focuses on incremental progress, critical race theory “questions the very foundations of liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law” (p. 3).

This researcher engaged in a critical analysis and utilized the six basic tenants of CRT to analyze the data for this study. This data for this study is comments from the discussion thread in response to the article entitled, *This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee* (Jenkins, 2020). This was done by identifying comments that applied to or belonged in each of the basic tenants, or in multiple of the basic tenants.

The six basic tenants of critical race theory are:

1. Racism is ordinary and is a common, every-day experience for many people of color in the United States. Racism is a problem that is very difficult to address because it is not acknowledged;
2. Our system of white-over-color dominance serves both psychic and material purposes for the dominant group. In other words, racism, for the most part, is the result of interest convergence;
3. Race is socially constructed; meaning that races are categories that society invents, manipulate and/or retires at their convenience;
4. Racism can take the form of differential racialization; whereupon society racializes different minority groups to suit changing needs (I.e., labor market);
5. Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity; and
6. Voice of color; which means due to the unique histories and experiences with oppression, writers and thinkers who are black, American Indian, Asian, or Latino can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they likely do not know or properly understand (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

**First Basic Tenant**

Beginning with basic tenant number one that states, “Racism is ordinary and is a common, every-day experience for many people of color in the United States. Racism is a problem that is very difficult to address because it is not acknowledged” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369), this researcher identified the following comments that relate to racism being ordinary in the United States.

These comments are from the Single Responses data set and are related to racism being ordinary in the United States.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pandora’s Box</th>
<th>Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>America remains such a color-blind society - in all the wrong ways, it seems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL</th>
<th>Rich White Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The multiple legacies of slavery permeates [sic] American life and the NFL owners are a reminder of the durability of those legacies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The white owners don't want to have the black workers stick up for themselves because it's inconvenient to discuss while the OWNERS are hauling in the cash.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL</th>
<th>Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The same cowardice and intentional blindness exhibited by the NFL exists everywhere else in American society.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFL owners' response was that of the nation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following comments are from the One Comment / One Response data set. They are related to the first basic tenant of critical race theory because of denial. The first commenter refuses to acknowledge that the problem of unarmed black citizens by police officers is a
national problem; it is a problem of epic proportion yet this commenter calls it “personal stuff” instead. The second commenter praises Kaepernick but states that most NFL fans refuse to acknowledge that he (Kaepernick) is right. The third commenter talks about how Americans have ignored lessons of history and continue to turn a blind eye to the social justice issues that plague our nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough on the big K. Quarterback, I see his oint [sic], but he represents NFL not place for personal stuff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The price of standing up for what is right...most white, aggrieved nfl fans couldn't/wouldn’t acknowledge he was right...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status of America</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complacency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We ignore the lessons of history, repeating the awful examples of intolerance while we look the other way. We are all enablers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Second Basic Tenant**

The second basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Our system of white-over-color dominance serves both psychic and material purposes for the dominant group. In other words, racism, for the most part, is the result of interest convergence” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369). This researcher found the following comments that relate to the system of white-over-color dominance that serves material purposes for the dominant group:

These comments are from the Single Responses data set:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gladiator Spectacle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is a bitter irony that the NFL has found a strategy to employ black men to uphold white supremacist culture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

America's version of the gladiator spectacle and basically unknown to the rest of the world
NFL Racists

Last thing the NFL needs is their minority "workers" to start staging sympathy strikes for the fans.

NFL Injuries

Ruining men's brains for money. Violence Inc. Screw it.

Third Basic Tenant

The third basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Race is socially constructed; meaning that races are categories that society invents, manipulate and/or retires at their convenience” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

This comment is from the Single Responses data set and provides an example of how “race” is manipulated for convenience.

Pandora’s Box Racism

Black Americans still have better lives than Black Africans. All Americans are lucky to be here regardless of how they got here.

This comment is from the Long Conversation data set. Here the commenter claims that “black athletes have to take the lead” in seeking social change. This comment can be construed as manipulation for convenience because the commenter seems to be content with the status quo until this happens. This also means that this comment could be included in the first basic tenant of critical race theory because of denial or failure to acknowledge the problem.

Pandora’s Box Call to Activism

But black athletes [sic] have to take the lead for others to be perceived as authentic.

Fourth Basic Tenant

The fourth basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Racism can take the form of differential racialization; whereupon society racializes different minority groups to suit changing needs (I.e., labor market)” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).
These comments are from the Single Responses data set and were listed in the second basic tenant of critical race theory. They also apply to the fourth basic tenant because, as these commenters observe, the NFL owners are happy to employ black players for their strength, but do not want them speaking out either.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NFL Gladiator Spectacle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is a bitter irony that the NFL has found a strategy to employ black men to uphold white supremacist culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America's version of the gladiator spectacle and basically unknown to the rest of the world</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Fifth Basic Tenant**

The fifth basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

These comments are from the Three Short Conversations data set. Here the first commenter projects a unitary identity upon George Floyd by calling him a criminal. This comment is also an attempt by the commenter to justify his murder. The second commenter agrees with the first commenter by making a sarcastic remark.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>George Floyd was a Criminal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Floyd had a criminal record.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sarcasm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We don’t talk about that he was an innocent man the media told me so.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sixth Basic Tenant**

The sixth basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Voice of color” which means due to the unique histories and experiences with oppression, writers and thinkers who are black, American Indian, Asian, or Latino can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they
likely do not know or properly understand (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369). This researcher found the following statement(s) that showcase the voice of color:

Single Responses data set:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotes by Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The plague of racism is insidious, entering into our minds as smoothly and quietly and invisibly as floating airborne microbes enter into our bodies to find lifelong purchase in our bloodstreams. -Maya Angelou.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This researcher found the following statement(s) that express criticism of the voice of color. These comments could also be placed into the list for tenant number one that states, racism is common in the United States.

The first comment is from the Single Responses data set. Here the commenter criticizes Kaepernick’s (silent) voice of color by claiming he used it as a weapon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kap had good social justice intent but he used it as a weapon against his employer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next comments are from the One Comment / One Response data set. The first commenter claims that he doubts Kaepernick can even verbalize why he did it; thereby criticizing Kaepernick’s (silent) voice of color. The second commenter criticizes the “place” where Kaepernick used his (silent) voice of color. This comment was also included in the first basic tenant of critical race theory because the commenter said the issue is “personal” which equates to denial by this individual. The third commenter discredits Kaepernick’s (silent) voice of color altogether by stating that he did not make a difference.

The fourth and fifth commenters also discredit Kaepernick’s (silent) voice of color by claiming his strategy was ineffective. Both of these comments could also be included in the first tenant of critical race theory because both of these commenters blatantly refuse to acknowledge the message Colin was trying to convey. The fifth commenter even claims that it was converted
into a protest against the US which is an example of someone who absolutely refuses to see or acknowledge the truth; the protesting began in 2020 following the murder of George Floyd – Kaepernick took a knee in 2016. The protests were not related to Kaepernick kneeling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What a stupid stretch. If you ask him, I doubt he can verbalize why he did it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enough on the big K. Quarterback, I see his oint [sic], but he represents NFL not place for personal stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yeah.. CK did not make one bit of difference, did he?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I suppose angering a franchises sports fans [sic] by acting in an unAmercain [sic] manner is a good strategy to effect change. Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Taking a knee” did a poor job of connecting that action to what they were protesting. So it was easily converted into a protest against the US, the military or democracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next comment is from the Three Short Conversations data set. Again, another commenter has a problem with “where” Kaepernick used his (silent) voice of color and is bitter that Kaepernick was being paid millions of dollars. This commenter’s racist rant continues with words of joy that Kaepernick is unemployed. The first commenter that replied to this individual exclaimed, “Wow…was your white hood at the cleaners?” This commenter also arbitrarily assigns Kaepernick a unitary identity (football quarterback) by claiming he could not possibly earn that much money anywhere else in the world so this comment could also be included in the fifth basic tenant of critical race theory that states, “Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possibly earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This comment is from the Long Conversations data set. Here the commenter calls Colin Kaepernick a “sideshow” thereby discrediting Kaepernick’s (silent) voice of color. Because this
commenter discredits Kaepernick with an insult, this individual also refuses to acknowledge the social justice problems that plague our nation. Therefore, this comment could also be included in the first basic tenant of critical race theory because of denial.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colin Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Questions**

Given that the article to which commenters responded was about a black athlete being blacklisted from his professional sport after staging a peaceful protest, this study sought to answer three research questions. This researcher offers the following answers:

**Research Question 1**

1. Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread escalate conflict with those who respond? Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread de-escalate conflict with those who respond?

