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THE TRANSLATOR AS COMMUNICATOR IN DAMIAN THOMPSON'S THE FIX: HOW ADDICTION IS INVADING OUR LIVES AND TAKING OVER YOUR WORLD (2012)

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ABSTRACT

The Fix: How Addiction is Invading our Lives and Taking over Your World (2012) is a book written by the acclaimed English journalist and writer Damian Thompson. In his book, Thompson explores addiction outside the field of medicine supporting that it is more of a construct rather than a disease. The broadening of the definition of addiction and the expansion of the spectrum of addictive behaviors attempted by the author proves that addiction is a matter of choice that people resort to, consciously or unconsciously, since the environment we live in actuates them to. His views have provoked controversy among both readers and critics. Regardless of the validity of Thompson's re-conceptualization of addiction, the freshness of his outlook and the immediacy with which he addresses the average reader explain the success of the book as well as its value as a translational option. Hatim and Mason's (1993; 1997) communicative approach to translation which was elaborated on their works *Discourse and the Translator* and *Translator as Communicator* constitutes the cornerstone of our analysis with regard to the textual as well as contextual aspects that have informed the choices made in the Greek version of the first chapter of Thompson's text. Moreover, Herman's (1996) notion of the Translator's Voice and the need for assimilation within that of the author's underscore the importance of maintaining the full communicative thrust of the original in the target language. The whole process of translation is framed by Fairclough's (1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis which foregrounds the significance of language variation for triggering reader response on the basis of linguistic, generic as well as contextual conventions. Overall, the analysis aims at illustrating the need for a communicative, reader-oriented approach to Thompson's text by bringing to the fore the translator's endeavor to achieve successful mediation on the basis of her role as a communicator between different cultural contexts.

Keywords: addiction, translation, communicative approach, Translator's Voice, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), orality

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Στο έργο του *Εθισμοί: Πώς οι Καταχρήσεις Εισβάλλουν στις Ζωές μας και Καταλαμβάνουν τον Κόσμο σας,* ο καταξιωμένος Βρετανός δημοσιογράφος Damian Thompson επιχειρεί να μελετήσει το φαινόμενο του εθισμού δίνοντας βάση στη συμπεριφορική διάσταση του θέματος. Στόχος του Thompson είναι να αποδείξει πως οι ποικίλων ειδών εξαρτήσεις δεν συνιστούν απαραίτητα συνέπεια γενετικής προδιάθεσης ή παθολογίας. Ο εθισμός είναι αποτέλεσμα συμπεριφοράς, η οποία ενθαρρύνεται από το περιβάλλον στο οποίο ζούμε, και όχι ασθένεια. Προς υποστήριξη του επιχειρήματος του, ο συγγραφέας προχωρεί σε μια εμπειρική κατά κύριο λόγο μελέτη βασιζόμενος σε παραδείγματα που προέρχονται από την καθημερινότητα αλλά και τη δική του εμπειρία ως πρώην αλκοολικού Η επαναπροσέγγιση του φαινομένου του εθισμού που επιχειρείται από τον Βρετανό δημοσιογράφο γίνεται σε τόνο φιλικό με έντονο το στοιχείο της προφορικότητας. Η έλλειψη επιστημονικών και ιατρικών στοιχείων που θα ενίσχυαν την αξιοπιστία των επιχειρημάτων του συνιστά προσωπική επιλογή του συγγραφέα, ο οποίος στοχεύει σε μια νέα, πρωτοπόρα επισκόπηση του θέματος, έξω από τα συνηθισμένα και τις υπάρχουσες προκαταλήψεις. Στην παρούσα εργασία θα προχωρήσουμε στη μελέτη του πρώτου κεφαλαίου του έργου του Thompson βάσει της επικοινωνιακής θεώρησης της μετάφρασης των Hatim και Mason. Η θεωρία του Fairclough περί Κριτικής Ανάλυσης του Λόγου συμπληρώνει την ευρύτερα επικοινωνιακή προσέγγιση που υιοθετείται, υπογραμμίζοντας τον ρόλο της γλώσσας στη διαμόρφωση της στάσης του αναγνωστικού κοινού απέναντι στην επιχειρηματολογία του συγγραφέα. Τέλος, η θεωρία του Hermans περί αορατότητας του μεταφραστή ρίχνει φως στους τρόπους με τους οποίους η μεταφράστρια επιχειρεί να παραμείνει πιστή τόσο στο γράμμα όσο και στο πνεύμα του λόγου του Thompson. Απώτερος στόχος της παρούσας ανάλυσης είναι η ανάδειξη του κομβικού ρόλου του μεταφραστή ως διαμεσολαβητή και αναμεταδότη μηνυμάτων κατά την πράξη της μετάφρασης.

Λέξεις Κλειδιά: εθισμός, μετάφραση, επικοινωνιακή προσέγγιση, αορατότητα του μεταφραστή, Κριτική Ανάλυση Λόγου, προφορικότητα

OVERVIEW

The aim of the present dissertation is to provide readers with a thorough analysis of the approach used concerning the translation of the first chapter of Damian Thompson's book *The Fix: How Addiction is Invading Our Lives and Taking over Your World* (2012). The book has been rendered in Greek as *Εθισμοί: Πώς οι Καταχρήσεις Εισβάλλουν στις Ζωές μας και Καταλαμβάνουν τον Κόσμο σας*. The aim of the dissertation is to illustrate the means through which the translator produces a highly communicative result in the target language with regard to the contextual as well as linguistic disparities determining the act of communication of a message from one audience to another. Maintaining balance between source and target in terms of both theme and style requires a great degree of cultural awareness and understanding concerning the conventions and expectations of both the Greek and English audience.

The first part of the study provides the reader with a thorough analysis of Thompson's argument in relation to addiction. Elaborating on facts regarding the author's identity and his works allows the reader to trace the lineage of the writer's ideas and, thus, gain insight into *The Fix*'s central focus. Acknowledging the multi-facetedness of the argument presented sheds light on the challenges imposed on a translational level since, according to communicative demands, the translator's task lies in reproducing the impact of the original on the target audience. The second part of the analysis focuses on the act of translating Thompson's text and evaluating the translator's attempt to render the English text in a manner appropriate to the conventions and expectations of the Greek readership. The difference assumed on the level of familiarity concerning behavioral readings of addiction between source and target readers seems to be crucial with regard to the approach adopted. Bridging the gap between what the Greek audience knows about behavioral addictions and what the text assumes that the implied readership acknowledges is an issue that has troubled the translator throughout the process of transmitting Thompson's message. The translator's task is to mediate between source and target context in order to communicate the author's message to the implied Greek readership effectively.

The process of investigating different aspects of the English text and evaluating how these are translated into Greek is based upon specific textual instances that are considered indicative of the practices employed to achieve an equivalent

result in the target language. The aim of the study is to project the central role of the translator in the process of message transmission, giving emphasis to the multi-level interaction taking place between the author and his readers, the translator and the Greek audience, the author and the translator and, on a broader level, between two different cultural sets and languages.

1. *THE FIX* BY DAMIAN THOMPSON

1.1 Introduction

In the first chapter, the study elaborates on thematic aspects with relation to *The Fix*. At first, it provides the reader with some information regarding the author's identity and his previous works so that the reader can have a better idea of the way Thompson approaches the 'big' issue of addiction. Then, the study proceeds to an exposition of the main points that constitute his argument and consolidate his re-reading of addictive behaviors from an empirical perspective. An analysis of the genre of the book complements inspection of the text's central focus as it offers the reader an insight into the hybridity of the writer's discourse. A survey over the criticism made with regard to the validity of the author's argumentation follows in order to disclose the strong points and limitations of his approach. The study of these aspects reveals what makes this book interesting for both the readers and the translator. It is the combination of the commitment to the personal – based on Thompson's personal narrative – and, at the same time, to the public – based on Thompson's mission to make the wider readership aware of what addiction means today – that turns this book into a challenge to translate and effectively transmit the author's message to the target audience.

1.2 The Author

Damian Thompson is an acclaimed English journalist, editor and writer. He was born in 1962. He studied History at Mansfield College in Oxford and received a PhD in the Sociology of Religion from the London School of Economics. His field of studies has played a catalytic role in terms of his professional career as a journalist. He was a religious affairs correspondent for *The Daily Telegraph* from 1990 to 1994. He is currently the editor-in-chief of *The Catholic Herald* as well as an associate editor and a columnist of *The Spectator*. He has also worked as a Saturday columnist for both *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* for a number of years. Thompson is actively involved in the world of digital journalism as well. He has been the blog editor of *The Telegraph Media Group* since 2011. Apart from his expertise in

religious matters, Thompson's scope of interest goes beyond religion as his work shows. The versatile journalist has written articles on a variety of issues ranging from politics to art reviews. What makes Thompson special is his ability to bring to the fore "the humanist sight of events" (Terlizesse 2001: 105 in Ames 2006: 200) of whatever he gets into grips with. This talent justifies his long and lasting presence in the British media for over 30 years.

Thompson's profound love for speaking his mind to the public was the main reason that made him follow a parallel career as a writer. In his books, he has been preoccupied with religious topics as well as 'counter-truths' motivated by his will to inform the public about the importance of people and phenomena in the shaping of the contemporary world. As he has repeatedly stated in articles and the social media, the fact that he dares to talk about things that most people feel uncomfortable about or are afraid to challenge is what intrigues him the most about writing. Thompson's first book was published in 1997 under the title *The End of Time: Faith and the Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium*. In this book, he wrote about the resurgence of apocalyptic beliefs and the rise of New Age theology in a world that is rapidly changing after a brief account of what millennialism has stood for ages. The book soon became a success due to his insightful account of the world's condition one step before the rise of a new era (Peterson 1997). Then, more books followed. *Loose Canon: a Portrait of Brian Bridley* (2004) was about the life of the flamboyant Anglo-Catholic Vicar who was forced to resign after the shock caused by a report on his homosexual preferences. In 2005, Thompson's second book on apocalyptic matters was released. *Waiting for Antichrist: Charisma and Apocalypse in a Pentecostal Church* was an empirically-based study on apocalyptic narratives published by the Oxford University Press. The book was considered to be a sequel to his very first work on the millennia and the myths about the end of the world.

