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## Consignes

- Remplir soigneusement l'en-tête de chaque feuille avant de commencer à composer
- Rédiger avec un stylo non effaçable bleu ou noir
- Ne rien écrire dans les marges (gauche et droite)
- Numéroté chaque page (cadre en bas à droite)
- Placer les feuilles A3 ouvertes, dans le même sens et dans l'ordre

## Thème

It is a family of migrants like thousands of others. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Sophie Greenberg came from Poland to pursue the American Dream in New York City. There she found Isaac Sackler, freshly arrived from Galicia. Together, they had three children: Arthur, Mortimer and Raymond. And despite a few unfortunate turns of events, the couple could be proud of one thing: to have left a stainless last name to their three sons. Just a century and three generations later, this last name is despised in the country and a Congressman has said he was "not sure to know a family in America that was more infamous"...

Between now and then, a pharmaceutical empire has been built and billions of dollars have been earned: thanks to Oxycotin, one of the opioids that have killed around 500.000 Americans over the past twenty years, according to health authorities.

It is the story of this family that the American journalist Patrick Radden Keefe tells us in a comprehensive and extremely well-documented book. "There is a lot of excellent books on the opioid crisis", the author confesses. "Yet, I wanted to write a story of a different kind. A saga that would depict three generations of a family dynasty, and the way this dynasty have changed the world. A story

that would deal with ambition, philanthropy, crime and impunity, the corruption of institutions, power and profit-seeking."

### Compréhension : Résumé analytique comparatif

Considering the growing awareness regarding the drug-related scandals of the past few years, there is no denying institutions are finally resorting to policy-making to tackle this issue (Document 1 and 2).

First, drug-related scandals have caused major backlash and revealed the wrong doings of pharmaceutical companies (document 1 and 2). Both documents assess how the epidemic/crisis altered the public's perception of so-called "Big Pharma" companies. According to document 2, Purdue's implication in the crisis and its reckless promotion of Oxycotin have made the company a target of criticism. Document 1 points at how much these companies have wreaked havoc in some parts of America and the massive hostility they gathered, a trend only amplified by dramas such as Netflix's Painkiller. Moreover, document 1 argues the Covid pandemic was a turning point. It says it revealed Big Pharma corporations' greed and inability to provide reliable healthcare when it was most needed. Indeed, one of the most infuriating parts of the crisis for both <sup>the</sup> government and the public was when Moderna and Pfizer decided to issue patents to privately profit from vaccines that were publicly funded (document 2).

Furthermore, this growing awareness regarding the pharmaceutical industry is starting to translate into new policies, albeit timidly.

200 (doc 1 and 2). Indeed, according to document 1 Joe Biden is finally waging a war on Big Pharma's monopolistic practices to reduce the healthcare bills of millions of Americans. Yet, document 2 <sup>also</sup> deplores that these actions are still falling short of European standards and that only a handful of politicians are brave enough to tackle this behemoth of an industry. On the other side of the Atlantic, document 2 describes how universities, museums and influential arts universities are severing their partnerships with individuals implicated in these scandals, such as the Sackler family, owners of Purdue. Yet, it also shows these institutions really take action only when the public pushes for it. For instance, Oxford only decided to end its partnership with the Sackler family and remove the name "Sackler" from public spaces after a Financial Times report revealed it had kept links with parts of the family (document 2).

To conclude, drug-related scandals have revealed to the public the immoral behaviours of some pharmaceutical companies, which forced institutions to finally crack down on the industry (document 1 and 2).

361 words

## Essay

Ever since the Covid pandemic changed the face of the world in 2020, America has been abuzz with talks about what lessons should be drawn from it, especially regarding the power of pharmaceutical companies. Some would argue Moderna or even Pfizer epitomize the American Dream. They were mid-sized companies that made a fortune out of their innovation after all. Yet, I would beg to differ. I for one think the opioid crisis and the power of pharmaceutical companies are a glance into the shortcomings of the American dream which shows the current difficulties of the <sup>democracy</sup> Americans and the weakness of the American healthcare system and questions the myth of the self-made man.

First, the opioid crisis and the power of the pharmaceutical industry cast the light on the current plights of the American democracy. Indeed, due to intensive lobbying <sup>funded by the Big Pharma companies</sup> as document 5 shows - little to no action have been made by the government to stifle the crisis. Moreover, the Covid pandemic also revealed even more acutely the lack of trust of the American public for health institutions, which was best shown by the refusal to comply with the mask mandates and to take the vaccine. It also exacerbated the ideological and political divide between Democrats and Republicans as well as polarization which have been all-so corrosive for the American political system for quite some time now. As such, I believe these two factors have eroded the American democracy as a whole and thus the American Dream.

Furthermore, they have weakened substantially the American healthcare system. The power of pharmaceutical companies have allowed them to turn massive profits on products such as insulin by abusing of their monopoly. Due to the spiralling cost of healthcare in America the poorer parts of society are more likely to shun going to the doctor, even for preemptive treatments - a trend only made worse by the fact that a third of American lack a health insurance. On top of that, the lack of control of the production and distribution of medicines, such as Oxycotin - a highly-potent painkiller commercialised by Purdue - have induced a tragic increase in overdose as shows document 4. Overdoses disproportionately affect certain groups such as Natives and Blacks which further exacerbates the problem of inequality regarding healthcare.

Lastly, these two issues question the very myth of the American self-made man. Indeed, due to the lack of regulation, Martin Shkreli was allowed in 2015 to multiply by 46 folds the price of Daraprim, a medicine that treats overnight

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HIV, when he bought up Turing Pharmaceutical. The whole career of the now nicknamed "most hated man in America" was now put into question. He indeed earned his money by betting on the downfall of entire pharmaceutical companies and now was abusing his newly found riches to keep making profit at the expense of consumers. He titled himself as a "self-made man" who had lived "the American Dream", yet few were those convinced which challenges to what extent goes the American Dream to say the least.

To conclude, I believe both the opioid crisis and the power of pharmaceutical companies have challenged the concept of the American Dream. Yet, I believe the American government is finally taking action to go in the right direction to reinstate the American healthcare system through Joe Biden's war on Big Pharma (document 1).

532 words

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