Through a critical analysis of the data, this researcher found that certain language used in this discussion thread caused conflict to escalate or de-escalate. In the Short Conversation No. 2 data set, the conversation begins with a commenter posting, “Taking the knee was not the problem. The problem was the "pig" socks. Don't you get that? Stop glorifying this man.” [Gallery: Criticism of Kaepernick]

In this comment, the commenter attempts to focus the conversation on a pair of “pig socks” worn by Colin Kaepernick, this language escalated the conversation and caused the conversation to shift to the Politics gallery. The first commenter responded with, “How's the weather in Moscow??” [Gallery: Politics] This comment alludes to the political climate of the United States at the time (Trump’s relationship with Putin).
The conflict continues to escalate with the next two comments: The next commenter wrote, “The problem is YOUR bigotry. Too bad YOU haven't been stopped and frisked just for being a WHITE RACIST.” [Gallery: Racism] This commenter is alluding to the fact that black people are often stopped by police for no apparent reason.

This was followed by another comment that said, “... isn't Derrek Chauvin a pig? And that's being nice.” [Gallery: Derek Chauvin is a Pig] This commenter is clearly astounded that the first commenter sees the “pig socks” as the problem, as opposed to Derek Chauvin.

The conversation escalates even more with the language in the next comment: “Call him what he is...Murderer.” [Gallery: Killer Cops] This commenter was responding to the “...isn’t Derrek Chauvin a pig?” comment.

The conversation escalates once again, and returns to the Politics gallery when the next commenter posted: “Oink, oink Trumplicker.” [Gallery: Politics]

Research Question 2

1. Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread contribute to conflict regarding race with those who respond?
Through a critical analysis this researcher found that certain language used in this discussion thread contributed to conflict regarding race with those who responded.

In the Short Conversation No. 1 data set the conversation begins with a commenter saying: “What an incredibly dumb column. Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possible earn anywhere else in the world.” This commenter’s racist rant continues with words of joy that Kaepernick was not hired by any other NFL team and therefore unemployed, “Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.” [Gallery: Criticism of Kaepernick]

The language used in this comment indicates that the comment is bitter that Kaepernick was getting paid “millions of dollars” and was happy that he was unemployed (“Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him”). This language contributed to conflict regarding race as indicated in the first response to this comment. This commenter replied with, “Wow... was your white hood at the cleaners? My gawd [sic]... does that much ignorance come naturally or do you hvw [sic] to work at it? [Gallery: Racism] This commenter basically accused the poster of the Level [1] comment of being a racists and belonging to the Ku Klux Klan.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
<th>Racism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possible earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.</td>
<td>Wow... was your white hood at the cleaners?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This escalation of the conflict continued when another commenter posted: “What an incredibly dumb comment. Many, if not most were not fine with his kneeling. And your excuse that he should do it while not getting paid millions is just that... a white person trying to
rationalize. What he got paid had nothing to do with the issue, or you. And mentioning the rioting that wasn't going on when he kneeled is irrelevant.” [Gallery: Shiny Object]

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shiny Object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>And your excuse that he should do it while not getting paid millions is just that... a white person trying to rationalize.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 3

1. What are the turning points in the conversation?

Through a critical analysis, this researcher determined that there were many turning points in the conversations in this discussion thread. This researcher has provided two examples of turning points in the conversation: one is from the Short Conversation No. 3 data set and one from the Long Conversation data set.

Example Number One:

This Level [1] comment is from the Short Conversation No. 3 data set and was posted by an individual that used “gas lighting”, which is when a person makes a statement designed to anger people and cause conflict. Within the entire data set, this individual made two original Level [1] comments about George Floyd and his previous criminal record for the purpose of causing conflict. This researcher decided to include the following conversation (of the two) for analysis.

The conversation began with the following comment: “George Floyd had a criminal record.” [Gallery: George Floyd was a Criminal] The first reply to this comment did not create a turning point but rather the commenter agreed through the use of sarcasm, “We don’t talk about that he was an innocent man the media told me so.” [Gallery: Sarcasm]
Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>George Floyd was a Criminal</th>
<th>Sarcasm</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Floyd had a criminal record.</td>
<td>We don’t talk about that he was an innocent man the media told me so</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a turning point when the conversation continues: This commenter exclaims that the first commenter’s point is irrelevant. “..and? So what?” [Gallery: Irrelevance]

There is another turning point in the conversation with the next comment when the commenter turned the focus of the conversation to the death penalty and killer cops. They stated, “Death penalty for misdemeanors? At least in Saudi Arabia and Iran they make it official.” [Gallery: Killer Cops]

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Irrelevance</th>
<th>Killer Cops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>..and? So what?</td>
<td>Death penalty for misdemeanors? At least in Saudi Arabia and Iran they make it official.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation continues:


The conversation turned again when the next commenter uses insults to convey their point. They commented, “And you are criminally stupid, yet we don’t execute you for it.” [Gallery: Personal (Insults)] The next commenter makes a similar comment and even though the comment shifted to a different gallery, it did not create a “turning point” in the conversation. This individual posted, “So everyone with a criminal record can\should get a knee on his\her neck for 8:46 mins ’till they are dead???” [Gallery: Disagreement]
This conversation continued and although it shifted between galleries, there were no more turning points. This researcher offers the visual re-presentations for the remainder of this conversation for reference:

**Example Number Two:**

The second example is from the Long Conversation data set. Because this conversation was long, there were several turning points. The language in this conversation causes escalation in conflict within the conversation as well so this example serves as an answer to both research questions one and two.

The conversation begins with a Level [1] comment when a commenter posted, “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]
The next commenter posted a Level [2] comment that said, “Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too.” [Gallery: Activists Support/Praise] The conversation shifts to the Activists gallery but does not create a turning point. The turning point and conflict escalation occurred with the next Level [3] comment when a commenter posted, “Yeah, Cassius Clay, the Draft Dodger. Right up there with Bill Clinton and Donald Trump.” [Gallery: Activists Criticism]

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Comment</th>
<th>Shift</th>
<th>Turning Point &amp; Conflict Escalation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Activists Support/Praise</td>
<td>Activists Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America Exposed</td>
<td>Muhammad Ali was proven right as time went on and this generation will, too.</td>
<td>Yeah, Cassius Clay, the Draft Dodger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Americas original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick’s sin was to point it out</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The language in the comment, “Yeah, Cassius Clay, the Draft Dodger. Right up there with Bill Clinton and Donald Trump” created a turning point in this conversation and caused the conflict to escalate. The next commenter replied (Level [4] comment) with, “The last thing anyone of principle would do is conflate Ali's open, vocal, willing-to-go-to-jail stand with any other. Oh also: his name was Muhammad Ali. You can call him by his name. [Gallery: Activists Disagreement with Criticism]. The next commenter further retorted (Level [4] comment) with, “Ali was no draft dodger. He didn’t come up with some spurious medical excuse, or get Daddy to arrange a billet in the Air National Guard for the duration. And like Kaepernick, he was vilified by those who’d never had to experience the daily de-humanising [sic] racism that he faced, and he was vindictively denied the right to make a living through his sport. [Gallery: Activists Disagreement with Criticism and Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Comparing Kaepernick to Others]
The next commenter continued the conversation by responding to the original, Level [1] comment. This individual stated (Level [2] comment), “No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected.” [Gallery: The Flag Disrespect] The language used by this commenter created a turning point in the conversation and escalated the verbal conflict. There were 33 replies made to this comment; clearly the language in this comment upset many people. The first commenter retorted with (Level [3] comment), “Oh palease!” [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment].