In 2008, Thompson decides to broaden his area of study and writes *Counterknowledge: How We Surrendered to Conspiracy Theories, Quack Medicine, Bogus Science and Fake History*. In this work, the author examines the dissemination and reception of fringe theories through today's media culture that, to his mind, are accountable for giving prominence to 'false' readings of crucial for the humanity events. The author argues that people experience a "pandemic of credulous thinking" and are ceaselessly bombarded with "misinformation packaged to look like fact".

Counterknowledge -- a term that the author first coined -- embodies all these widespread assumptions in support of which there is neither substantial proof nor evidence to contradict. Some examples of counterknowledge exposed in Thompson's work are alternative medicine treatments, pseudohistory claims like the Holocaust denial, and conspiracy theories as those circulated about the September 11 attacks. The impact of Thompson's concept of 'counterknowledge' was rather positive. However, there were critics who questioned the credibility of some of the author's arguments. As Stanford notes in his review: "And with a final, worrying thought: might the whole theory of counterknowledge not be an example of counterknowledge itself?" (2008: 1) pointing to the marketability pertaining to the ideas of the writer and the lack of substantial evidence in support of his argumentation.

Thompson's next book, and our current case study, was *The Fix: How Addiction Is Invading Our Lives and Taking over Your World*. *The Fix* was first published in May 2012 by Harper Collins. In this book, he attempts to re-read addiction as a social phenomenon. Thompson was one of the first writers to attempt a broadening of the definition of addiction to the wider audience through real-life examples. Soon after its release, *The Fix* became an international bestseller. The phenomenal success of *The Fix* boosted Thompson's career and this is shown by the fact that the author has since written a plethora of articles on addiction and addicts. A short version of *The Fix* was also released under the title *How Your Gadgets Are Turning You into an Addict,* in December of the same year, focusing on the role of technology in the addiction-nurturing process. *The Fix* is Thompson's latest work. In the following section, we provide the reader with further information regarding the theme of the book and the criticism that Thompson's work received by both readership and critics.

1.3. The Theme

The Fix: How Addiction is Invading our Lives and Taking over Your World is a book on the phenomenon of addiction from the perspective of an ex-victim, aiming at communicating personal views and experiences to the public. Excluding research findings and medical jargon, the author attempts to create a simple reading of

addiction and ultimately make this complex phenomenon accessible to the wider audience. Throughout the book, the author spins his own yarn by employing personal impressions, addicts' experiences, and popular imagery to create a readable account of the apparatus responsible for the dissemination of addictions in the modern world. In this way, he aspires to shed light on the role of the environment as far as addiction-nurturing processes are concerned. Providing an empirical, casual account that rejects a narrow conceptualization of addiction as a pathological disorder, the author endeavours to break the self-victimization circle and turn his work into a call for action addressing both addicts and non-addicts.

Thompson's main argument is that addiction is not a disease. In his view, "addiction is something that people do – to themselves and other people – rather than something that happens to them; it's not like developing cancer" (Thompson 2012a: 7). His re-reading of addiction and rejection of the outdated disease dogma is primarily informed by behavioral accounts on the phenomenon. However, in his book he makes no reference to experts' claims concerning the behavioral aspect. He claims to be the first to attempt a behavioral analysis of addictions, explicating things from a point of view that even 'scientists do not fully understand' (Thompson 2012a: 7). "A challenge to the accepted dogma that addiction as an irreversible brain disorder is long overdue" (Thompson 2012b: 1) according to the author, and that is what motivates him to speak openly about this undoubtedly complex and sometimes conflicting issue. We should note here that addiction in Thompson's work is a more or less open-ended term, in the sense that it endorses any form of irrational attachment to an object, activity or experience that affects its users regarding their successful integration into society. Consumerist habits and personal relations become the signs betraying whether a user is an addict or not. Thompson, in this way, manages not to limit his range of study on addictions with regard to their consequences to the level of physical or mental health; two subjects which have been the focus of researchers and specialists for a number of years.

Cupcake, Vicodin and iPhone (see Figure 1) are the three fetishes of our society that according to Thompson's reading prove that addiction is more of a behavior rather than a disease. "The line between consumption, habit and addiction is becoming dangerously blurred" as the writer supports (Thompson 2012c: 1). Explicit advertising of products through actual commercials or implicit advertising through

fictional personae and other popular media circulated imagery is the main means for marketing habits and accessories to potential consumers all over the world. “The conditions of the global free market are producing substances and experiences that target even more effectively the pleasure centers in our brains” (Thompson 212b: 2). The globalization of addictive behaviors that we experience is, therefore, a result of media practices that have meticulously engineered an environment that prompts both users and non-users to become abusers so as to find an escape from their misfortunes and uplift their moods. The degree of temptation instilled in these activities is so great that “[l]ike alcoholics, taking our first sip of the evening, we have no idea where we will end up --- and we don’t really care” (Thompson 2012c:4). The intimate relation between addiction and consumerism is one of the macrothemes of Thompson’s text.

Figure 1. Cupcake, Vicodin and iPhone: *the three fetishes of our society.*

The author primarily reads addiction as “a consumer experience” (Thompson 2012a: 5). People resort to addictions because they are prompted to by the media, celebrities and industries that ceaselessly provide them with new, usually affordable experiences promising an escape from their daily routine and problems. “Never before have we had access to so many desirable things and experiences that we hope will change our moods” (Thompson 2012a: 4). It is the consumerist ethos and materialist drive for easy-to-reach pleasures that make so many things and activities almost irresistible for the average consumer. The increase of addictive behaviors goes hand in hand with the booming of technology industry that is projected in Thompson’s narrative as the perpetrator behind the circulation of modern addictions. By modern-day addictions we mean lifestyle accessories and activities that address most of our needs and tastes and can be consumed on a daily basis, even publicly, without bearing any stigma for the user. Examples of these new types of addictions

are the cupcake craze, the iPhone mania and the Vicodin trend that seem to have conquered people worldwide regardless of background. “They are objects of desire that can reinforce addictive behavior – the sort that creeps you on when your defences are down” (Thomspon 2012a: 2). The rapidity with which these things have been so widely adored is almost impossible to explain on the mere grounds of incidental marketing success. The author claims that their dissemination testifies the prevalent assumption that “some obviously play with the chemistry of our brains” to make profit by exploiting the innate to human nature and “most fundamental of all our instincts – desire” (Thompson 2012a: 4).

Thompson supports that the ever-increasing individualism of ours plays an ancillary role in people’s increasing inclination to addiction. Interpersonal relations come to the fore of the addict-identification process since, according to the author, “[p]erhaps the crucial feature of addiction is the progressive replacement of people by things” (Thompson 2012a: 6). As he observes, being manipulative towards others is nowadays the norm in terms of personal relations. “Why? Because the addict comes to judge other people simply on the basis of how useful they are in delivering a fix” (Thompson 2012a: 6). In other words, Thompson’s claim is that people have transferred their way of dealing with objects to their way of connecting with others. This kind of relation is presented as an indicative example and testimony of people’s turning into addicts whether they admit it or not. Borrowing the words of Craig Nakken[1], the author notes that: “In a relationship with an object the addict comes always first” (Thompson 2012a: 6). In brief, in Thompson’s view, one’s growing detachment and selfishness are identified as legible factors for naming one an addict.

By expanding the scope of both addiction and addicts, Thompson aims at redefining this timeless concept as well as pointing out some of the false knowledge

[1] Craig Nakken: acclaimed author, lecturer, trainer, and family therapist specializing in the treatment of addiction. With over twenty years of working experience in the areas of addiction and recovery, Nakken presently has a private therapy practice in St. Paul, Minnesota. In his best-seller book *The Addictive Personality: Understanding the Addictive Process and Compulsive Behaviour* (1988), Nakken gives an insightful account of the vicious circle of addiction by focusing on the particular traits of one’s personality that make an individual pre-disposed to developing addictions. The importance of Nakken’s works lies in the fact that he is one of the first that openly talked about the relation between addiction and environment and placed emphasis on the area of emotional fulfilment and personal relations. Moreover, Nakken’s work is considered a breakthrough since he was the first to introduce the concept of *process* in relation to addictions. Nakken’s work has been translated into Greek by Kostas Panagiotopoulos under the title: *Το Προφίλ του Εξαρτημένου: Κατανοήστε τη Διαδικασία της Εξάρτησης και την Καταναγκαστική Συμπεριφορά*, and was published in October 2006.

that, as he claims, prevents the rest of us from seeing things clearly. Addiction is best described on the basis of human behavior that constitutes the common ground among different cases regardless of the type of addiction. Medical findings are lacking in validity because they have been unable to detect a quality shared among users; something that behavioral readings can easily pinpoint simply on the basis of observation. What we should clarify is that Thompson does not aspire to override medicine or science with regard to addiction but rather to complement their practices by showing that addiction is a multifarious issue which demands a multi-disciplinary approach in order for us to be able to cope with in the years to come. Addiction has evolved and addictive-behaviours have acquired qualities that cannot be any more investigated from an exclusively medical perspective since we are talking about behaviours/objects/activities that thrive within society and affect everyday people. Addiction is something that people live with, to a greater or lesser degree, whether they are actual users, potential users or just viewers of events that either familiarize them with the phenomenon or intrigue them to give it a try. Therefore, Thompson's claim is that a thorough investigation of addiction should take into account the role of the environment in the addiction-nurturing process.

The author's conclusion is that "everybody is an addict" (Thompson 2012c: 1) whether s/he acknowledges this or not. We are all addicts, potential or active ones, because the environment we live in nurtures us to succumb to temptation. We all have our own place in the "spectrum of addictive behaviors" (Thompson 2012a: 7) and our place within it is determined by "the way we respond to given stimuli" (Thompson 2012a: 2) and the extent of this inclination of ours may be less or more harmful for our physical existence and mental stability. Thompson's mission is, in short, to enlighten the public about the role of the environment in relation to the dissemination of addictions by making his readers aware of the apparatus behind and the eminent dangers.

