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Social Media Midterm

Long Answer: Question 1

Weak ties are connections that are considered to be more structured, these connections are with people who you might work with, acquaintances, and even strangers who you have some sort of relation to. An easy way to think of weak ties is surface-level relationships that can expand and grow, it's important to have weak ties because it gives you the opportunity to learn new things and experiment. The #MeToo Movement is a social movement fighting against sexual abuse, harassment, and sex crimes, #MeToo began "Following the avalanche of sexual harassment and assault allegations against movie mogul Harvey Weinstein" according to Gieselers book *#MeToo From Grassroots Activism to a Viral Roar*. #MeToo began as a hashtag on the social platform Twitter, in Giesler's book she writes about actor Alyssa Milano who reached across the social media feed on October 15th, 2017 to ask anyone who'd experienced sexual harassment, abuse, and assault to respond with the #MeToo tweet. As Giesler would say, "twitter became a megaphone for public outcry as women and men, public and private citizens alike answered the call". The #MeToo movement is a perfect example of weak ties being activated in online movements and campaigns due to the mere fact that people from different social circles were communicating with each other and posting on social media about personal experiences. Weak-ties are good in movements like these because sometimes people feel more comfortable sharing information with someone they're not in the same social circle as to avoid any form of awkwardness or humiliation. An example of this could be a direct message on

twitter, someone tweets about an experience they had with sexual assault and uses the hashtag #MeToo, another person who had a very similar experiences sees the tweet while looking through the #MeToo hashtag and sends her a direct message, these people don't know each other but have created a weak-tie. In the essay question, you say "Some critics of online movements say that campaigns based on weak ties always amount to "slacktivism"", I have a really hard time believing this. The definition of slacktivism is "the practice of supporting a political or social cause by means such as social media or online petitions, characterized as involving very little effort or commitment.", it takes more than "little effort" to post on social media about getting raped or catcalled. I would say there are some aspects of the #MeToo movement that amount to slacktivism but the movement its self doesn't. Liking a tweet or commenting on a tweet with the hashtag #MeToo might be considered slackticism but I think because this social movement and many other social movements are very personal it would not fully be considered Slactivism. An example of slactivism in a social movement could be an influencer posting a photo og themselves and using the caption "arrest the cops who killed Breonna Taylor", there is no effort or work that has gone into this post to actually arrest the cops of Bronna Taylor. It has been very popular to use this caption on a photo you post on instagram as of recently but it is slacktivism and extremely insensisitive, they're slackers. During the #MeToo movement, which still exists and is still posted about, there was definitely some slacktivism, but I dont think it alotts for the amount of slacktivism that has happened throughout the BLM movement, I say this because although BLM has had many more protests than the #MeToo movement the social media of BLM accounts to a lot of slacktivism, people will post a black box but they wont go out and march, crazy right?

Short Answer 1 200-300

1. **Question #1**

What is the relationship between phatic communication and social media, and what is the function of phatic communication? Is all communication on social media phatic? Provide an example to illustrate.

The relationship between phatic communication and social media is very simple yet construct, phatic communication is verbal and nonverbal, it's used to start a conversation or greet someone rather than communicating meaningful information. Phatic communication also allows someone to interpret the meaning of a short phrase or a conversation starter however they would like. Phatic communication is used on all social media platforms from Instagram to Facebook to Snapchat to Twitter, some examples of phatic communication online are liking someone's photo, sharing, and commenting. Phatic communication is a social function therefore the relationship between phatic communication and social media is automatically recognized. A majority of social platforms are full of phatic communication, although not all communication on social media is phatic. Phatic communication is more about communicating, not about trying to convey something important. I don't believe all social media is phatic, but I do believe there are certain platforms that would like to be. Lots of social media platforms have a word or character limit mostly so things are straight to the point. Let's take to Twitter and Facebook, for example, Facebook's character limit is 63,206 characters while Twitter is 280 characters, they're two completely different platforms but one is more phatic than the other, the one more phatic is Twitter. Facebook can still convey phatic communication but also allows for other forms of communication. Phatic communication is more about the procedure of communicating rather than what the message is trying to convey.

2. **Question #2**

What are affordances? Based on your understanding, discuss how the affordances of a social media platform can impact both self-presentation and communication practices. Be sure to center your response on one specific platform.

Affordcances are good things, mostly, they refer to the beneficial properties of something. Almost everything has some sort of afffordance, for example the front door to my house has a lock affordance which allows us to stay safe and prevent random people from enetering our house. Instagram has many affordances including being able to post an image, having a caption, tagging people, using hashtags, liking images, and being able to have flexibility with what you post. Self-representation can be a very important thing to some people on instagram and because of the affordance of being able to post anything within the community guidelines many people enjoy and take this affordacne into their own hands. Although this affordance is offered through instagram it can be really dangerous to some people, I say this because there is so much false reality within soical media and it is able to happen because of the affordances of social media and especially instagram. To some people an affordance of instagram is that you can take someone elses photos and post them or try to steal another persons identity, like in the movie Catfish, Angela took advantages of presentation flexibility on facebook and pretended to be someone else but she used these affordances in a negative way. Instagram is full of phatic communication and it is one of the affordacnes of instagram, being able to like and comment on someones photos, and being able to respond back. Instagram is more of a phatic communication platform rather than a personal communication platform, these communication practices are an affordacne because it allows you to share comments and likes which is really what instagram is all about, but it meshes with the affordacne of self presentation, if you're not getting as many likes or followers as you'd like then you might fee that there are no affordances

of instagram. A lot of these topics can mesh together which is awesome and makes it a lot easier to understand, but instagram is a whole mess with affordacnes.