The conversation continued with 32 more replies to the comment, “No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who dies for it…” The next comment was in the same gallery when the next commenter said (Level [3] comment), “You’re the one disrespecting the flag by disregarding the constitution it represents. [Gallery: The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment]. Beginning with this comment, this researcher has provided a visual representation of the remainder of the replies along with the word(s): shift (indicating a shift between galleries; continuance (indicating a continuance of the previous line of thought,
escalation (indicating conflict escalation), and/or turning point (indicating turning point in the conversation) in the top row.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuance</th>
<th>Shift</th>
<th>Shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You're the one disrespecting the flag by disregarding the constitution it represents.</td>
<td>Brian, you are an i.diot, probably a racist i.diot.</td>
<td>Huge BS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hey, dude -- OUR FLAG is not just for soldiers. YOU disrespect the flag for giving it such a narrow meaning.</td>
<td>@brian is one of those effing &quot;patriots&quot; who slapped a &quot;support the troops&quot; bumper sticker on their gas guzzling SUVs</td>
<td>Brian, no one fights for a flag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Escalation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Personal (Insults)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your reasoning is nothing but a racist excuse.</td>
<td>It was never about disrespecting the flag. It was never about disrespecting soldiers.</td>
<td>I can't understand the mentality and values of anyone who cares more about the flag than the treatment of the citizens of the country it represents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Escalation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Flag Personal (Insults)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He asked a Navy Seal to help him protest in the most respectful way, and was told the Seals take a knee in respect at the coffins of their fallen and that that would honor his country and his ideals.</td>
<td>WRONG</td>
<td>Which is why he discussed with his teammate--who was a veteran--and his teammate said he didn't find it offensive at all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift Escalation</td>
<td>Shift Escalation</td>
<td>Shift Escalation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal (Insults)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disagreement / Rebuke of Disrespect Comment</strong></td>
<td><strong>Personal (Insults)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He showed us the greatest sin and it turns out it is YOU!</td>
<td>lolololol</td>
<td>Watching them kick your traitorous arse into the next zip code would be the best entertainment value around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Law Enforcement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Law Enforcement</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Police Brutality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Police Brutality</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It was all about police brutality</td>
<td>How is going down on his knee a sign of disrespect? That's how a lot of people pray to God.</td>
<td>When you get <em>any</em> kind of award or recognition from the queen of England you kneel before the monarch...definitely not a sign of disrespect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Veterans Identity</strong></td>
<td><strong>Veterans Veteran Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Law Enforcement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I served, and have my CIB, Bronze Star and Purple heart…</td>
<td>… and did so that people like Kapernick could do what he did.</td>
<td>His intention which was to protest brutality,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shift Escalation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift</strong></td>
<td><strong>Shift Escalation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
<td><strong>Veterans Veteran Support</strong></td>
<td><strong>Law Enforcement</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal (Insults)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Law Enforcement</strong></td>
<td><strong>Killer Cops</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You are part of the problem. You should learn to think.</td>
<td>No, it was a military man who suggested he use a knee as a respectful action</td>
<td>You don't think cops killing people are disrespecting the flag, the country and the Constitution?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shift Escalation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continuance</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continuance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
<td><strong>The Flag</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect</strong></td>
<td><strong>Disagreement / Rebuke Of Disrespect</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Horsehockey. He never disrespected the flag. Not once.</td>
<td>Bullsh*t. @Brian</td>
<td>No!! He did not disrespect [sic] the flag!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The conversation then continues with another Level [2] comment in reply to the original Level [1] post that stated: “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed] This commenter replied with, “Kaepernick helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. [Gallery: ...
Pandora’s Box America Exposed]. The language in this comment did not create a shift or a turning point in the conversation.

The next comment, however, did create a shift and a turning point when this commenter posted a Level [3] comment that said, “Why should it be black athletes' or black anybody's job? We all have skin in this game, and we should all be trying to "keep the box open." [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Call to Activism].

The next commenter keeps the conversation in the same gallery but creates a turning point by stating (Level [4] comment), “I have no objection. But black athletes [sic] have to take the lead for others to be perceived as authentic. In the time since Colin Kaepernick put his knee down, why did it stop? ...then knees still should be hitting the ground all the time. [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Call to Activism]. Here the commenter created a turning point by stating “black athletes needs to take the lead” as activists.

The next commenter replied (Level [5] comment) with, “The knee-down stopped because white owners prevailed within the NFL.” [Gallery: Rights Corporate Rights]. This comment shifted the conversation to the Rights gallery and created a turning point in the conversation.

The next commenter not only shifted the conversation to a different gallery but also created a turning point and escalated conflict. This commenter replied to the previous Level [2] comment that stated, “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed] The Level [3] comment stated, “Colin was not a good passing QB. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]. With these six words, the commenter shifted the conversation to Kaepernick’s playing ability and totally disregarded the issue at hand.
Original Comment  
**Pandora’s Box America Exposed**  
America's original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.

Continuance  
**Pandora’s Box America Exposed**  
Kaepernick helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside.

Shift  
**Turning Point**  
**Pandora’s Box Call to Activism**  
Why should it be black athletes' or black anybody's job? We all have skin in this game, and we should all be trying to "keep the box open."

Turning Point  
**Pandora’s Box Call to Activism**  
But black athletes [sic] have to take the lead for others to be perceived as authentic.

Shift  
**Turning Point**  
**Rights Corporate Rights**  
The knee-down stopped because white owners prevailed within the NFL.

Shift  
**Turning Point**  
**Escalation**  
**Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick**  
Colin was not a good passing QB.

The conversation continues with a retort (Level [4]) comment that shifted the conversation and shows how the conflict in the conversation was escalated. This commenter wrote, “If he was removed from the game for his lack of talent, why did the NFL settle? [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick].

The next commenter replied to this comment with (Level [5] comment), “Public Relations and brand damage. He could still be playing in the NFL but he is not interested in being a backup QB. So he's not playing.” [Gallery: Rights Corporate Rights]. The language in this conversation shifted the conversation to the Rights gallery.

The next commenter posted a retort to the Level [3] comment, “Colin was not a good passing QB” with (Level [4] comment), Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl?” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box Racism]. The next comment also replied to the Level [3] comment with, “To try and make a case that Kaepernick is not “a good enough passing QB” is at best a pathetic denial of his being blacklisted, and at worst, flat out racist.” [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick]. The first of these two comments shifted the conversation to the Pandora’s Box.
Racism gallery and also shows how the conflict escalated in the conversation. The first portion of second comment shifted the conversation to the Support of Kaepernick gallery but is a continuance of thoughts of the previous comment; the second portion of this comment shifted the conversation back to the Pandora’s Box Racism gallery and shows how the conflict in the conversation was escalated.

The argument and conflict escalation continued with a reply from the commenter that posted, “Colin was not a good passing QB.” The posted a Level [5] comment that said, “Google QB rankings and let the numbers tell you the story. Average QB’s don't win in the NFL. He could be a backup but he is no starter. He is delusional and people that don't know football believe him. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation back to the Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and continued the escalation of the conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shift Escalation</th>
<th>Shift Escalation</th>
<th>Shift Escalation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick</td>
<td>Rights Corporate Rights</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Public Relations and brand damage.</td>
<td>Funny, why do I suspect that had Colin Kaepernick been white, you would have extolled his prowess at leading the 49ers to the Super Bowl?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The argument continued with a reply the next Level [6] reply that stated, “Average Qb [sic] doesn't make the super bowl. Average Qb doesn't run Alex Smith out of town. End of you ignorant argument and lack of knowledge of the game. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of
Kaepernick]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation back to the Support of Kaepernick gallery and continued the conflict in the conversation.

The last comment in this section of this conversation is a Level [3] comment in response to the previous Level [2] comment that stated, “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]. This commenter replied with a Level [3] comment that said, “…helped open the box and showed Americans what was inside. That box was lined with mirrors, so that we could all see our reflections.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation back to the Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery and served to de-escalate the conversation.

The conversation continues with another reply to the original Level [1] comment that stated, “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]. A commenter replied to with a Level [2] comment that said, “Americas original sin is there for all to see. Not mine. I have been with Colin K. all along. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation to the Support of Kaepernick gallery.

The next commenter replied with a Level [3] comment, “Our original sin was slavery. And it hasn't gone completely away yet. That sin belongs to all of us until it is completely expunged. We all own it.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]. The language
in this comment shifted the conversation to the Pandora’s Box America Exposed gallery but did not escalate conflict in the conversation.