Having in mind the theme of the book and its main points is significant in terms of translation since this information discloses the *rhetorical purpose* of the text; which means "[t]he overall intention of a text producer, as insatiated by the function of a text" (Hatim & Mason 1993: 243). As we have already pointed out the author aims at providing the readership with a readable account of addiction using media imagery and real-life examples. These are factors that definitely determine the

linguistic and structural choices made with regard to meaning construction and that is the reason why the translator should be fully aware so as to later make the right decisions in the target version with respect to both content and style of the original text.

1.4 The Genre of *The Fix*

The genre, or in other words, the text-type of *The Fix*, is a substantive feature of this translation analysis. The variety of sources, broadsheet images, personal experiences and experts' commentary, governing the presentation of information has resulted in a rather sensational mix that proves to be highly readable for the average reader. What Thompson intends is to create a hybrid text that perfectly manifests the multifacetedness of addiction-nurturing processes and places focus on their behavioral aspect. Aiming at providing the readers with a holistic view of the subject, he needed a flexible text-type that would enable him to report on events and simultaneously comment on them for the largest part. Moreover, the language used and the examples provided should project the author's eagerness to communicate experiences with the intention of convincing readers of the validity of his argumentation. However difficult it may be to pinpoint a certain category that fits *The Fix*, what best describes the type employed is that of an extended editorial that conforms to the conventions of a tabloid as a means to enhance appeal and persuasiveness. In the following sections, the study analyzes the genre of the book by focusing on the importance of linguistic patterns and imagery employed, so as to clarify the author's point with regard to audience reception.

1.4.1 The Editorial Aspect of The Fix

An editorial is a well-written text where the writer presents subjective views on a 'hot' issue with the intention of persuading rather than informing the audience (Reah 2008). "Editorials comment, speculate and give opinion" (Reah 2008: 87). The editorial is a text-type that the majority of readers are familiar with regardless of education. And that is what makes it the perfect medium for communicating de-familiarizing views, lessening, thus, assumed resistance on the part of the readers.

Usually, there is very little factual information in an editorial (Reah 2008: 47). This deprivation of facts is a convention of the editorial because it is by definition implied that the facts employed are those necessary to achieve mutual understanding between the writer and the readers. Giving prevalence to the writer's viewpoint through the selection of the information presented is a characteristic of the editorial that makes it an extremely useful means of communication for Thompson. By focusing on specific data, he is able to draw the appropriate conclusions and, consequently, elicit the right response from his readers. With regard to the editorial, Hodge and Kress (1993: 17) note:

> An editorial is the place where the process of selection and assimilation, of rewriting and transformation are most dense. It is here that the paper's ideology is clarified and re-established, re-asserted in relation to troublesome events. It is also the place where the paper speaks most directly to its readership, presenting its perception of 'reality' in the form which it regards as most suitable for its readership.

This claim justifies Thompson's attempt to draw an image of addiction that complies with the conceptualization of addiction intended as more of a behavior rather than as a disease. In the following extract, we will try to detect some of the ways through which Thompson manages to manipulate information as well as linguistic means so as to synchronize the reader's perspective with his own reading of modern-day addictions.

> Then there's Vicodin. It's the most commonly prescribed painkiller in America. In fact, it's the most commonly prescribed drug in America: 130 million scripts for it were handed out in 2010 and 244 million for the overall class of drug, narcotic analgetics. It's a strong stuff, a mixture of two painkillers: hydrocodone (an addictive opioid) and paracetamol (non-addictive, but causes liver damage in high doses). Vicodin is intended for this sort of pain that makes you cry out in the doctor's waiting room – caused by twisted backs, rotting wisdom teeth and terminal cancer. If they swallow so many of those pills, it seems reasonable to conclude that Americans must be in a lot of pain. Or is it just that millions of people can't manage without Vicodin's deliciously soothing aura, even if there's nothing much wrong with them? (Thompson 2012a: 2)

Thompson's introductory paragraph to Vicodin abuse is an indicative example of the ways the author blends science with commentary in order to bolster his claim regarding the behavioral aspect of some of today's most widespread addictions. At

first, he presents the reader with facts regarding: a) the dissemination of Vicodin – 130 million scripts of it were prescribed in 2010 and the number is still on the increase— and b) its composition – the Vicodin is a combination of hydrocodone and paracetamol. The use of pharmaceutical terms -- like *hydrocone* and *paracetamol* -- endows the text with a scientific aura that underlines the credibility of the author's argument despite its prevalently simplistic style. Mixing science with public perceptions and forms of expression is a feature of journalistic speech that facilitates the transformation of serious data into public knowledge especially in regard to texts elaborating on the issue of addiction (Winter 2006). The simplistic nature of Thompson's writing is underlined by his overt preference for strong words like *drugs* in order to make his point explicit to the reader. Moreover, the fact that the word is typed in italics constitutes an immediate address to visual as a means to enhance textual impact. The addition of explications in parenthesis is another means through which the writer makes the text further accessible since he avoids using any paratextual notes that would load the text with unnecessary information and, possibly, confuse readers. The explicitness claimed on the level of language, however, does not hinder the generation of ambiguities with regard to the data employed. One can easily detect the means through which generalizations help the author deliberately focus on the negative aspect of the information presented as, for example, in the case of *paracetamol* where Thompson states that abuse may cause liver damage but does not clarify what he means by 'high dose'.

Ambiguities resulting from over-simplification are prevalently justified on the basis of the conversational writing style adopted throughout. By conversationalization we mean the use of everyday terms, abbreviations (e.g. *there's, can't*) and loaded language (e.g. *cry out*, *deliciously*, *euphoria*) as well as hypotheses (e.g. *"If they swallow so many pills…pain"*) and rhetorical questions (e.g. *"Or is it just…wrong with them?"*) that rather conform to the conventions of oral communication. The orality of Thompson's text is a characteristic of his work that is integral to the impact exerted upon the readership since it contributes to the sense of immediacy created between the author and his readers. Spoken language is generally supposed to be more vivid and straightforward due to the fact that it is ordered on the basis of patterns compatible to casual, friendly conversation that boosts comprehension (Hodge & Kress 1993). Nevertheless, the reader should not disregard the fact that

"[w]ithin the sphere of a written discourse the writer has the time and freedom to manage contradiction on his own terms" (Hodge and Kress 1993: 13). Making the reader feel at ease with the author through colloquial expression is a trick on the part of the text/message-producer so as to implicitly promote the truthfulness of his words and, thus, make the receiver comply with the argumentation proposed.

To sum up, instilling orality into the editorial format helps the author bring opinion to the foreground. More specifically, the use of conversational patterns helps the author come closer to his readership, facilitating acceptance of the former's message. The author calls on the readers to explore addiction together through the power of journalism to inform them via accessible images and language. This mission is manifested on the level of theme, diction, as well as structure. This call comprises the feature upon which the idea of a 'good' editorial is based. According to Reah: "A good editorial treats readers as active companions on a voyage of discovery" (Reah 2008: 18). Author and readers try to locate meaning and explore addictions from a different perspective on the basis of their common experiences and background. The notion of co-production is a characteristic of media discourse and communication. According to Hodge and Kress (1993: 175):

> At every level, every element in the communication process has a double orientation towards production and reception, in a social production of meaning that is always co-authored by many participants, and is 'read' (monitored, inflected towards actual and imagined readers) by many more.

Therefore, by adopting an editorial perspective throughout, Thompson succeeds in reducing the text both thematically and linguistically to a journalistically manageable dimension. It is the whole concept of co-production that allows Thompson to employ the editorial format as a means that enables him to expose facts and opinions while borrowing features of everyday conversation. The orality of his speech, however, has another effect upon his work. More specifically, it paves the way for focusing on his personal narrative in relation to addiction. Mingling facts with personal experiences, as we will see in the next part of our analysis, helps the author raise the readership's empathy facilitating, thus, the latter's integration into his viewpoint. Focusing on the narratological dimension of Thompson's text in order to map the ways through which

meaning is constructed and appeal is achieved to the intended audience is an important aspect regarding the translation of the original text.

1.4.2 The Narrative Aspect of The Fix

The narrative unfolding throughout Thompson's text is an important analytical tool for the development of the writer's argument in relation to addiction. Employing first-person narration to spin a yarn about the addict's predicament facilitates the integration of the reader into the author's perspective and enhances persuasion. Thompson does not pretend – at least overtly – to be an expert on addictions. What he does in *The Fix* is to simply tell what he believes about addiction and addicts as a person who has been tormented by different kinds of addictive behaviors for a number of years and is still fighting to control his addictive inclination. The following extract selected from his book, elaborates on the ways through which the author introduces readers to his history of addiction in a manner that immediately draws attention and at the same time sets the basic ideas for the unfolding of his argumentation.

> I spent many years as an addict. I was pathetically addicted to alcohol between the ages of 18 and 32. It took me a long time to acknowledge the fact, though – to realize that the act of getting drunk delighted and obsessed me to a degree that set me apart from most of my friends and colleagues. My doctor tells me I'm still an addict. I'm not exactly happy to wear that label after spending such a long time avoiding so much a sip of alcohol, but the evidence is compelling. Since giving up drinking, my addictive desires have attached themselves to one thing, person or experience after another. I can't swallow a Nurofen Plus for a headache without hoping that I'll enjoy a little codeine buzz. I can obsess for ten minutes in front of a display of confectionery in a news-agent's. And my CD-buying habit has nearly bankrupted me. Trivial stuff compared with my drinking, but my over-reactions to these stimulations don't feel normal, exactly. (Thompson 2012a: 5)

The thematization and recurrence of the first person (e.g. *I spent…I was…My doctor…*) gives the text a confessional tone that underscores the author's intention to share personal experience. The focus is placed on Damian – the addict – and not on Thompson – the author; a feature of the text that facilitates readers' identification. The author starts projecting his case by highlighting his long-year fight against

alcohol: *I spent many years as an addict. I was pathetically addicted to alcohol between the ages 18 to 32*. However, although claiming that his alcohol addiction belongs to the past, the author's account is rather vivid. The use of strong words as *pathetically, obsessed, desires, compelling* increases the forcefulness of the author's claim and foregrounds emotion instead as a means for the reader to better perceive the former's condition. The choices made on the level of lexis also facilitate the transmission of the central focus from alcoholism to other minor addictions -- like the author's craving for a Nurofen Plus or his CD-buying mania -- in a manner that aims to trace the similarities between these different states. The equation of addiction types is centered upon the practice of transferring textual focus on the behavioral aspect characterizing each case. It is the looseness of structure and grammar that supplements the process of projecting Thompson's behavioral reading regardless of the disparity in riskiness; being an alcoholic for years is not equally detrimental to one's health as buying CDs no matter the degree of obsession that one may develop. The reader is induced to concentrate on the emotional aspect of Thompson's narration and not on the verifiability of his argumentation.

