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Review: Greta a Tué Einstein: La Science Sacrifiée sur l'Autel de l'Écologisme
[Greta killed Einstein: Science sacrificed on the altar of environmentalism]

By Jean-Paul Oury

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Oury, Jean-Paul. *Greta a Tué Einstein: La Science Sacrifiée sur l'Autel de l'Écologisme* [Greta Killed Einstein: Science sacrificed on the altar of environmentalism], Versailles [France]: V.A. Éditions, 2020. 181 pp. Paperback, €22.00.

Greta a Tué Einstein: La Science Sacrifiée sur l'Autel de l'Écologisme is about the recent mutations in the public sphere in Europe; it addresses how a certain ideology of ecologism has been conceived and is now widely accepted in French society as a driving force, but also as a combat against capitalism, consumerism, and élites in general. Its provocative title (and the book's cover) should remind every reader about the strong influence of NGOs taken altogether in the public sphere. According to author Jean-Paul Oury, information and news about scientific facts and discoveries have now been replaced by stories centred on hazards, scientific debates, controversies, and environmental crises. Our initial conception of science has changed, mainly because in the mainstream media narratives related to scientific matters have changed, not only in contents, but even in the ways facts and scientific opinions are retold and framed. Experts in scientific domains have lost a part of their status, and opponents of all kinds and from all horizons have gained exposure, credibility, and therefore, influence. In his theoretical framework, the author uses "ideologies" as his driving concept to understand the dynamics and current debates in our Manichean world in which the righteous are fighting vehemently against those who are accused of shamelessly destroying our planet. He focuses on how scientific and environmental issues are portrayed and reframed in the media, mainly in Europe, and refers to the excesses of collapsology, especially in some weekly magazines that announce an imminent, environmental "collapse" (p. 97).

A French philosopher and an expert in the study of the unforeseen impacts of GMOs, Oury even refers to the globalized "Greta Thunberg phenomenon" to indicate how the status of science and scientists seems to be discredited in some media, while the legitimisation of ecology (and ecologists) is broadly recognised and accepted by many opinion-makers and influencers (p. 96). The problem here is not "ecologists" as such, but the "broadly," which implies an implicit and unconditional status of scientific authority, persuasion, and adhesion for anyone labelled as an ecologist. Who would

dare to oppose such a popular, almost unanimous figure? Avoiding personal attacks to refocus on ongoing social movements, Oury concentrates on how science is (de)constructed within the public sphere: this is not firstly a matter of emotions and opinions, but it should rather be a matter of facts, data, and experiences.

In fact, even though the author does not refer to this domain or label as such, Oury's *Greta a tué Einstein: La science sacrifiée sur l'autel de l'écologisme* is partly about the Public Understanding of Science (PUS), that is, the way non-scientists (mis)conceive and make sense of scientific debates, being helped in their reasoning only by the rapid scientific vulgarisation made in the mainstream media. Oury analyses as well the controversies emanating from recent environmental debates, and how opposed positions can be exacerbated in the media. But the author argues that nowadays, many scientific issues have become matters of beliefs, ideologies, pressure groups, and influences (p. 36). The case of the nuclear file is frequently used here as an example of the efficiency of lobbies that use propaganda, manipulation, and sophisticated approaches of marketing to promote the nuclear industry's "green" image, and at the same time by softening the phantoms of the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters (p. 37, 125). Science and technology lobbies are not always right, and not always wrong; but they are often active, powerful, and clever. Clearly, Oury's *Greta a tué Einstein: La science sacrifiée sur l'autel de l'écologisme* is an important, original, and thought-provoking book that is however hard to find on the American continent. The contents are well documented, updated, and quite recent; the author even refers to COVID-19 (p. 100). Let us hope someone will have the idea to translate it in English some day.

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