The next commenter replied with a Level [4] comment, “Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture.” [Gallery: Law Enforcement Call for Reform]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation to the Law Enforcement Call for Reform gallery but did not escalate conflict in the conversation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shift</th>
<th>Shift</th>
<th>Shift</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box America Exposed</td>
<td>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been with Colin K. all along.</td>
<td>Our original sin was slavery. And it hasn’t gone completely away yet.</td>
<td>Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conversation continued, and so did the escalation of conflict when a commenter replied to the original Level [1] post that stated, “Americas [sic] original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out.” [Gallery: Pandora’s Box America Exposed]. This commenter created a turning point in the conversation and escalated conflict within the conversation by stating, “No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back. Colin K decides in this party environment and in a team sport that he is going to be different even as it was obvious he was not a very good QB as his passing sucked. Even as the average person is spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars to attend the game and by the way Colin was making millions for bad play. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick].

The next commenter retorted with a Level [3] comment, “This narrative that Kaep [sic] isn’t good enough is absolutely pathetic. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation to the Support of Kaepernick gallery and continued the conflict.
The next commenter retorted with a Level [4] comment that stated, “It is because he is pathetic as a QB.” [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation back to the Criticism of Kaepernick gallery and continued the escalation of conflict in the conversation.

The commenter then retorted with a Level [5] comment, “The fact that you guys are trying so hard is hilarious. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick]. The language in this conversation shifted the conversation back to the Support of Kaepernick gallery but served to de-escalate the conversation with the word “hilarious.”

In the last comment in this discussion thread, the commenter seems to give up on their argument and passes the responsibility of finding proof about Kaepernick’s playing ability onto the other commenter. This individual posted a Level [6] comment that stated, “It’s not hard. Just google the facts. [Gallery: Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick]. The language in this comment shifted the conversation back to the Criticism of Kaepernick gallery but served to end the conflict as this was the last comment in this part of the discussion thread.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shift Escalation of Conflict</th>
<th>Shift Continuation of Conflict</th>
<th>Shift Escalation of Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back.</td>
<td>This narrative that Kaep isn’t good enough is absolutely pathetic.</td>
<td>It is because he is pathetic as a QB.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shift De-Escalation of Conflict</th>
<th>Shift De-Escalation of Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Support of Kaepernick</td>
<td>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fact that you guys are trying so hard is hilarious.</td>
<td>It's not hard. Just google the facts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Museums – Taking RFA a Step Further**

In accordance with Gee’s (2011) opinion that research methods and theories are tools that should be used flexibly and due to subject matter of the article and the resulting comments in the
discussion thread, this researcher offers a re-presentation of the data by chunking (Chenail, 1995) galleries into museums. This researcher took this extra step because at the time the article was written, America was in a state of chaos and turmoil. We were literally witnessing a disturbing chapter in our nation’s history.

Just as museums provide us of a glimpse of history by displaying galleries of artwork, and given the context and frames that influenced the events, the content of the article and the resulting comments, and the findings of this study, this researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) galleries into museums to offer a glimpse of that status of our nation, the thought processes of the commenters and our history that was being made at the time.

This article was written only five days after George Floyd was murdered! Even with his live-on-media murder fresh in our minds, some commenters chose the knee to the neck. The names of these two museums and the galleries displayed in them were chosen in accordance with the protocol designed by this researcher as set forth in chapter three. The following is a small representation of galleries that hang in the “Knee in the Grass” Museum and galleries that hang in the “Knee to the Neck” museum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knee in the Grass Museum</th>
<th>Knee to the Neck Museum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the Author</td>
<td>To the Author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content, Two Knees and Writing Style Galleries</td>
<td>Disagreement / Criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best encapsulation of this situation</td>
<td>That is the silliest, nay stupidest thing ever written in the Post … wow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bovine scatology!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the Author</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Reactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This piece stopped me cold. I get nauseated every time I see the video of the officer murdering George Floyd.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
<td>Pandora’s Box</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status of America</td>
<td>Racism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racism is so American that when someone protests against racism, people think they’re protesting against America. CK found that out.</td>
<td>Pence, in his white privileged, somber, holier than thou way states he is all for peaceful protests. Yet he was the first to condemn Colin Kaepernick for taking a knee to bring attention to police brutality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Call to Activism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We all have skin in this game, and we should all be trying to “keep the box open.”

Response to Content
Indifference
It is not simply looking the other way. At its heart, it is the inability to see yourself in the shoes of another.

Colin Kaepernick
Praise / Support
Brave reformer who sacrificed his career for the higher purpose of racial awareness.

I would be proud to meet him and shake his hand - and thank him for what he did for all of us.

Colin Kaepernick
Comparing Kaepernick to Others
Colin Kaepernick is an American Hero, no less so, than Muhammed Ali was for taking a stand against systemic bigotry, evil and government abuse of power

Colin Kaepernick is our generation's Rosa Parks.

Derek Chauvin is a Pig
..... isn't Derrek Chauvin a pig? And that's being nice.

Killer Cops
Call him what he is.......Murderer

Black Americans still have better lives than Black Africans. All Americans are lucky to be here regardless of how they got here.

Colin Kaepernick
Criticism of Kaepernick
He's a terrible quarterback.

No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back.

What a stupid stretch. If you ask him, I doubt he can verbalize why he did it.

Enough on the big K. Quarterback, I see his oint, but he represents NFL not place for personal stuff.

George Floyd was a Criminal
George Floyd had a criminal record.

This researcher identified a particular shift in this discussion thread that perhaps encapsulates the issues of social justice that plague our nation. In this particular conversation, a commenter called for reform in our law enforcement agencies. This commenter stated, “Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture” [Gallery: Law Enforcement Call for Reform]. The very next commenter posted, “No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back. Colin K decides in this party environment and in a team sport that he is going to be different even as it was obvious he was not a very good QB as his passing sucked. Even as the average person is spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars to attend the game and by the way Colin was making millions for bad play.”
This particular exchange shows that there are Americans that would rather focus on Colin Kaepernick’s playing ability and how much money patrons are spending at an NFL game rather than much needed social justice reform.

Visual Re-Presentation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture.</td>
<td>No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back. Colin K decides in this party environment and in a team sport that he is going to be different even as it was obvious he was not a very good QB as his passing sucked. Even as the average person is spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars to attend the game and by the way Colin was making millions for bad play.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary of Chapter 4

Analysis of single reply comments through RFA allowed this researcher to notate the differences in the words chosen by commenters to respond to the author Sally Jenkins and the content of her perspective piece. These galleries also showcase the difference in focus of each commenter as it relates to aspect or context.

Analysis of a data set that contained comments that received only a single response (One Comment / One Response) allowed this researcher to showcase the differences in how commenters responded to one another on similar subjects. This was accomplished by chunking (Chenail, 1995) these small data sets into galleries and then analyzing them within each particular gallery. Given that the data sets were small, some of the sets had a semantic shift in conversations, while others did not.

Analysis of the data from three short conversations using RFA (Chenail, 1995) revealed that the data fell into 15 talk galleries: Criticism of Kaepernick, Derek Chauvin is a Pig, Denial, Disagreement, George Floyd was a Criminal, Irrelevance, Killer Cops, Offering Information, Personal (Insults), Politics, Racial Injustice, Racism, Sarcasm, Shiny Objects, and White
Privilege. Semantic shifts in these conversations demonstrated the strong differences of opinions of these commenters and that they were not afraid to share these opinions in the discussion thread.

This researcher also analyzed one long conversation. Utilization of RFA (Chenail, 1995), revealed 38 semantic shifts between the seven major categories of galleries. These shifts vividly demonstrate the strong difference of opinions of the commenters and showcase the differences of what they believe to be more important. More pointedly, these shifts showcase that there are two sides – or two knees – and these commenters make it clear as to which one they chose.

Critical RFA analysis through Goffman’s framing theory revealed that comments were made in the context of the wording and language used in this specific article and current events. Current events at the time were the recent murder of George Floyd, a black man publically murdered by white police officer, Derek Chauvin; the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the political climate of the United States at the time. Other contexts included: the return of Colin Kaepernick to media headlines; and personal opinions and beliefs.

