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Épreuve de : LANGUE VIVANTE A

Consignes

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LVA - ANGLAIS

III. Thème

It's a family of immigrants amongst thousands of others. At the beginning of the 20th century, Sophie Greenberg came from Poland to find the American Dream in New York. Here she met Isaac Sackler from Galitz. Both went on to have three children: Arthur, Matimer and Raymond. And even though they endured some twists of fate, the couple was proud of one thing: their sons inherited a stainless name. Less than a century later, after three generations, this name is hated throughout the country and a member of Congress declared that he wasn't "sure of knowing an American family which was more despicable."

Between those two dates, a pharmaceutical Empire was built and billions of dollars were won over OxyContin, one of the opioids which killed almost 500 000 Americans in 20 years according to health authorities.

~~It's the story of this family that~~ The American journalist Patrick Radden Keefe tells us the story of this family in a top-notch and extremely documented book. One can find a lot of excellent books on the opioid crisis, admits the author. However, I wanted to tell the story on a different level, with a series which depicts three generations of a family dynasty and the way that this dynasty had changed the world, a story which encompasses ambition, philanthropy, crime and impunity, corruption of the institutions, power and lust for money.

II Comprehension : Résumé Analytique Comparatif

Those two documents, written in May and September 2023, clearly focus on with a national ~~of~~ ^{feeling of} unjustified cruelty regarding the actions of the health magnates, namely "Big Pharma". They describe what can be seen as a turning point over the lines between power and pharmaceutical organisations; a paradox that led to such a shift was the OxyContin scandal. It was revealed to have killed half a million Americans: the decision to cut ties with this firm (second document) or to pressure some others (first document) is seen as unanimous, both amongst leaders and the population. Both documents assess that there has been a process before deciding to publicly or legally denounce those firms, and that their immense influence (through donations in the second document, monopoly and lobbying in the first) ~~wasn't~~ wasn't sufficient to hide their ever bigger abuses. There is a will to punish such shenanigans, all the more shocking as they come from a revered family (document 2) or an industry that plays a role in the daily life of Americans (common medicine) and well-known millionaires (like the CEO of Moderna).

But these two articles take the problem into account through different lenses: the first one puts political struggles in the spotlight while the second does that for philanthropy and renowned institutions. Even though no one can turn a blind eye anymore, it seems that politics have been aware of what was at stake for longer (except for those who benefitted from Pharma profits). Perhaps, as their aim was to help the population

(enhance access to health care for instance) and not to raise money for their cause, they were in a better position to assess the abuse. Indeed, they seem to have tried for longer without being able to implement before the spark of Oxycotin, whereas the moral ^{anything} virtue of those giants was less put into question, when they donated for charity. Whole Biden's administration clearly denounces them, Sackler has kept coming to some smart events and kept its name in Oxford. The first article focuses more on how [⊗] affects daily life and politics, and the second highlights the case of the Sackler family to underline the importance of their network. [⊗] their abuse of power

→ to act

However, Nick Dearden and Antonia Curdy can't measure the scale of the crackdown, which is still uncertain. Big Pharma still has greater margins in the US than in Europe, and the Sackler family has supported the end of its donations, so it's still in good terms with Oxford for instance.

370 words

④ Expression personnelle : essai argumenté

The opioid crisis is most certainly a challenge for the American culture as a whole. It shows that society has to be changed. Indeed, it's a sign that it's gripped both for users, who need help, and those who promote these drugs and have no moral virtue left.

As shown in document 4, the numbers of drug overdoses have ballooned in recent years, it's telling even when I look at the rise between 2019 and 2020. This situation hits some members of the population that are more put aside than others, like Black people or Native Americans. More than a health threat, it stresses how America is

no longer a beacon for hope but rather a place that encourages immense inequalities in my opinion.

But on the other hand, if the American dream allows an access to success thanks to illegal or deadly methods, is it even still appealing? It was always about fulfilling one's dreams through prosperity and grandeur, so I think that this philosophy could logically lead to such a situation. When Sophie Greenberg emigrated and sacrificed everything for her children, the aim was laudable but it was misused by her children who forgot that working hard and being praised for it is only well-deserved when it comes with a moral compass.

If the American Dream means money, then it has lost its appeal to me: what is there to praise when one funds art and education with billions that have been made over distress and misfortune of others? Indeed, if the opioid crisis has jeopardised beliefs of peace, freedom and well-being in America, it's also because a whole philosophy of solidarity and cohesion seems to have been forgotten: I take it that paying politicians on such a scale, without legal consequences, shouldn't even happen in any society. It's not even about white collar crime rate, but what really happened is corrupting people into turning the institution that should ultimately save them when they are in extremely vulnerable situations into an institution that kills them. A whole conception of trust has been tarnished, as shown in document 5: I think that it represents how this danger has entered what should be innocent - here, Halloween for children - and people's lives, homes. The American health system is perfectly known to be amongst those who cause the most inequalities and cost - in the world, yet nothing has been done since Medicare and Medicaid in 2008. I simply cannot fathom a society in which basic rights are outshined by money.

I think that even though this situation like

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many other challenges of America today (racism, rise of populism, right to bear arms, ...) could scare some immigrants who would dream big, it hasn't had this effect, or at least not yet. The optimism that epitomizes America is all the more needed when reality is dull, that's why the most remembered line of the 2023 Oscars was "keep your dreams alive!". Yes, the situation should scare people, but it fundamentally worries some parts of the population less than a supposed political conspiracy. So even though some broadly diffused programmes, like Painkiller, warn the population, it's not a central part of the people's lives. They may have had felt "mass hostility" towards pharmaceutical giants, yet it hasn't turned into mass protests or mass movements.

At the end of the day, I feel that the aftermath of the scandals, or the American Dream, has been smaller than it could have been. It's both a way of preserving cohesion in a country that endures enormous inequalities, which strike the medical field too, and a form of denial of an ill-functioning system.

527 words.

NE RIEN ÉCRIRE DANS CE CADRE

