

Goop's Netflix trailer: Paltrow sinks into a vagina, spews pseudoscience

Enlarge / Promotional image of Oscar-winner Gwyneth Paltrow emerging from a stylized image of the female genital anatomy.

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Netflix released a trailer Monday for the six-episode series *The Goop Lab with Gwyneth Paltrow*, which—as expected—appears to spew as much pseudoscience and evidence-free wellness muck as the mogul's notorious “contextual commerce” business, Goop.

In Netflix's own words, the show intends to guide “*deeply inquisitive*” viewers through “*boundary-pushing wellness topics*,” such as “*energy healing and psychics*.” The show—like Goop—appears to be largely aimed at women, and the trailer's release was accompanied by an image of Paltrow appearing to descend into an artist's rendition of a vagina.

Goop critics were quick to decry the show, arguing that—like the brand—it actually intends to guide *exploitable* viewers through *unproven and potentially dangerous health practices*, such as the same *garbage Goop has been promoting for years*. And the show—like Goop—claims to “empower” women only by convincing them to try dubious treatments and products.

Critics on Twitter have been particularly merciless at trashing and mocking the show (and Goop) all day. The

announcements of the show's trailer have been bombarded with disapproving memes, viewers noping out, and messages scolding Netflix for getting involved with the notorious business. (The responses were overwhelmingly negative, but there were some solid puns in there, too)

Despite the swift backlash online, the most cutting and concise critiques of the show seem to appear in the trailer itself. As the teaser notes, the unproven wellness practices and products shown are "unregulated" and, simply "dangerous."

In one clip, Paltrow herself asks one of the show's guests "what the fuck are you doing to people?"

Milking it

Yet, the trailer also offers Paltrow's justification for the show's—and Goop's—existence. In an apparent rejoinder to the unspoken-yet-blaring question of "dear lord, why?", Paltrow explains: "We're here one time, one life. How can we really milk the shit out of this?"

Based on the context, she seems to be arguing that privileged people such as herself might as well become guinea pigs for snake-oil salesmen just in case they might attain a slightly more fortunate status than the one they already enjoy.

But another interpretation offers a clear description of Paltrow's business model, which feeds into the multi-*trillion*-dollar wellness industry. (That's a lot of milk.) With the ever-elusive possibility of a better life, backed by her celebrity status and good genetics, Paltrow's Goop hawks uber-expensive, aspirational wellness products. That includes a \$350 crazy straw, an \$84 water bottle with a "positive energy" rock in it, and an \$85 "Shaman Medicine Bag" with "magically charged stones."

The business model is depressingly successful. Goop's

valuations in recent years have soared to \$250 million, and the company has expanded into brick-and-mortar stores on multiple continents. The Netflix series is just the latest sign of Goop's achievements.

There have been setbacks, too. In early 2018, doctors reported that a woman died of bee-sting therapy, which Paltrow had previously personally endorsed. In September of that year, Goop paid \$145,000 in civil penalties to settle a lawsuit brought by 10 state prosecutors alleging that the company was making unsubstantiated, harmful health claims. And a potential deal to publish a Goop magazine with Ars' publisher, Condé Nast, reportedly fell through over Condé Nast's insistence on fact-checking (*phew*).

Still, Paltrow has been unwavering and unapologetic, criticizing practitioners of evidence-based medicine for not "believing" in unproven health treatments.

With the new show, Paltrow remains steadfast. In a statement to Cosmopolitan, Paltrow said that the show takes the same "open-minded approach that we've cultivated at Goop and applied a different, visual lens with Netflix."

The series will be available on Netflix January 24.

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