Analysis of commenter demographics through social identity theory revealed that these individuals find part of their “identity or belonging” through being a participant in this discussion thread. Given that this researcher had previously read and re-read comments from two previous articles written about Colin Kaepernick, she recognized several participants that posted in all three discussion threads, indicating that certain individuals socially identify in discussion threads on more than one occasion. The majority of these individuals chose to present an identity of anonymity; and at least 73 percent interacted in this discussion thread completely anonymously through the use of a pseudonym for a user name and a plain binary human silhouette for their profile picture. The remainder of the commenters participated in this discussion thread with a
username that included a full or partial name that could be considered a “given” name; however all participants that did not utilize the plain binary human silhouette as their profile picture, utilized either an Avatar or photograph that did not serve as identification.

Critical analysis of the data through CRT supported the six basic tenants. This researcher identified comments that showed individuals: deny racism; gave examples of white-over-black dominance; manipulated race for convenience; gave examples of racialization to meet labor market needs; used language to assign a unitary identity to George Floyd; and provided a quote by Maya Angelou that demonstrates how voices of color can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they likely do not know or properly understand.

Analysis of the data through the lens of the research questions revealed that the language that contributed to conflict and created turning points in the conversation was found to be criticism of Colin Kaepernick and historical social justice reformers. Criticism of Kaepernick contributed to the conflict in the conversation and turned the conversation to politics, racism, Derek Chauvin is a pig, and killer cops. Criticism of Kaepernick kneeling before the flag for the national anthem also contributed to the conflict in the conversation and turned the conversation to disagreement, personal insults, Veteran support, police brutality, killer cops, constitutional rights, and call to activism. There was one comment that (temporarily) de-escalated the conversation when someone posted a comment in support of Colin Kaepernick. Assigning a unitary identity of George Floyd as a “criminal” also contributed to the conflict in the conversation and turned the conversation to disagreement, killer cops, and irrelevance, and resulted in personal insults. Criticism of activists served to escalate the conflict of the conversation and turned the conversation to disagreement.
In accordance with Gee’s (2011) opinion that research methods and theories are tools that should be used flexibly this researcher chunked (Chenail, 1995) galleries into museums as a small representation of galleries that belong in the “Knee in the Grass” Museum and galleries that belong in the “Knee to the Neck” museum. This researcher created these museums to showcase the thought processes of the commenters and to show that some commenters chose the knee to the neck even though George Floyd’s murder was videotaped and made public.
Chapter 5 – Discussion of Findings

“Language is the foundation of civilization. It is the glue that holds people together. It is the first weapon drawn in a conflict.”

–Jeremy Renner (as Ian Donnelly) (Villeneuve, 2016)

Chapter five is a discussion of the findings. First, the researcher presents a brief summary of the purpose and goals of the study for the stated problem. This is followed an overview of how this researcher utilized Critical RFA to analyze the data. The researcher then presents a discussion of the findings through three theories: Goffman’s Framing Theory, Social Identity Theory and Critical Race Theory followed by answers to the research questions this research sought to answer through this study. This is followed by a discussion of chunking of galleries into “museums” in order to present the findings in manner that showcases the issues discovered in the data. This step is intended to be a visual aid as well as add substance to the discussion of the findings. This section is followed by limitations of the study, recommendations, contribution to the field of conflict analysis and resolution and then conclusions and researcher reflections.

This research project provides an excellent demonstration of the RFA methodology and its flexibility. This researcher discovered more and learned more through this process than she believed was possible.

**Purpose and Goals of this Study for the Stated Problem**

Given that the problem statement for this study was: Communicating online via an Avatar and or pseudonym provides a certain anonymity that is both good and bad. Unfortunately, the good and bad reasons are the same: people feel free to voice their opinions without fear of repercussions; the purpose of this study was to examine a discussion thread wherein individuals pose as an Avatar and/or utilize a pseudonym to post comments. It was specifically the purpose
of this study was to analyze the language of a selected conversations using Recursive Frame Analysis in order to gain a better understanding of how the use of certain words and phrases, or emoticons, affect the course of events in a conversation.

Furthermore, it was the goal of this study to gain a better understanding of how language used in an online discussion thread was used to shift the conversation from constructive to destructive; as well as destructive to constructive.

During the course of conducting research, it was discovered that several online media outlets had already made the decision to “turn off” user based comments to news stories (Beaujon, 2014; Finley, 2015; Goujard, 2016) because of the content, tone and words posed by commenters. This finding further substantiated the need for this study.

While conducting the literature review, this researcher identified other studies that had been conducted related to the use of Avatars in social media settings; however none of these studies investigated the discourse in communication between users. This dissertation investigated the discourse contained in communications between people utilizing Avatars and/or pseudonyms in order to gain a better understanding of how these conversations affect conflict related to culture, socioeconomic status, and/or race, gender and ethnicity. The researcher discovered other issues in the conversations as well: politics, reform in law enforcement, call to activism, failure to understand constitutional rights and others.

**Methodology – Critical Recursive Frame Analysis (RFA)**

Analysis of single reply comments through RFA allowed this researcher to notate the differences in the words chosen by commenters to respond to the author Sally Jenkins and the content of her perspective piece. These galleries also showcase the difference in focus of each commenter as it relates to aspect or context.
A critical RFA analysis of a data set that contained comments that received only a single response (One Comment / One Response) allowed this researcher to showcase the differences in how commenters responded to one another on similar subjects. This was accomplished by chunking (Chenail, 1995) these small data sets into galleries and then analyzing them within each particular gallery. Given that the data sets were small, some of the sets had a semantic shift in conversations, while others did not.

A critical analysis of the data from three short conversations using RFA (Chenail, 1995) revealed that the data fell into 15 talk galleries: Criticism of Kaepernick, Derek Chauvin is a Pig, Denial, Disagreement, George Floyd was a Criminal, Irrelevance, Killer Cops, Offering Information, Personal (Insults), Politics, Racial Injustice, Racism, Sarcasm, Shiny Objects, and White Privilege. Semantic shifts in these conversations demonstrated the strong differences of opinions of these commenters and that they were not afraid to share these opinions in the discussion thread.

This researcher also critically analyzed one long conversation. Utilization of RFA (Chenail, 1995), revealed 38 semantic shifts between the seven major categories of galleries. These shifts vividly demonstrate the strong difference of opinions of the commenters and showcase the differences of what they believe to be more important.

More pointedly, these the differences in the language used to respond to the author and the conflict and shifts in the other three types of data sets revealed that there are two sides – or two knees – and these commenters make it clear as to which one they chose.
Theories – Discussion of Findings through Theories

Goffman’s Framing Theory

A critical analysis of the discourse in this online discussion thread using Goffman’s framing theory allowed this researcher to explore the theoretical or rational views of a specific circumstance or situation (Chenail, 1995). Goffman’s theory on framing posits that significances of everyday life can be most efficaciously dealt with taking into consideration the way in which these experiences are framed because these significances, or meanings “are the projection of the structure or form of the experiences in which they are embodied” (Jameson, 1976, p. 119).

There were several circumstances or situations that this researcher explored as a theoretical or rational view of this specific situation. The primary rational view is that these comments were posted to an online discussion thread in response to a specific article, *This is Why Colin Kaepernick took a Knee* (Jenkins, 2020). Through a critical analysis, this researcher also considered that theoretically, current events at the time contributed to the context in which these comments were made; some of these were the COVID-19 pandemic, political controversy, protests over the murder of George Floyd and rioting and property destruction by individuals that showed up at these protests.

A critical analysis through Goffman’s framing theory revealed that comments were made in the context of the wording and language used in this specific article and current events. Current events at the time were the recent murder of George Floyd, a black man publically murdered by white police officer, Derek Chauvin; the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the political climate of the United States at the time. Other contexts included: the return of Colin Kaepernick to media headlines; and personal opinions and beliefs.
Social Identity Theory

Abigail De Kosnik (2019) wrote an essay that tied Goffman’s framing theory to our online identities. In this essay entitled, *Is Twitter a Stage? Theories of Social Media Platforms as Performance Spaces*, De Kosnik discussed Goffman’s (1959) work entitled, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, where Goffman postulated that every individual performs roles in their everyday lives and have many motives for attempting to control the impression they make on others. He further proposed that our patterns of actions that we present through “play” can actually constitute a “part.” In this essay, De Kosnik (2019) pointed out that Goffman is not concerned with the content of the performance, but rather the “fact that performance takes place, and how performance works, in social interaction” (2019, p. 20). De Kosnik wrote that our performance in everyday life, as described by Goffman, can be used to describe how we perform on digital media platforms and that the impressions that we seek to make upon others and the parts that we play while do so, are our online identities.