All in all, it is rather Thompson's sloppy writing style along with the focus on the self that reminds readers of everyday conversations and, thus, positions them in the role of the hearer who is called to sympathize with the speaker/victim. Audience contribution to the whole process of communication is limited to confirming the author's views and accepting his version of addiction on the basis of empirical knowledge and emotionally charged language. The prevalently conversational character of the text makes up for the implicit passing from major to minor addictions without raising questions or sounding inconsistent to readers. The reader is urged to focus on the behavioral aspect and listen to Thompson's account in the writer's effort to read addiction from a victim's perspective. The author is the most appropriate person to transfer this kind of knowledge since he claims the status of the insider; so it is a commonsensical conclusion – as he himself puts it – that he knows what he is talking about. Leech (1983) claims that people in general tend to minimize disagreement and maximize agreement between self and other when the latter is invited. Pomerantz (1984) also supports that disagreement is a "dispreferred next action" when agreement is invited. The conversational character of Thompson's text and the confessional aspect of his narration, as illustrated in the chapters above,

perfectly fit tabloid conventions, a matter that we will investigate in the next part of our analysis.

1.4.3. The Tabloid Aspect of The Fix

The journalistic strain underlying Thompson's argumentation is in compliance with his project of enlightening the public as to the behavioral aspect of many modern-day addictions. The role of media has been always ancillary in bridging the gap between what the public knows and what recent scientific findings show by relating addictive impulse to pathological disorders (Winter 2016). "The mass media is a key link between science and citizens" (Winter 2016: 26). It is the author's journalistic background that makes him place extreme emphasis on the issue of readability and his mission to include wider audiences as important contributors to the production of addictive knowledge. Public participation is defined as:

> *the diversified set of situations and activities, more or less spontaneous, organized and structured, whereby nonexperts become involved, and provide their input to, agenda setting, decision-making, policy forming, and knowledge production processes regarding science* (Bucchi and Neresini 2008: 49 in Winter 2006: 29).

As far as *The Fix* is concerned, the empirical study attempted is formed in compliance with the general public's demand for easy access to information as well as comprehension; a fundamental characteristic of the tabloid (Sigurd 2002).

The tabloidization of media is the mainstream with regard to 21stcentury journalism (Sparks 2000). Despite the general condemnations, making news presentation all the more simpler, regardless of what is actually at stake, is the main means through which today's media try to engage audience attention (McLachlan & Golding 2000: 75). The tabloidization strain is unavoidable in today's world where most members of the audience, and especially younger people, "are post-modern, post-serious, post-literate, and post-broadsheet, which means that the audience for serious journalism is disappearing" (Stothard 1997: 5 in McLachlan & Golding 2000: 76). The change in audience has, in other words, brought a fundamental change in the way contemporary journalists are called to deal with 'big' issues in order to create work that appeals to the public. These changes seem to inform Thompson's handling

of the serious topic of addiction as well. The orality pervading the author's discourse and the emphasis on the visual are key means through which he has managed to transform the information provided and center the dynamics of his logos upon the act of communication between himself and the readers. Gaining people's trust is an important element for the development of the author's arguments. This tabloid disposition also explains the marketability trait pervading his discourse as we can see in the following examples.

The extract below is the opening paragraph of Thompson's book. One can easily detect the advertising quality of the author's discourse due to its deliberate orality and straightforwardness. Moreover, it is the almost 'prurient' description of the cupcake that maximizes the impact of Thompson's words in a manner similar to that of a TV commercial.

> The 21st-century cupcake is a thing of wonder: a modest base of sponge groaning under an indulgently thick layer of frosted sugar or buttercream. It's made to look like miniature children's birthday cake – and, indeed, birthdays are the perfect excuse to scurry down to the local boutique bakery for a big box of them. The retro charm of cupcakes helps suppress any anxieties you might have about sugar and fat. Your mother made them! Or so the advertising suggests. Perhaps your own mother didn't actually bake cupcakes, but the cutesy pastel-coloured icing implies that one bite will take you back to childhood. This can't possibly be junk food, can it? (Thompson 2012a:1)

The outset of Thompson's narrative indicates, in the simplest manner possible, the ways industries manage to market products and experiences so as to convince potential viewers/readers to consume. The author starts with a small-scale re-working of the tricks usually employed to engage audience attention. What we have here is the vivid description of a cupcake that exerts a rather alluring influence upon the implied reader through the movement of the writer's focus from visual to non-visual traits of the product which validate its value as a delicacy to buy. First, the reader is given the statement that "The 21-st century cupcake is a thing of wonder" which works as a means to predispose the addressee with regard to the value of the product promoted. Then, the reader is exposed to the edible aspects of the cupcake (*base of sponge*, *frosted sugar or buttercream*) that make it irresistible to taste. The description is perfectly enriched with an abundance of strong words and phrases (*thing of wonder*,

groaning, indulgently thick) that work as attributes to the product advertised. The tangible features, however, are not the only traits of a cupcake that make it special. The advertiser goes on confirming the positive aspects of the cupcake on the level of taste as well as nutrition to erase any doubts that may arise regarding the credibility of his words by portraying it as a homemade sweet, giving emphasis on this quality through the immediate address and the use of an exclamation mark "Your mother made them!" What the advertiser does, in short, is to ceaselessly zoom in (tasty, beautiful) and out (homemade/nutritional) on the product's qualities in an attempt to grasp all these features that have made the cupcake an object of desire among consumers. "Looking through the camera has become an accepted, if not dominant, way of perceiving reality (Barthel 1988: 59). Strong imagery plays with the readers' senses and knowledge of the world in order to stimulate attention in a manner similar to that of an actual TV commercial. The readers' expectations are raised until they fall to the mere "Or so the advertising suggests". Without commenting on the cupcake's actual taste, the author deals a blow to the means through which companies succeed in promoting their products and paves the way for conspiracist thinking. A second hit follows that ultimately projects the problematics of the text regarding the questioning of what advertisements sell to the audience: "This can't possibly be junk food, right?"

The intended reader is staggered by the genius of the author who accomplishes so much in so little space and time. The way Thompson manipulates the advertising discourse, as illustrated in the example previously provided, proves the insightfulness of the author's perspective and makes the reader immediately see the newsworthiness of the topic under discussion. It becomes more than evident that there can be no finer portrayal of the 'shady' ways through which the environment works in relation to addiction nurturing. This de-construction of advertising methods, therefore, works as an advertisement of *The Fix* itself. This subversion on the part of the author demonstrates the witty nature of the text; a feature that further promotes the value of Thompson's work. As Barthel (1988:1) notes:

> Advertising is about appearances. It is also about information, but what interests us, what excites us in and about advertising is how objects, or products, become ideas, how they become gifted appearances: how they make appearances and help us make appearances. This does not happen through magic. It happens through the advertiser's

> skill at positioning the product, creating an image, "finding a place to live in our minds" Information becomes part of the appearance.

Barthel's emphasis on appearance brings to the foreground another important element regarding the tabloid character of Thompson's text. This is the focus on the visual and the power that media imagery exerts on people's lives. Throughout Thompson's work the worlds of Carrie Bradshaw and Dr. House intersect with the emblematic icon of the iPhone in order to compose an amalgam of addict experiences that reveals the global character of the phenomenon of addiction. The selection of these images is not coincidental. They constitute universal cultural 'signs' that are fundamentally related to the notion of progress as far as 21st century lifestyle and ethics are concerned. The iconic status of the presented figures and products perfectly promotes the author's interpretation of addiction as a behavior that is more or less culturally motivated. People fall into the trap of addiction because addiction is actually everywhere, as the author suggests. Moreover, talking about addiction on the basis of these signs provokes the average reader/viewer/consumer to find out more about the shared connection between their favourite TV heroes and the controversial topic under discussion. According to Hall (1997: 3):

> Meaning is … produced whenever we express ourselves in, make sure of, consume or appropriate cultural 'things'; that is when we incorporate them in different ways into the everyday rituals and practices of our daily life and in this way give them value or significance.

Consequently, by using globally circulated images, the author can more easily disclose addiction in everyday terms and engage the audience's attention. Media imagery allows the writer to weave a continuum of experiences and capture actual facts by investing in the power of the visual regardless of their fictional nature. Carrie Bradshaw and Dr. House are not actual people; they are TV personae that are, nevertheless, adored by the audience. The same applies for the iPhone that rather occupies the place of an industrial idol due to its cutting-edge technology and design. Fictional, commercialized pictures become the conceptual tool through which the reader is called to investigate addiction in-depth and comply with the author's reading. Thompson's skill of introducing media imagery as an evaluative means for the credibility of his argumentation on addiction reminds us of Bruner's concept of story-telling (1991). Bruner acknowledges that it is the power of great story-tellers to

either relate a narrative so well as to create the illusion that their story needs no interpretation or alternatively, to lead people "to see human happenings in a fresh way… in a way that they had never before 'noticed' or even dreamed" (Bruner1991: 12). It is, therefore, Thompson's mastery over the tabloid and the commercial that allows him to make the dichotomy between the real and the fictitious collapse in order to present his behavioral reading of addiction on the basis of fabricated, media imagery and totally disassociate his work from scientific claims in the name of producing an utterly democratic text.

