

Fueling green capitalism: Big Oil and greenwashing

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Recently in the aisles of a supermarket, I came across what I believe to be a childrenâ€™s toy. Priced at â‚¬5,99 and produced in China, it was a scale model of a wind turbine, cast in plastic and working with two (included) AAA batteries. The packaging depicted lush green fields and bright breezy skies, making the whole product somehow reflect our collective cultural imaginary: celebration of human ingenuity to harness the power of the wind, advancing towards harmony between nature and civilisation. A good, heartening story to tell the children, no doubt.

However, this picture is far from being the reality. The very physical materiality of the same object tells us an entirely different story, a disturbing tale that involves oil extraction, petrochemical derivatives, cheap labor, global trade and toxic landfills. The plastic toy belongs to a very different universe than the real wind turbine. And its biggest irony: the windmill is powered by batteries, and

not the other way around. A â€˜reverseâ€™ windmill that sucks energy in order to produce more wind? Then it might be an accurate metaphor of the industriesâ€™ role in the climate crisis â€“ we are led to a future of extreme weather events because of their insatiable appetite for energy.

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