

In your opinion which of these themes presented has the most traction and influence over the beliefs of many people in mainstream society. You can use any information from the jam board presentations to support your argument. You can use any other video or graphic to support your views.

Years of underhanded tactics that have eroded the public's trust in pharmaceutical conglomerates ("Big Pharma") gave way to outrageous and seductive medical conspiracies to proliferate mainstream media. As fringe conspiracy theories made their way into the mainstream, prominent Covid-deniers and advocates of the anti-vaccine movement weaponized that widespread distrust into a complete condemnation of Big Pharma and the medical community, dismissing "studies with hundreds of thousands of subjects that [show] no link between the MMR vaccine and autism" (Tomlinson) as simply "bad science [since] most of it is ...funded by people who make money off of selling vaccines" (Bigtree). The most seductive lies sometimes have a grain of truth to them **That is exactly how they exploit the situation:** Big Pharma has, in the spirit of profit, "'aggressively' promoted among ...physicians a more liberal use of opioids" to exploit vulnerable and chronically-ill populations with opium addiction (Zee), charged exorbitant prices for life-saving medicine like insulin (Belluz) and fraudulently misrepresented the addictive and deadly side effects of their products (Zee). Given the shaky relationship between Big Pharma and its consumers, it's clear to see why public opinion shifted in admonishing Big Pharma instead of lauding them for providing salvation in a tumultuous time **I'm just wondering how much of that eroded relationship is real versus manufactured online?.** This distrust has disastrous consequences! While these conspiracy theories are not based on evidence, their cultural significance is growing at an unprecedented rate: conspiracy theorists like Del Bigtree, who once revelled in shadowy internet forums and the darkest corners of YouTube now sell emotional stories and 'alternative facts' to "[three] million" regular viewers (Smith). Their audience has grown beyond paranoid anti-vaxxers and has "[pulled vaccine-hesitant] people from all walks of life ...into the alternative world of health

misinformation” (Smith). This process of legitimizing nonsense is most dangerous for its ability to easily normalize “alternative facts.” Once these “fake experts” are legitimized, the viewer is sucked into a vortex of lies, from crystal healing to 5G conspiracy theories (Tiffany) **Excellent**. As these ideas gain traction, believers start to organize, vocalize their ideas as constituents and form lobbying groups (Burki), spread lies about vaccines through ads like Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s “MMR Vaccine’s Poison Pill” (Kennedy), influence local and federal policy (Robinson) and rally with the President behind #FireFauci, a call to remove the leading infectious diseases health authority during a pandemic! The current global pandemic exacerbates the asymmetry between the supply and demand of factual information and makes misinformation convenient to proliferate. Tamotsu Shibutani, a prominent American sociologist, described rumours as “‘improvised news’ that spread rapidly when demand for information exceeds supply” **what a fabulous quotation!**(Bartholomew). His insight aptly describes the rise of pervasive and seductive half-truths and outright fabrications as death and distrust have held the world hostage, threatening to plunge the world yet again into superstition and wishful thinking. **This was very thoughtful work and well-organized. 92%**

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