Blurring the line between the actual and the ready-made constitutes an act of deliberate narrowing of the reader's scope. However, the forcefulness of Thompson's argumentation is not diminished. The use of globally circulated fetishes enables the author to endow his work with transparency and credibility through the creation of a common discourse that derives from the commonsensical interpretation that these pictures provide. The author treats his readership as members of the same global culture that are able to recognize the same meanings when exposed to information/imagery that adheres to the universal value of certain things and phenomena. According to Hall (1997:4):

> Members of the same culture must share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world in roughly similar ways. They must share the same 'cultural codes'.

The imagery selected is thus culturally encoding meanings in a manner that facilitates communication. What the writer achieves, in short, is to base his reading on as set of shared mental representations; a move that reinforces his arguments' resonance. Hall supports that meaningful exchange demands that participants "in a very broad sense speak the same language" (Hall 1997: 4). That is what Thompson ultimately achieves through the use of simple, Standard English and the use of globally recognizable images. Strong imagery replaces and at the same time increases the force of words in order to project a new media-structured, visual-based discourse that works as the common language between the author and the readers. In other words, Thompson invests in the power of the image so as to produce a globally shared language of communication through the use of imagery, creating, thus, a format of representation that 'speaks' to the average reader/viewer.

To conclude, tabloid conventions offer the author a means to produce an influential for the average reader account of addiction. Popular imagery gives the reader the confidence of having to deal with something telling and transparent since it appeals to the visual. The majority of the imagery used comes from the world of media and especially from that of the screen. In this way, Thompson asserts the impact of the media upon the lives of the viewers and potential consumers. Tracing the reasons that are accountable for the rise of addiction into the field of virtual reality and TV characters helps the author enlarge his narrative scope and implicitly paves the way for phobic readings of reality – a rather sellable choice of argument. The unveiling of the promotional strain underlying popular imagery and its eventual displacement from the fetishes described in the author's attempt for the clarification of motives proves to be an effective audience-engaging strategy that convinces readers of the credibility of the writer's rationale. Moreover, the wittiness with which he surrounds his claims, endowing his speech with an aura of 'leaked information', intrigues the reader about the content of the book. Adjusting his writing style to the logos of an actual commercial confirms the point that today "News is literally for sale" (Sigurd 2002: 142). Marketability of news purveys the author's preference for simplicity and vice versa. "A market orientation implies a need to simplify stories so that they are comprehensible to a broad segment of the population" (Sigurd 2002: 141). The aforementioned criteria have undoubtedly affected the way people and critics responded to Thompson's work; an issue that we will explore in the following chapter.

1.5. Reception

Thompson's reading of addiction has caused mixed reactions. On the one hand, there are those who stand in favour of Thompson's attempt to re-define addiction as a behavior reinforced by the power of habit (Norton 2012, Pemberton 2012, Wright 2012) and read *The Fix* as an insightful work that provides the wider readership with a rare opportunity to see how addiction is warping society through the consumerist apparatus of our capitalist cosmos. Thompson exposes the ways in which "…our minds are being used against us" (Pemberton 2012:2) as well as the ugly truth that "we're letting it happen" (Pemberton 2012: 2). Taking responsibility for one's

actions and not blaming one's false nature seems to be the main point of this book that mainly gives us "a far more nuanced look at the mechanics of addiction than we lay readers are usually offered..." (Norton 2012: 2). This does not mean that Thompson excludes the disease aspect concerning addiction throughout the book. What he aims at is to foreground a different aspect that has been quite neglected by the majority of experts. His argument is best illustrated in Chris Wright's[2] (2012: 2) opinion of *The Fix*. According to Wright:

> As effective as the disease model has been at reducing the stigma associated with addiction, it has also diminished a couple of important elements in the recovery process: The sense that we are ultimately in charge of our own destinies, and that we must accept responsibility for our actions (Wright 2012: 3)

On the other hand, there are those who believe that Thompson's views in fact put everyone at risk (Murray 2012, Gold 2012). They mostly accuse him of over-simplification of the nature of addiction; an issue that derives from the fact that he speaks about a matter on which he lacks the appropriate expertise. According to polemicists, Thompson places extreme emphasis on the role of willingness in the process of recovery from one's addictions and ruthlessly attacks a model that has been endorsed by the global medical authority for more than 50 years. Furthermore, the critics' focus is centered upon the part concerning drinking problems that seems to be the author's major interest as an ex-alcoholic. Rupert Wolfe-Murray, in his review in *The Haffington Post*, attacks Thompson and suggests that the book understates the seriousness of alcohol addiction by presenting it as something quite banal. Tanya Gold, from *The Guardian*, accuses Thompson of writing a book that mainly constitutes "a poison pen letter" against the Alcoholic Anonymous Twelve-Step Sobriety Programme (AA 12-step programme). For Gold, Thompson pretends to address addictions in general whereas his real purpose is to attack an established rehabilitation method that has proved to have helped alcoholics for more than fifty years. Moreover, by presenting addiction as a matter of personal choice, he foregrounds the stigma that follows addiction rather than a way in order for these people to overcome their problems (Gold 2012: 2). Lastly, those who criticize

[2] Chris Wright is an acclaimed psychologist and supporter of behavioural readings of modern-day addictions.

Thompson point to the fact that he does not adequately refer to the importance of the genetic factor in terms of one's tendency to adopt addictive behaviours (Gold 2012).

Thompson has repeatedly responded to these accusations by stating that: "What I have said is that I don't buy the dogma that addiction is a disease" (Thompson 2012b: 1). He claims that he does not attack either the Alcoholic Anonymous or any other organization that has been testified by specialists to help addicts. All he wants to say is that for him, addiction, in any of its forms, is something more than an "emotional crutch" (his personal blog). What he aspires to achieve is: firstly, to expose the industry behind the growth of different addictions and secondly, to stress the need for updating the ways in which we deal with those inner urges that can have a harmful effect upon us. The talk about the Anonymous Alcoholics' method is not the subject of his book but an example of the inefficient means with which we try to deal with a popular addiction. Thompson says that his intention was to stress the need for making a step forward in terms of addiction treatments. The AA 12-step method, for instance, is a model borrowed "from the 80-year-old doctrine of the steps, which are heavily influenced by the evangelical Christianity of 'moral rearmament'" (Thompson 2012b: 1). Thompson aims at emphasizing the need for multi-disciplinary research with regard to addiction. As far as the exclusion of the genetic factor is concerned, he has also got an answer. In his words: "[a] far better predictor than heredity is environment, and the conclusion of my book is that contemporary capitalism is ruthlessly targeting our mental reward systems" (Thompson 2012c: 3). By de-emphasizing the heredity factor, he promotes the message that one can put an end to one's addictions. His argument could be summarized as: "My message is that addiction is behavior – and it's no less deadly for that" (Thompson 2012b: 2).

1.6 Concluding Remarks

Thompson's attempt to re-read addiction outside the scope of medicine is manifested thematically, linguistically as well as structurally. The author employs strong language and popular imagery to convince readers of the credibility of his argumentation on addiction. This tactic conforms to the convention of a tabloid editorial that purports to project opinion and give emphasis to the author's evaluative

interpretation in relation to addictions. The simplification and vivification of the arguments presented intrigues the reader to get into grips with the author's perspective and, thus, comply with the reading adopted in relation to addiction as a prevalently consumer-constructed experience. Thompson's book on addiction belongs to the wider network of media actions aiming at communicating this complex phenomenon to the public in broader terms than what people have been used to in previous decades (Winter 2006), incorporating layperson's knowledge, medical, scientific and social interpretations as well as political implications (Winter 2006) that aim at reconstructing the phenomenon holistically on the basis of contemporary findings and assumptions. The concept of co-production that pervades the author's attempt is another element justifying the appeal of his views and the success of the book on an international basis. He takes advantage of the visual and storytelling quality of journalistic discourse to convey his message in a persuasive manner to the intended audience.

In terms of translation, the information presented in this chapter is essential since it provides the translator with a thorough inspection of the author's rhetoric and purposes. Tracing the development of argumentation and charting the routes of communication enable the translator to re-produce a similar trajectory in the target language without violating elements of the source. Moreover, giving specifications in terms of the ideology and experiences informing authorial decisions helps the translator find the means to re-produce the thesis and spirit of the original in a manner compatible with the expectations and conventions of the target audience. As the study shows in the following chapters, the role of discourse used and the way information is organized is essential for the production and comprehension of the author's message. The translator's primary aim is to assimilate their voice within the one of the author and re-create the friendly, casual and convincing style of the source text since the illusion of proximity between Thompson and his readers comprises a constitutive element of the appeal of the book. The act of translation is, therefore, interpreted as an act of restaging source information and flow with respect to target contextual and linguistic restrictions. All in all, maintaining balance between source and target text especially in a text that tries to explain such a complex, and for some even taboo, phenomenon is what makes Thompson's text a challenge to translate; a project that we wil delve into the second part of our analysis.

2. TRANSLATING *THE FIX*: A COMMUNICATIVE READING OF THOMPSON'S WORK

2.1 Introduction

Translating *The Fix* from English to Greek was not an easy task since a translation by definition addresses an audience different from that of the original. Certain adjustments were needed in order for the translated version to fit the expectations of the Greek audience with regard to what the target reader has been accustomed to reading about addiction and what the book promises to reveal. Any modifications made in the target version aim at fully reproducing the impact of the source text. The translator's primary focus consisted in the conceptualization of the phenomenon of addiction in a manner similar to the one intended by the writer himself despite the assumed unfamiliarity of the Greek public with regard to behavioral readings of addiction-nurturing processes and habits. Giving prominence to the interaction between writer and readers was considered important due to the original text's fluent, conversational character, and readable argumentation. This aim complies with the goal set by the author to communicate experiences from a casual but at the same time rather journalistic perspective motivated by his long presence in the field of media. "[A] 'good' journalist is, first and foremost, a good communicator of experiences" (Sparks 2000: 10). This strain of thought underlying the original should be equally reflected in the target text. The translator, therefore, has opted for an overall communicative, *reader-centered* model[3] (Hatim & Mason 1993: 16-17) that is informed by three different approaches to linguistics and translation. These are: a) Hatim and Mason's (1993; 1997) approach to translation b) Fairclough's (1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis and c) Herman's (1966) notion of Translator's Voice.