According to Wood and Smith (2005), an individual’s “identity is a complex personal and social construct, consisting in part of who we think ourselves to be, how we wish others to perceive us, and how they actually perceive us” (p. 52). Social identity is defined as “the sense of identity we get from belonging to a larger social group” (Folger et al., 2009, p. 92).

Analysis of the discourse in this online discussion thread through *social identity theory* allowed a better understanding of social context or “belonging” (Folger et al., 2009). Understanding context is an important component of conflict resolution because the core of any conflict is grounded in the perception of the individuals engaged in conflict.

To understand how the conflict in the discourse of this discussion thread was grounded in the perception of the individuals engaged in conflict or “communication wars” this researcher
considered the context in which these comments were made in conjunction with how these commenters identified by “belonging to a larger social group” (Folger et al., 2009) of commenters as well as the fact that the majority of the commenters did not wish others to perceive them for who they really were (Wood & Smith, 2005, p. 92) because they utilized pseudonyms for their user names and/or Avatars, microscopic photos and/or a plain binary human silhouette as their profile picture.

Given the definition of social identity provided by Folger et al. (2009), “the sense of identity we get from belonging to a larger social group” this researcher proposes that these individuals in this discussion thread derive part of their sense of identity through belonging to a large social group of individuals that posted comments to this discussion thread. Also, considering that this discussion thread was the third one that this researcher read and re-read multiple times (while engaging in the data selection process), some of these commenters posted comments to all three articles. So it is reasonable to believe that (at least) some of these commenters identify through belonging to large social groups of individuals that post comments to discussion threads on a regular basis.

In order to analyze and understand how these individuals wished to be perceived (Wood & Smith, 2005); this researcher analyzed the data offered in their profiles above each comment through protocol she designed. Analysis of the user demographic data revealed that there were 2,682 comments made in this discussion thread by 1,136 commenters. Of these 1,136 commenters, 74 utilized an Avatar as their profile picture; 229 utilized a photograph as their profile picture; while the remaining 833 utilized a plain human silhouette. The analysis also revealed that individuals that posted comments in this discussion thread utilized pseudonyms for their screennames that contained a full or partial name that could possibly be categorized as a full
or partial “given” name or pseudonyms that were created with random letters, words and/or numbers.

The analysis revealed that the majority of these individuals chose to present an identity of anonymity; at least 73 percent interacted in this discussion thread completely anonymously by using a pseudonym as a user name and a plain binary human silhouette for their profile picture. The remainder of the commenters that posted in this discussion thread chose a username that included a full or partial name that could be considered a “given” name; however all commenters that did not utilize the plain binary human silhouette as their profile picture, utilized either an Avatar or photograph that did not serve as identification.

Analysis of commenter demographics through social identity theory revealed that although these individuals find part of their “identity” through belonging to a large social group of individuals that post comments to discussion threads, they chose to do so anonymously.

**Critical Race Theory**

Hylton (2009) summarized critical race theory as a “framework from which to explore and examine the racism in society that privileges whiteness as it disadvantages others because of their ‘blackness’” (p. 22). Critical race theory challenges policy and practice that promotes race neutrality while it recognizes the valuable black voice that is often marginalized in mainstream theory, policy and practice.

This researcher utilized the six basic tenants of critical race theory to critically analyze the data from this study. This was done by identifying comments that applied to or belonged in each (or multiple) of the basic tenants; followed by a discussion of how each comment applied to the tenant(s).

The six basic tenants of critical race theory are:
1. Racism is ordinary and is a common, every-day experience for many people of color in the United States. Racism is a problem that is very difficult to address because it is not acknowledged;

2. Our system of white-over-color dominance serves both psychic and material purposes for the dominant group. In other words, racism, for the most part, is the result of interest convergence;

3. Race is socially constructed; meaning that races are categories that society invents, manipulate and/or retires at their convenience;

4. Racism can take the form of differential racialization; whereupon society racializes different minority groups to suit changing needs (I.e., labor market);

5. Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity; and

6. Voice of color; which means due to the unique histories and experiences with oppression, writers and thinkers who are black, American Indian, Asian, or Latino can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they likely do not know or properly understand (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

This researcher identified several comments wherein commenters pointed out the denial of racism while one commenter referred to Kaepernick’s protest a “personal problem” thereby refusing to acknowledge that the killing of unarmed black citizens by police is a national problem; this is denial. These comments support the first basic tenant of critical race theory, “Racism is ordinary and is a common, every-day experience for many people of color in the United States. Racism is a problem that is very difficult to address because it is not acknowledged” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369)
This researcher also identified this comment related to white-over-black dominance: “It is a bitter irony that the NFL has found a strategy to employ black men to uphold white supremacist culture.” This comment supports the second basic tenant, “Our system of white-over-color dominance serves both psychic and material purposes for the dominant group. In other words, racism, for the most part, is the result of interest convergence” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

The third basic tenant of critical race theory is, “Race is socially constructed; meaning that races are categories that society invents, manipulate and/or retires at their convenience” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369). The most powerful comment that supports the third tenant of critical race theory was, “But black athletes [sic] have to take the lead for others to be perceived as authentic.” This commenter claims that “black athletes have to take the lead” in seeking social change. This comment can be construed as manipulation for convenience because the commenter seems to be content with the status quo until this happens. This comment could be included in the first basic tenant of critical race theory because of denial or failure to acknowledge the problem.

This researcher also identified this comment related to racialization to meet labor market needs: “America's version of the gladiator spectacle and basically unknown to the rest of the world”. This comment supports the fourth basic tenant: “Racism can take the form of differential racialization; whereupon society racializes different minority groups to suit changing needs (i.e., labor market)” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

The fifth basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369). This researcher identified a comment wherein
George Floyd was assigned a “unitary identity” by a commenter that stated: “George Floyd had a criminal record”. This comment basically assigned George Floyd the unitary identity as a “criminal” and was posted to justify his murder.

The sixth basic tenant of critical race theory states, “Voice of color which means due to the unique histories and experiences with oppression, writers and thinkers who are black, American Indian, Asian, or Latino can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they likely do not know or properly understand” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369). This researcher identified several comments whereupon Colin Kaepernick’s silent voice of color was criticized: One commenter posted, “What a stupid stretch. If you ask him, I doubt he can verbalize why he did it.” This commenter’s claim criticizes Kaepernick’s (silent) voice of color. Another commenter posted, “Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possibly earn anywhere else in the world. Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him”. This commenter (along with others) had a problem with “where” Kaepernick used his (silent) voice of color and is bitter that Kaepernick was being paid millions of dollars. This commenter’s racist rant continues with words of joy that Kaepernick is unemployed. This commenter also arbitrarily assigns Kaepernick a unitary identity (football quarterback) by claiming the he could not possibly earn that much money anywhere else in the world so this comment could also be included in the fifth basic tenant of critical race theory that states, “Identity is a product of intersectionality; no individual has a singular, simply stated, unitary identity” (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11; Tyson, 2006, p. 369).

One commenter provided a quote by Maya Angelou that demonstrates how voices of color can communicate matters to their white counterparts that they likely do not know or
properly understand. “The plague of racism is insidious, entering into our minds as smoothly and quietly and invisibly as floating airborne microbes enter into our bodies to find lifelong purchase in our bloodstream. -Maya Angelou”.

Analysis of the data through critical race theory supports the six basic tenants of critical race theory and shows the need for critical race theorists to continue to study and seek ways to transform the relationship among race, racism and power (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017).

**Research Questions**

A critical analysis of the data through the lens of the research questions revealed that the language that contributed to conflict in the conversation and created turning points in the conversation was found to be criticism of Colin Kaepernick kneeling before the flag for the national anthem, criticism of his playing ability, calling George Floyd a criminal in an attempt to justify his murder; and criticism of historical social justice reformers.

