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Attend school or protest (strike) for climate change

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Title of Paper: Attend school or protest (strike) for climate change: who's *caring*?

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Abstract:

The Tory MP said the government “shares young people’s passion” for tackling climate change, but claimed even missing out on one day of school could affect activists’ GCSE results. (Independent, 20 September 2019)

"Everybody wants young people to be engaged in the issues that affect them most so that we can build a brighter future for all of us," the prime minister's official spokesperson said. "But it is important to emphasise that disruption increases teacher's workloads and wastes lesson time that teachers have carefully prepared for... That time is crucial for young people precisely so that they can develop into the top scientists, engineers and advocates that we need to help tackle this problem." (SkyNews, 15 February 2019)

Australian Resources Minister Matt Canavan said the only thing children would be learn from the protest was how to collect government benefits. "Walking off school and protesting, you don't learn anything from that," he told Sydney radio station 2GB. "The best thing you learn about going to a protest is how to join the dole queue". (ABC News, 30 Nov 2018)

The above lengthy quotes set the parameters of this paper. On the one hand the younger generation is arguing that their protests all over the world (sparked by young people themselves like Greta Thunberg) are needed to save our planet. On the other hand various politicians around the world argue that missing school is actually hindering young people from saving the planet. It could be argued that both sides *care*, where the underlining question is: how does humanity safeguard its future? Young generations care for the planet and ask politicians to act now to bring about change; politicians care for the younger generation by providing education so that they will become “top scientists, engineers and advocates that we need to help tackle this problem” (ibid.).

Our question is: what do we mean by care? Who cares? What is the role of education in care? Does caring mean providing education? Or does education give rise to care? In order to help us articulate these questions and provide partial answers in this paper we will rely on the work of Bernard Stiegler about the issue of care within contemporary technological societies. For Stiegler the answer lies within education. But he is quick to remind us that education is a pharmakon: it has the potential to support the growth (as medicine/remedy) of the individuation of rational critique and as well the poisonous disindividuation of psychotechnologies.

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