[3] According to Hatim and Mason (1993: 16-17), there are three types of translating that place emphasis on different aspects of meaning production and reception. These are: a) the *author-centred* translating, where primary emphasis is placed on authorial intentions; b) the *text-centred* translating, where the focus is placed on what the text says for itself as if it was an autonomous entity regardless of what the author possibly intends to say or what the readership may understand due to disparity in interests, background knowledge and expectations; and c) the *reader-centred* translating, where the translator's priority lies in the variety of responses a text may trigger to a certain or different audience(s). These different approaches to translating illustrate the conflicting loyalties and challenges that translators are called to face every time they get into grips with a text.

Hatim & Mason's (1993; 1997) approach to translation constitutes the cornerstone of our analysis and emphasizes the role of the translator as both a mediator and a communicator of experiences between different cultural as well as linguistic contexts. Throughout the act of reproducing a text's message in the target language the translator is at pains to recreate meaning in a manner equivalent to that of the source that corresponds to authorial intentions as well as audience expectations. Cooperative interaction constitutes a key notion with regard to Hatim and Mason's approach. They read translational intervention as an act of mitigation that aims to harmonize differences and ensure the rhetorical development of a text beyond the confines of individual sentences, underscoring the importance of achieving equivalence of reader response. The context in which communication takes place is considered an indispensable part with regard to message transmission. That is the reason why the two theoreticians claim that the focus of the translator should lie in the process of negotiating contextual effects while considering the need to dissolve disparities and modify discourse to ensure effective interaction according to target language conventions.

Fairclough's (1995) model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) appropriately frames the overall communicative trajectory of the translational model proposed by further projecting the correspondence between the linguistic choices made and the effect achieved on the intended audience. More specifically, by focusing on media discourse, Fairclough aims at foregrounding the dialectical relationship existing between texts, on the one hand, and society, on the other. CDA constitutes a means of exploring the way language affects social practices and vice versa, thus, revealing the dynamic interplay instantiated between text producer(s) and the implied audience influencing both cognition of and interaction with a product. Fairclough's intention consists in foregrounding the crucial mediating role discourse plays for reconciling the gap between language and social context. Fairclough's preoccupation with context and the media makes his socio-linguistic model the right means of framing our translational approach and complements Hatim and Mason's theory in accordance with Thompson's theme and goals underlying his tabloid logos.

Last but not least, Herman's (1996) notion of the Translator's Voice complements the communicative perspective adopted by justifying the deliberate silencing of the translator's involvement in the act of message transmission on the

basis of the original's casual, interactionist[4] character and sense of proximity created between the author and his readers. It is the text-type of the source that requires immediacy and straightforwardness to be sustained in the target version at any expense, with the ulterior aim of maximizing the readability of the final product. By deliberately covering any traces of intervention, the translator manages to come up with an equally transparent and fluid text in Greek that conveys Thompson's narrative on addiction in equally communicative to the original text terms. Herman's approach to cross-cultural communication encourages the translator to accommodate different aspects of the text in the target language on the grounds of effective human interaction that favours continuity and facilitates comprehension.

What the translator has resorted to, therefore, is a polysystemic communicative model that draws upon different functional linguistic and translational theories that, nevertheless, have one thing in common; they place the translator at the centre of the act of message production and consumption and systematically focus on his/her mediating role in relation to the process of bridging the gap between different cultural and linguistic contexts. Construing the translational analysis of *The Fix* in this strand reflects the translator's concern to produce a text that is equally communicative to Thompson's work and effectively engages the Greek target reader to the tabloid rationale pervading the original. The analysis of the aforementioned theories is related throughout our exploration of specific instances drawn from Thompson's text that are selected as indicative examples of the translator's effort to render the true nature of the original in the target language. All in all, the second part of our study constitutes a thorough inspection of the translational and sociolinguistic theories employed in relation to their contribution to the overall act of translation.

[4] Interactionism is a theoretical perspective that was first introduced and developed by the American sociologist George Herbert Mead (1863-1931). It studies how individuals shape society and vice versa through the meaning(s) arising and developing in interactions.

2.2. Hatim and Mason's Approach to Translation

According to Hatim and Mason (1993), the act of translation is seen as a test of the translator's cross-cultural awareness between source and target content. A translators' ultimate aim lies in re-producing the original's impact in the target language while not intervening in the informational core of the source. Hatim and Mason recognize that different cultures construct meaning in distinct ways through language due to their innate disparity in terms of context as well as linguistic and structural means. Context and discourse exert a determining influence on the way a message is conveyed. The way a message is transferred formulates its meaning as well as the readers' response. Cultural presuppositions, discoursal conventions and authorial intentions should always be taken into account in order for the translator to reproduce an equivalent end-product in the target language. Figure 2 offers a schematic representation of the three different dimensions of context that, according to Hatim and Mason's theory, affect message production and reception. These are: a) the **communicative** dimension that interprets texts as a kind of interaction between the author/addresser and the readers/addressees foregrounding the former's intentions, b) the **pragmatic** dimension that generates textual interpretations on the basis of the situation in which the interaction takes place, and c) the **semiotic** dimension, that places emphasis on the linguistic means selected to achieve successful communication. Each of these dimensions affects the rendering of the source text's message and at the same time places "the translator at the centre of communicative activity" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 236) giving prominence to his/her endeavour of re-creating authorial intentions.

It is the translator's responsibility to decode the message given in order to later re-encode it in accordance with target language expectations and conventions. In other words, the translator's task is to mediate between different languages and contexts in order to produce a communicatively competent result. Hatim and Mason place extreme emphasis on the communicative aspect of the text. Their theory is based on a view of translating as "*an act of communication which attempts to relay, across cultural and linguistic boundaries, another act of communication (which may have been intended for different purposes and different readers/ hearers)"* (Hatim & Mason 1997: 1; emphasis in original). Perceiving translation as a primarily communicative act between two different cultures paves the way for a dynamic

rendering of the text that goes beyond the level of sentence and gives prominence to the overall rhetorical purpose. Taking into consideration the contextual factor(s) affecting message reception differs totally from a static, rather sterile word- for-word rendering of the original into the target language. This rendering sticks to wording and neglects the effect created with regard to readers' response. The challenge for a translator is to treat linguistic entities as the result of motivated choices made by the original author. These choices aim at proliferating and disseminating the transmitted message in-tune with the rhetorical development of the author's argumentation as well as audience expectations. Nida's concept of *dynamic equivalence*, i.e. the "principle of equivalence of effect on the reader" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 7) is, therefore, opted as the basic orientation of Hatim and Mason's communicative approach to translation with the intention of creating an adequate end-product compatible with the target reader's expectations. By 'adequacy' we mean "the closest possible approximation to the meaning of the source text" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 8). To sum up, Hatim and Mason's approach highlights the importance of textual impact and is a corollary of the notion of translating as "a communicative process which takes place within a social context" (Hatim & Mason 1993: 3).

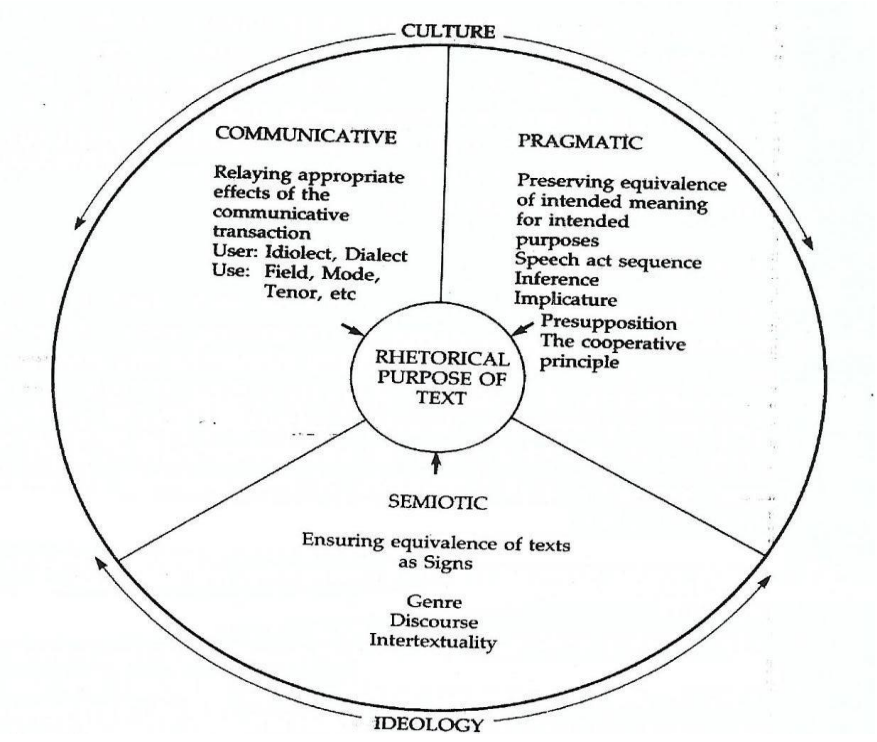

Figure 2*. Hatim and Mason's Approach to Translation (Hatim & Mason 1993: 237)*

Preserving the impact of the original into the target version foregrounds the translator's role as a communicator who is responsible for getting the intended message(s) across not only effectively but efficiently as well. Efficiency and effectiveness play a key role in Hatim & Mason's communicative model of translation. And this role is to maintain equilibrium between source and target text. More specifically, by effectiveness we mean "achieving maximum transmission of relevant content or fulfilment of a communicative goal" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 93) Efficiency, on the other hand, means achieving balance "in the most economical way, involving minimum expenditure or effort" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 93). These two principles are responsible for making the 'world' of the source text accessible to the target reader and, thus, permit them to "infer the producer's communicative intention" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 93). We should note that translation here is seen as both a process and a product. This twofold view of translation corresponds to the translator's double status as a receiver and producer of a text; a role that highlights his/her responsibility for mediating in order to sustain the full communicative thrust of the original. The communicative approach proposed by Hatim and Mason places emphasis on providing the reader with a target version that satisfies both the criteria of linguistic cohesion and conceptual coherence. Communicative focus underscores the role of the reader in the process of perceiving in-text realities and aims. According to Hatim and Mason, "the translator's task should be to preserve, as far as possible, the range of possible responses; in other words, not to reduce the dynamic role of the reader" (Hatim & Mason 1993: 11) The translator should, thus, permit the target reader to enter the world of the original while not hindering understanding because of either translatory or cultural limitations.