Criticism of Kaepernick contributed to the conflict in the conversation and turned the conversation to politics, racism, Derek Chauvin is a pig, and killer cops. Criticism of Kaepernick kneeling before the flag for the national anthem also contributed to the conflict in the conversation and turned the conversation to disagreement, personal insults, Veteran support, police brutality, killer cops, constitutional rights, and call to activism. There was one comment that (temporarily) de-escalated the conversation when someone posted a comment in support of Colin Kaepernick. Assigning a unitary identity of George Floyd as a “criminal” also contributed to the conflict in the conversation and turned the conversation to disagreement, killer cops, and irrelevance, and resulted in personal insults. Criticism of activists served to escalate the conflict of the conversation and turned the conversation to disagreement.
Research Question 1

1. Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread escalate conflict with those who respond? Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread de-escalate conflict with those who respond?

One commenter wrote, “Taking the knee was not the problem. The problem was the "pig" socks. Don't you get that? Stop glorifying this man”. The language used in this particular comment escalated conflict when this commenter attempted to focus the conversation on a pair of “pig” socks worn by Colin Kaepernick. The conversation first shifted to the Politics gallery; the conflict really escalated with the next two comments: “The problem is YOUR bigotry. Too bad YOU haven't been stopped and frisked just for being a WHITE RACIST.” [Gallery: Racism] This commenter is alluding to the fact that black people are often stopped by police for no apparent reason. This was followed by another comment that said, “… isn't Derrek Chauvin a pig? And that's being nice.” This commenter is clearly astounded that the first commenter sees the “pig socks” as the problem, as opposed to Derek Chauvin. The conversation escalated even more with the language in the next comment: “Call him what he is........Murderer.” The conflict escalated because these two commenters were astounded and angry that someone was worried about the design of a pair of socks rather than be concerned or angry about the status of our nation given that a black man, George Floyd was basically publically executed by a white police officer. It literally took protests and rioting in the streets for Derek Chauvin to even be arrested and charged with murder.
Research Question 2

2. Within the context of an article on racial justice, how does the language used in this discussion thread contribute to conflict regarding race with those who respond?

This researcher found that certain language used in this discussion thread contributed to conflict regarding race with those who responded.

One commenter wrote, “What an incredibly dumb column. Most people are fine with Kaepernick kneeling as often as he wants - just not while getting paid millions of dollars he could not possibly earn anywhere else in the world.” This commenter’s racist rant continues with words of joy that Kaepernick was not hired by any other NFL team and therefore unemployed, “Glad he is currently unemployed and that not a single NFL team is willing to touch him.”

The language used in this comment indicates that the commenter is bitter that Kaepernick was getting paid “millions of dollars” and was happy that he was unemployed. This language contributed to conflict regarding race as indicated in the first response to this comment, “Wow... was your white hood at the cleaners? My gawd [sic]... does that much ignorance come naturally or do you hvw [sic] to work at it? This commenter basically accused the poster of the Level [1] comment of being a racists and belonging to the Ku Klux Klan.

Research Question 3

3. What are the turning points in the conversation?

There were many turning points in the conversations in this discussion thread. The best example is when a commenter posted a response to the comment, “Americas original sin is there for all to see. Colin Kaepernick's sin was to point it out”. The responding commenter wrote, “No, his sin was to disrespect the flag, the soldiers who died for it, and the soldiers loved ones who
were horrified to see the deceased so vilely disrespected”. This comment created a huge turning point in the conversation; there were 33 replies made to this comment so clearly the language in this comment upset many people. There were two turning points within this conversation with a total is 32 shifts between galleries; including 13 statements of disagreement; 10 instances of conflict escalation; and only two instances of conflict de-escalation. Shifts between galleries include: Veteran Support; Veteran Identity, Personal Insults, Police Brutality, Constitutional Rights, and Call to Activism.

There were many turning points in the conversations in this discussion thread, however this one generated the most turning points, gallery shifts and conflict escalation due to the language used to accuse Colin Kaepernick of disrespecting the flag and the soldiers. This researcher believes conflict in this conversation escalated because the responders were angry that someone absolutely refuses to acknowledge that Colin Kaepernick took a knee because he did not want to salute a flag that represents a nation that ignores the serious issues of police brutality, police killings and social injustice.

**Limitations of the Study**

The findings of this study were limited (Marshall & Rossman, 2011) by context or frames. Given that this study examined the discourse contained in the comments in one specific online discussion thread in response to a press release, the context was influenced by the environment (the online platform); and the subject matter and language used in this particular perspective piece (*This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee*, Jenkins, 2020).

The study was also limited by the fact that the commenters utilized pseudonyms and / or Avatars, tiny photographs or a plain binary human silhouette as their profile pictures so there was
no way to determine whether a user was engaging in conversation(s) using more than one online profile.

Another limiting factor of this study was context that was influenced by current events at the time the comments were posted: another black man had been murdered by a white police officer; protests were organized throughout the United States; rioting occurred at some of the protest locations; and the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic had just begun.

Additionally, although the researcher created a system for determining intention of replies, utilizing this system did not guarantee that other users did not post “false” interactions within the discussion threads; or engage in cross-comment interactions.

**Recommendations**

This researcher chose a specific media outlet that was shown to be “in the middle” from a political standpoint. This was done to ensure that the conversations were two-sided. It is the recommendation of this researcher that further studies could be conducted by examining discussion threads in multiple articles across different publications to discover whether the same individuals post comments to discussion threads in response to stories published in media that fall into the far left and/or far right from a political standpoint. Additionally, further studies could be conducted to investigate whether comments made in far right and/or far left discussion threads result in more or less shifting and conflict in the conversations. Another study that would be interesting would be – if it were possible to identify the individuals that utilize an anonymous identity to post in these discussion threads – to investigate whether or not these individuals engage with others using the same type language using a profile whereby they could be identified.
Contributions to the Field of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

This study contributes to the field of conflict analysis and resolution because (to this researcher’s knowledge), this is the first study to apply Recursive Frame Analysis to a study of data contained in an online discussion thread.

This study also contributes to the field of conflict analysis and resolution because the findings serve to fill the gap in exiting literature related to social and cultural conflict that arises in online discussion threads where people utilize an Avatar and/or pseudonym.

A further contribution to the field of conflict resolution is that this study shows that peacekeepers, educators and social justice reformers should remain ever-vigilant and seek ways to continuously bring about policy change and reform.

Researcher Reflections & Conclusions

The findings of this study show that people are angry and sick and tired of people REFUSING to understand “why” Colin Kaepernick took a knee. Clearly all of these commenters have access to a computer and know how to use it. Why can’t they use their keyboard to do a little research instead of harboring hateful feelings about something they do not understand?

This researcher worked hard to keep her personal feelings at bay while analyzing this data, but there were times when I just had to get up from my computer and walk away because some of the comments were so disturbing – especially given current events and context. One of the comments that made me flee from my computer was, “Black Americans still have better lives than Black Africans. All Americans are lucky to be here regardless of how they got here”. I could not believe my eyes when I saw this comment! Wow! I knew that racism existed in the United States even before conducting this study but I was faced with the grim reality that racism is alive and well. There was a part of me that had hoped that people would lighten up given the video-
taped lynching of George Floyd and the deaths of several other unarmed black Americans in the weeks and months prior. Analyzing this data proved me wrong. Even so, it was especially difficult for me to understand the mindset of the individual that made this comment given that this perspective piece was written only five days after George Floyd was murdered! Even with his public murder so fresh in our minds, this commenter and many others chose the knee to the neck – and that is extremely disappointing!

This comment and the findings of this study gave me the idea to create the museums that showcase comments that hang in the “Knee in the Grass” museum and comments that hang in the “Knee to the Neck” museum. This researcher took this extra step with RFA to show that we have a real problem!

