

## Exploring Environmental Crisis in Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Doubt Factory*

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### **Abstract**

The research article emphasizes on the study of environmental issues. In *The Doubt Factory*, Bacigalupi expertly tells the tale of how FUD-generating “communications consultants” have distorted our public discourse on behalf of their fantastically profitable clients, for whom a little delay in regulatory action is worth billions, and for whom the occasional class-action payout is part of the cost of doing business, expertly calibrated and factored into the bottom line. The research lays out a compelling argument that it's not the people on the front lines who are completely responsible, its one who create the environment that share some of the major issues.

Keywords: public, environment, clients, drug, issue, public, communication

Paolo Bacigalupi is an award winning author of novels for adults and young people. He is an American science fiction and fantasy writer. He has won the Hugo, Nebula, Locus, Crompton Crook and John. Campbell Memorial Awards.

The concerns of ecology, environmental quality and human affairs continually intersect like the threads of a fabric. Some of these intersections are obvious, such as pollution and urban crowding: whereas others may be subtle, such as unsuspected behavioral responses to various features of the environment. In environmental crisis, scientific methods that produce some kinds of knowledge tend to be taken seriously in matters of policy and legislative changes. Glen Love observes that ‘without the scientific method, science is indeed nothing but the hopelessly culture-bound activity that its detractors portray’ (*Practical Ecocriticism* 43-44)

*The Doubt Factory* successfully twists the conventional corporate thriller into something stronger and more meaningful. In this novel, Paolo Bacigalupi takes aim at the spin used by major companies and turns into a compelling tale of a young adult novel. Alix is a student in a good private school, in an affluent neighborhood. Her idyllic teenage life is shaken when she catches a glimpse of a boy in the school’s courtyard, assaulting their headmaster. After that incident she comes in contact with the assailant as a massive prank is undertaken, involving tons of rats, a SWAT team and lot of paint, revealing the presence of an anonymous group called 2.0.

Alix’s father is responsible for some illegal activities. When a major pharmaceutical company releases a drug that is responsible for a quite a few deaths he is the one they turn in order to cause enough doubt to keep the drug on the market for a couple of more years while they continue to sell it. He is also the one who creates strategy for wide scale disinformation campaigns, ranging from fake internet commentators to paid, friendly studies to aid his clients. The 2.0 gang, led by the aptly-named Moses, have all suffered losses at the hands of these

companies. Alix is forced to question everything that has supported her life to that point.

Bacigalupi plays out the story quickly and efficiently through some fairly typical young adult tropes, but with enough turns to shake up some of the predictability. It also feels like one of his angriest novels to date.

Bacigalupi takes a shot at the people who disseminate information. The people who spin stories, and who have influence on how people receive their information, are powerful individuals. Alix's father is perfectly positioned to drive public opinion, and thus influence policy to the best interest of his clients. By doing so, he has created an environment that is responsible for people losing their lives. Each member of the 2.0 gang, and they are out for revenge.

Alix's father works for companies which trade lives for profits. The industry of uncertainty is famous for tobacco research that says you can't prove smoking kills, trial drugs that never reach production because the population they threat, though severely ill, is too small for a good profit margin. Even rebranding old pills with new names and new marketing to fight against the cheaper generics. It's a sickening industry that should be exposed and it's amazing to see all of the lies and tricks laid out so plainly. Although this is an accepted practice, the result is that far too frequently dangerous chemicals and drugs continue to be sold to unsuspecting consumers for a several years, or even indefinitely. A warning label delayed for three years can make a company millions in continued sales, meanwhile costing dozens or hundreds of lives. All these things happens because truths were called into question and doubts were created by these consultant companies. Here Alix discovers that her father is at the helm of an organization providing dangerous false messaging to society about global warming and other issues. In the name of environmental crisis, her father destroys the life of poor people. People are not aware of

the danger that are in the form of medicines. Medicines, which should save the life of the people kills them. The people become the victims of such actions. They not only destroy the people but also the environment, which is our main protector.

The writer gets very heavy handed in the message that the author wants the readers to follow in their life. He has strong opinion on real-world problems and issues. The premise of evil product defense company seen as killing people story is sound, and likely about true. The impression of the huge overuse of the items of luxury and activities plays a havoc on our atmosphere. Human activities are formulating massive changes in universal atmospheric chemistry. Thus, while global warming may not produce the immediately mastery and costly weather catastrophes that much of the rhetoric has claimed, some weather trends are already less desirable and a sustained warming will increase a number of these unwanted trends.

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