The communicative model proposed aims at balancing the foreignizing and domesticating forces that may tamper with textual information or linguistic patterns in use resulting in either a distorted or confusing version of the original. Domestication refers to the strategy of making a text conform to the culture of the language it is being translated to regardless of the loss of information that this move may involve with relation to the source (Venuti 1995). Achieving readability of the finished-product does by no means comply with a domesticating rendering of the original On the contrary, foreignization is the strategy of retaining information from the source text at any cost and it usually results in a deliberate breaking of the conventions of the

target language (Venuti 1995). This move is considered to be rather incompatible with the demands of a communicative approach to translation that aims at bringing the translated text closer to its readership as a means of enhancing the engaged audience's comprehension. To make this happen, it underscores the contextual factor in an attempt to reconcile differences between source and target audience and offer the translator the means appropriate for diffusing textual message in a way roughly similar to that of the original in terms of discoursal as well as thematic demands and fluidity of argumentation. Attaining balance on the basis of equivalence of effect and respect to the intended reader's cognitive environment is the translator's basic principle unifying the two texts on the grounds of a communicative theorizing of textual interaction.

In the sections that follow, the study attempts to analyze Hatim and Mason's approach hand in hand with our translation of *The Fix*. First, it elaborates on the disparity of awareness between English and Greek readers regarding behavioral readings of addictions so as to illustrate the overwhelming role that culture plays in relation to translation as a whole. Taking into account the disparities with regard to the intended readership's background knowledge, it continues with a close reading of the different contextual dimensions influencing the act of translation trying to show how each of these affects meaning production and reception in both the source and target text. Theory complements practice and vice versa as we will see through specific instances drawn from the text that illustrate the translator's attempt to achieve a result that will be equivalent to the original in the target language on the basis of the narrative aspect adopted and the tabloid character of the original. Any modifications attempted on the part of the translator aim at pointing out the narrative's nature and encourage the implied reader to create links between the views presented and the interpretations promoted regarding the way reality is constructed by market forces while showing consideration for the Greek readers' expectations and background knowledge.

2.2.1 The Role of Cultural Context

Cultural presuppositions greatly affect the way through which an experience is best understood by a group of readers. In their approach to translation, Hatim and Mason, highlight the overwhelming role that culture plays with regard to the process of interpreting and transmitting a message from one language to another. Awareness of the difference in background between source and target readers helps the translator to filter elements of the original text and project them in a suitable manner on the basis of audience expectations and conventions. The degree of familiarity assumed in relation to the theme under discussion and the differences in taken-for-granted knowledge constitute factors that substantially affect the way a message is supposed to be transmitted to a certain audience in order to create the right sort of impact that corresponds to the author's motivations and moves communication forward in a manner that complies with the overall rhetorical purpose(s) of a text. Shared knowledge exerts a determining influence upon the construction as well as appeal of a message (Hatim & Mason 1993).

As far as *The Fix* is concerned, the translator acknowledges that there is a significant disparity between English and Greek readers regarding behavioral readings of addiction. In terms of the English text, what encourages Thompson to approach addiction in a fruitful manner is the familiarity assumed on the part of the readers regarding modern-day behavioral readings of not necessarily substance addictions. However, this assumption is not true in terms of the Greek audience. A brief look into the latest Greek publications concerning addictions[5] – addressing either scientists or the average reader – shows that addiction is always presented in relation to medical findings that exemplify the addictive impulse as a strictly pathological disorder. The medical aspect is ever-present in the analysis of any type of addiction, but is usually related to the consumption of a certain substance. Research findings indicate that most discussions on addiction refer mainly to drugs, alcohol and, last but not least, the

[5] The findings presented in this section are based upon the translator's research concerning Greek publications – either in print or on the Web – on addiction from the1990s to the present. The findings of the research show that addiction in the Greek context is exclusively associated with substance addictions; mostly drugs or alcohol. However, there has been some growing interest in terms of Internet addiction in recent years. The aim of this small-scale research was to achieve a better understanding of addiction within the Greek context. The findings corroborate the translator's hypothesis that addiction is regarded as a taboo subject for the Greek society that is generally more conservative regarding issues supposed to threaten public health and welfare.

Internet; a field of inspection that has attracted the interest of both the general public and experts in recent years. Addiction is mostly portrayed through the prism of a disease or an epidemic that threatens young people's welfare and may hinder their present and future integration into society[6]. Studies and articles in the press as well as on the Internet that attempt a presentation of the motives driving users to addiction mainly foreground genetic or psychological factors and pay less attention to the environmental/social aspect of the phenomenon. Society is mostly portrayed as an entity that suffers from the growth of addictions and not as having an active role in the entire addictive-nurturing process. The behavioral aspect of addiction is generally neglected. Research shows that there has been no work in Greek that exemplifies the addictive strain from the perspective of people's seemingly 'normal' habits or growing obsessions with lifestyle accessories. Needless to say, concerning Greek texts, personal opinions and readings about the phenomenon of addiction have no place regardless of author or text-type. The seriousness of the issue and its prevalently medical conceptualization does not leave any leeway for readings outside the area of science at least on an official level – that means known publications, specialized forums or blogs that are considered to provide the audience with credible accounts and information.

To conclude, the aforementioned observations reflect the conservatism to which the Greek readers have been accustomed in dealing with addiction. The issue of addictive behaviors constitutes a taboo subject for the majority of Greek readers. Having this in mind, one can easily estimate the extent of shock that a work like that of Thompson's may cause to the target readership. The casualness and directness with which the author dares to expose personal views on addiction without necessarily matching them with actual research findings makes the target language reader feel at least uncomfortable as to the validity of the author's argument. This applies to the English reader as well who, despite the success of the book, has been suspicious with regard to the validity of Thompson's argumentation (see Chapter 1.5). However, the Greek reader is supposed to be more resistant to the writer's message due to the lack of an epistemic or textual background that would pave the way for public interpretations. Thompson's means of lessening mistrust is the emphasis on

[6] Statements regarding the conceptualization of addiction in Greece are based upon the seminar presentation of Dr. Georgios Panos and Dr. Katerina Grafanaki *Εξαρτήσεις (Addictions)*, Professors at the University of Patras (*https://eclass.upatras.gr/modules/document/file.php)*

accessibility placed throughout his work. In the following sections, we will elaborate on the relation between culture and language in use; a correspondence which portrays both the information and the 'spirit' of the text as conveyed throughout the author's lines.

2.2.2 The Communicative Aspect of The Fix

Hatim and Mason's emphasis on context and its relation to language use is fundamentally informed by the **systemic-functional** model. More particularly, Hatim and Mason refer to the work of Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) and John Rubert Firth (1890-1960) to illustrate the development of readings that relate language to the situation it is used and the contribution of such readings to translation studies. Malinsowski was the first to introduce the notion of **context of situation** and talk about the important role culture plays as far as both meaning production and reception are concerned (Hatim & Mason 1993: 36-37). Firth expounded Malinowski's concept and claimed that the meaning of an utterance goes beyond the lexical meaning of words, indicating the significance of factors like the context in which communication takes place, the participants involved and the action performed (Hatim & Mason 1993: 37-38). Situational criteria, thus, are recognized as focal with regard to the way meaning is expressed. The same message can be expressed in a variety of ways depending on the environment in which the message transaction is taking place. This acknowledgement is of great importance to both intra and inter-cultural communication.

Hatim and Mason conclude their analysis over the development of the systemic-functional model with the Hallidayan concept of language (Hatim & Mason 1993). Halliday studies language as both a *semiotic system* -- that means a resource capable of construing meaning --- and a *text*, that means an instance of the overall system (Fountaine 2012: 1). Halliday's classification of language variation as seen in Hatim and Mason (1993: 39-51) perfectly illustrates the workings of a language, on the one-hand, on the basis of the user (*user-related variation*) and, on the other hand, on the basis of the uses that the language performs (*use-related variation*). The figure below offers a schematic representation of the multiple prospects language can vary according to the context in which it is used. User-related varieties are called **dialects**

and are concerned with disparities on the level of language use from person to person usually on the level of phonics (Hatim & Mason 1993: 39). Dialects are usually related to geographical, temporal and social restrictions. Moreover, differences in speech may stem from issues having to do with non-standard uses of language or issues of idiolect. As far as the work of Thompson is concerned, the original is primarily written in plain, Standard English showing the writer's will to address an international audience. As a result, the issue of dialects is not of interest to the translator.