While processing the data and creating the museums, this researcher identified a particular shift in the conversation that encapsulates the issues of social justice that plague our nation versus those that choose to blatantly ignore that the problem exists.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Law Enforcement Call for Reform</th>
<th>Colin Kaepernick Criticism of Kaepernick</th>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting reform of police recruitment, training, and discipline is an absolutely essential part of the big picture.</td>
<td>No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back. Colin K decides in this party environment and in a team sport that he is going to be different even as it was obvious he was not a very good QB as his passing sucked. Even as the average person is spending hundreds if not thousands of dollars to attend the game and by the way Colin was making millions for bad play.</td>
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This particular exchange carries a sad but powerful message of the findings of this study: there are Americans that would rather focus on Colin Kaepernick’s playing ability and how much money patrons are spending at an NFL game rather than much needed law enforcement and social justice reform. The comment, “No, Colin K was just a sideshow that has been hyped to the moon and back” now shamefully hangs in the “Knees to the Neck” museum.
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MEMORANDUM

To: Rebecca Arklie

From: Deanne Roopnarine, D.P.M.,
    Center Representative, Institutional Review Board

Date: September 28, 2020

Re: IRB #: 2020-460; Title, “Online Communication Wars: A Recursive Frame Analysis of Online Responses to the Article Entitled, "This is why Colin Kaepernick Took a Knee"

I have reviewed the above-referenced research protocol at the center level. Based on the information provided, I have determined that this study is exempt from further IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104 Exempt 4: Use of previously-collected records, data, specimens, tissues, etc.). You may proceed with your study as described to the IRB. As principal investigator, you must adhere to the following requirements:

1) CONSENT: If recruitment procedures include consent forms, they must be obtained in such a manner that they are clearly understood by the subjects and the process affords subjects an opportunity to ask questions, obtain detailed answers from those directly involved in the research and have sufficient time to consider their participation after they have been provided this information. The subjects must be given a copy of the signed consent document, and a copy must be placed in a secure file separate from de-identified participant information. Records of informed consent must be retained for a minimum of three years from the conclusion of the study.

2) ADVERSE EVENTS/UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS: The principal investigator is required to notify the IRB chair and me (954-262-5369 and Deanne Roopnarine, D.P.M., respectively) of any adverse reactions or unanticipated events that may develop as a result of this study. Reactions or events may include, but are not limited to, injury, depression as a result of participation in the study, life-threatening situation, death, or loss of confidentiality/anonymity of subject. Appropriate steps may be taken if the problem is serious.

3) AMENDMENTS: Any changes in the study (e.g., procedures, number or types of subjects, consent forms, investigators, etc.) must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. You are advised that changes in a study may require further review depending on the nature of the change. Please contact me with any questions regarding amendments or changes to your protocol.


CC: Robin Cooper, Ph.D.
    Deanne Roopnarine, D.P.M.
Appendix B: I Stand Alone

This poem was hastily scrawled on a napkin by this researcher on November 11, 2019, Veteran’s Day. I was eating dinner at a sports bar in southwest Florida. At the beginning of Monday Night Football, there was a huge presentation of the American Flag on the field, a military jet flyover and then a soldier sang our national anthem. An even though Facebook was flooded with “Respect our flag” and “you WILL stand for our anthem” posts all day long, once again, I stood alone! Not ONE other person stood for the National Anthem with me.

I stand alone
As I always do -
As is the privilege
Of me and you.

I stand at restaurants
I stand at bars
I stand at movies
And outside my car.

Most only stand
At football games
It’s easy there;
All do the same.

Most people ignore me
While others stare
So often oblivious
What I’m doing there.

In our culture
Where most demand
Another not kneel
They should stand.
This is why Colin Kaepernick took a knee
By Sally Jenkins, Columnist, May 30, 2020

Two knees. One protesting in the grass, one pressing on the back of a man’s neck. Choose. You have to choose which knee you will defend. There are no half choices; there is no room for indifference. There is only the knee of protest or the knee on the neck.

NFL owners chose the knee on the neck. They did. They may rationalize it as controversy avoidance or respect for the flag or audience mollification or economic strategy or business exigency. But when they collectively ostracized Colin Kaepernick for his protests against police brutality on unarmed black citizens, they chose the wrong knee. They chose the knee on the neck, the knee that pressures, stifles, gags, chokes and silences.

Kaepernick is still so present in the American consciousness that he might as well be playing in the league. Oh, the owners thought they made him disappear with a settlement. But the image of the kneeling, bow-headed Kaepernick becomes newly indicting each time someone is pinned
down by a brute in a blue uniform and dies pleading in a street. The owners misidentified the problem, you see. The problem they can’t get rid of isn’t Kaepernick or his knee. It’s themselves. Their own denial, that’s what dogs them.

[Live updates: Outrage over George Floyd death sparks protests across the U.S.]

The result of indifference, evasion and avoidance, of stoppered ears and shaded eyes, is not benign. It leaves people defenseless. Anyone who isn’t against this drumbeat of unredressed wrong is exposed as a guilty abettor. Former NFL player Desmond Marrow was body-slammed to the ground and choked by a Georgia cop, though he was already in handcuffs, over a simple roadside argument. “I thought I was going to die,” he said. Retired tennis star James Blake was tackled and cuffed on a New York City sidewalk simply because his skin color met a criminal description. Jaylan Butler, the only black member of the Eastern Illinois University swim team, had a police gun put to his forehead for wandering too far from a team bus. Matthias Askew, a retired NFL defensive lineman, was plied with a stun gun in front of his 7-year-old daughter during a traffic stop.

A recent study out of Stanford shows that black drivers are 20 percent more likely to get pulled over than white drivers.

How is this not the NFL’s problem? Seventy-five percent of the league’s players are black.

How are Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd not the NFL’s problem, too?

Kaepernick was treated as un-American and radical simply for asking the question, “Isn’t this lethal racism every American’s problem, and aren’t we letting down our flag by not fulfilling its promise?” Instead of defending him, most NFL owners stood by and quailed or in some cases projected tacit acceptance as Donald Trump called him a son of a bitch and suggested any player who took a knee be thrown out of the country. It was the ugly political version of a chokehold. Oh, the owners protested the “divisive” language. They issued statements. But where was their full-throated resistance to such an obvious, aggressive, bullying wrong?
All those who vilified Kaepernick, where is the same demand for banishment, the same level of ugly feeling, the same red-faced, foaming sense of injury over the insult to America in that video of Floyd’s death, three white cops with all of their weight on his burdened back, grinding him into that pavement?

[Jerry Brewer: The NFL wants hiring equity, but needs to convince its owners first]

“I haven’t seen the same OUTRAGE from people of influence when the conversation turns to Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and most recently George Floyd,” Miami Dolphins Coach Brian Flores said in a statement. “Many people who broadcast their opinions on kneeling or on the hiring of minorities don’t seem to have an opinion on the recent murders of these young black men and women. I think many of them QUIETLY say that watching George Floyd plead for help is one of the more horrible things they have seen, but it’s said amongst themselves where no one can hear. Broadcasting THAT opinion clearly is not important enough.”

You know what else isn’t important enough to NFL owners? Curing their abidingly racist hiring practices. There are surely some fine individuals among NFL owners whose hearts burn on the issue of race — the Atlanta Falcons’ Arthur Blank quickly comes to mind — but collectively they act with such lazy consciences that they need “incentives” to address the fundamental disparity of just three black head coaches out of 32.

The truth about Kaepernick is that he’s not a radical or a SOB. He’s a reformer, in the great American tradition. As Frederick Douglass said of reformers, “They see what ought to be by the reflection of what is, and endeavor to remove the contradiction.” The NFL might have been proud of that, but it wasn’t.

[Colin Kaepernick starts legal defense fund for Minneapolis protesters]

You cannot seal off murderous racial injustice in American life, partition it, any more than you can restrict a defective murmur to a single chamber of your own heart. “Do not blink it out of sight,” the great abolitionist Sen. Charles Sumner warned of racial violence at the end of the Civil War. “Approach it. Contemplate it. Study it. Deal with it.” Too many of us have tried to blink it out of sight, and NFL owners more than most. Time and again they have placed race into
a separate compartment, tried to soundproof it like their glass-paneled limos, gate it like their subdivisions and say, “This isn’t our problem, it has nothing to do with the game, and don’t make it the problem of our audience, either.”

Colin Kaepernick’s real offense was to open the box and hold up what is in front of the audience, instead of the triumphalist, self-congratulatory image the NFL wanted. The league owners had a chance, with Kaepernick, to be more than hucksters guarding their brands and bottom line. They might have been tremendous influencers on the problem of injustice in this burning moment. They might have been real allies of — and advocates for — their great players. They might have been examples of true, righteous Americanism. They might have been bonders rather than dividers, healers of mistrust. But who would ever buy that now? They missed their chance. They chose the wrong knee. It was a terrible choice. One that may even make you weep.

Sally Jenkins is a sports columnist for The Washington Post. She began her second stint at The Washington Post in 2000 after spending the previous decade working as a book author and as a magazine writer.