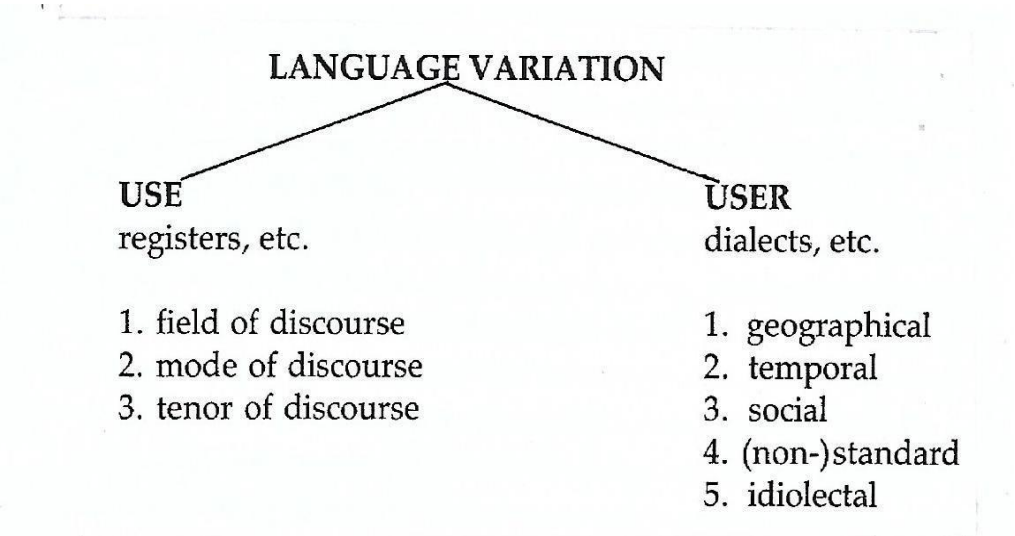

Figure 3. *Language Variation (Hatim and Mason 1993: 39)*

What, on the contrary, seems to be vital in relation to the translation of *The Fix* are the use-related varieties known as **registers**; a core concept regarding the development of Hatim and Mason's (1993) communicative approach to translation. More specifically, the concept of register accounts for contextual diversity regarding translation. By register, we mean "the set of meanings, the configuration of semantic patterns, which are typically drawn upon under the specific conditions, along with the words and structures that are used in the realization of these meanings" (Halliday 1978:23 in Zhang 2016: 180). According to Halliday, the usefulness of the notion of register lies in its ability to "link variations of language to variations of social context" (Halliday 1978:23 in Zhang 2016: 180). The three basic variables determining register are: a) **field** of discourse b) **mode** of discourse and c) **tenor** of discourse. The notion of field refers "to the kind of language use which reflects... 'the purposive role' or the social function of the text" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 48). The

field of discourse reveals the nature of the transaction taking place and the message-producer's intentions. The notion of mode, on the other hand, corresponds to "the medium of language activity" and is considered "the manifestation of the nature of the language code being used" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 49). Mode, in other words, refers to the means through which a message is transmitted to an implied audience; a feature that plays a decisive role regarding both message production and reception. Last but not least, tenor has to do with the participants taking part in an interaction. As Hatim and Mason claim, the notion of tenor "relays the relation between the addresser and the addressees" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 50). These three register variables delineate the relationships between language function and language form; an essential part of communication theory. Register analysis provides the translator with insight into the discrepancies accountable for the different ways in which configuration of meaning is achieved in different contexts by offering a detailed account of "the intricacies of the communicative process" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 75). As Hatim and Mason (1997: 55) note:

> *identifying the register membership of a text is an essential part of discourse processing; it involves the reader in a reconstruction of context through an analysis of what has taken place (field), who has participated (tenor), and what medium has been selected for relaying the message (mode). Together, the three variables set up a communicative* ***transaction*** *in the sense that they provide the basic conditions for communication to take place. (original's emphasis)*

With regard to *The Fix*, the notion of register allows the translator to elaborate upon the author's writing style and see through the latter's intentions. For example, based on the variables of field, mode and tenor one could detect the following in Thompson's work. First, in terms of field, the author focuses upon the phenomenon of addiction and the intricate ways in which it is related to the consumerist ethos of our day and age. The author aims at defining addiction on the basis of global media imagery in relation to experiences coming from what he has been through as an ex-alcoholic and a man generally prone to a number of either major or minor addictive behaviors. The writer's purpose is to prove that addiction constitutes more of a behavior rather than an epidemic to which we are all driven to a certain extent due to the environment we live in and the promise addictions give for an easy escape from our daily routine or misfortunes. In terms of mode, Thompson's message is circulated

through the means of a book issued by an acclaimed publishing company on an international scale. The choice of medium owns a significant place with regard to the appeal of Thompson's message to wider audiences. According to Baran, books are considered "an important cultural repository" as well as "an agent of progress on an individual and a communal level" (Baran 2017: 51-52). Therefore, the impact of his argumentation is implicitly reinforced as it gains in credibility without any intervention on the part of the writer or specific evidence that verifies the views presented. However, the authority that the choice of medium aspires to establish is lessened by the tenor employed throughout Thompson's work. More specifically, Thompson establishes a friendly relation with his readers using everyday speech and a prevalently conversational style that is rather congenial to the conventions of tabloids. In this way, the writer aspires again to enhance the persuasiveness of his argumentation by making the reader feel comfortable with the kind of discourse used and the examples presented throughout the text. On the basis of the aforementioned, it becomes more than obvious that there is a series of purposes that eventually formulate the register(s) used within a text.

In the examples below, we will analyze the aspects of field, mode and tenor in relation to specific instances drawn from the text as a means to illustrate the effects produced and the challenges faced with regard to translation. The choices made overall intend to make the reader 'get into the spirit' of Thompson's text while underscoring the author's/journalist's status as an insider. As Sparks (2000) notes, journalism defines itself as the communication of a type of knowledge that has been acquired by a reliable source. Therefore, the choices made on the level of register are dictated by the writer's overall rhetorical purpose. The translator's intention is to mediate between source and target meanings so as to create an equivalently effective product for the Greek reader corresponding to the author's discourse and intentions. In Examples 1 and 2, we will elaborate upon the role of field and illustrate the means through which the theme of the book influences the kind of discourse used on the part of the author and consequently the translator. It is the sort of perspective adopted and the writer's intention to reconfigure the phenomenon of addiction that allows addict terminology and drug slang to find their place in his argumentation and vivify the description of the images employed by investing in the sensationalist aspect with regard to the reality of addictive behaviors.

Example 1

ST[7]: Anyone with *a rolled banknote up* their nose knows that – so long as their dealer hasn't *ripped them off* – they are about to experience the effects of a mind-altering substance. The same goes for the guy *swigging* from a whiskey bottle.

TT: Αυτός με *το 'στριφτό' χαρτονόμισμα στη μύτη που ρουφάει πρέζα* ξέρει πως αν ο προμηθευτής του δεν τον έχει *κοροϊδέψει,* η ουσία αυτή μπορεί να του χαρίσει μια αίσθηση άνευ προηγουμένου. Το ίδιο ισχύει και για τον τύπο *που πίνει μονορούφι* το μπουκάλι με το ουίσκι.

The image of the drug abuser with the *rolled banknote* strongly adheres to the visual in order to get the writer's message across in the most explicit of manners. The Greek rendition becomes far more explicative through the use of the relative clause: (*Αυτός με το 'στριφτό' χαρτονόμισμα στη μύτη που ρουφάει πρέζα.*). Explication is considered necessary so that the target reader can fully comprehend the action that the writer is describing. Moreover, the use of *'στριφτό'* in inverted commas and the verb *ρουφάει* reproduce the thrust of the original utterance. The choices made in Greek belong to the vocabulary of drug (ab)users, too. The phrasal verb *ripped off* later in the sentence underscores the sense of vulnerability that overwhelms the addict by giving prominence to the loss of money/fortune. The Greek rendering *κοροϊδέψει* is more neutral and prompts the implied reader to interpret the addict's predicament on a broader level that touches upon the social as well and aims at further underscoring the abuser's weak position. The Greek text places more emphasis on the position of the abuser as the victim whereas the English text, through the use of the active voice, highlights the role of the dealer as the exploiter in order to lessen the stigma of incapability that is usually associated with addicts. An alternative, stick-to-the-economic-aspect rendering of *ripped off* would be the use of the Greek verb '*γδύσει*' probably in inverted commas and followed by the adverb *οικονομικά* in order to further explicate the author's message. However, accentuating consequences solely on a material level goes against the expectations of the Greek readers who are rather accustomed to interpreting addiction on the grounds of the social and the communal.

The writer continues his narration with the image of *a guy swigging from a whiskey bottle*. As we see, the writer avoids labeling the abuser as an alcoholic;

[7] ST stands as an abbreviation for Source Text whereas TT stands as an abbreviation for Target Text.

another instance that shows the writer's consideration with regard to the collapse of barriers that distinguish addicts from non-addicts. The translator shows the same degree of consideration by rendering *guy* as *τύπος*. The translator's attempt to stay close to the original's discourse is also evident in the rendering of the slang term *swigging* ας *που πίνει μονορούφι*. The verb *swig* actually means 'drink in large quantities' and is a term related to serious drinking problems. The Greek phrase *πίνει μονορούφι* does not connote heavy alcoholism but communicates a similar degree of dependence that makes up for the lack of an exact equivalent. An analogous challenge for the translator is presented in the following example.

Example 2

ST: Have you ever experienced that feeling of *glorious relief* after you've just thrown up a *dodgy curry*? It's not just getting rid of the food that makes you feel good; it's a natural elation produced by chemicals in the brain. Bulimics *get off on it*, to put it crudely.

TT: Έχετε ποτέ νιώσει αυτή την *υπέροχη αίσθηση ανακούφισης* μετά από έναν *εμετό*; Δεν νιώθεις καλά μόνο επειδή απαλλάχθηκες από το φαγητό. Αυτή η φυσική αγαλλίαση που νιώθεις προέρχεται από φυσικές ουσίες του εγκεφάλου. Τους βουλιμικούς για να το θέσω ωμά, ο εμετός *τους συναρπάζει*.

In this case, the use of the phrase *dodgy curry* plays an important role in terms of the conceptualization of the meaning of the original. Despite the disgust and strong appeal to visual that the image created produces to the reader, *dodgy curry* is an expression that is mostly associated with digestive problems and food poisoning. That is what makes the image of a *dodgy curry* contrast violently with the *feeling of glorious relief* that comes from it. The effect of the Greek *εμετός* is not as forceful as that of the English term. The same applies to the rendition of *glorious* as *υπέροχη*; a move that is dictated on the grounds of lessening the force of the writer's argument and makes it compatible to the more skeptical Greek reader. The same goes for the rendering of the phrasal *get off on it* where the excitement denoted in the original is lessened in the Greek passage through the use of *συναρπάζει*; an equivalent that, nevertheless, does not carry the sexual overtones and element of intrigue found in the original.

Another aspect of field as far as the translated product is concerned is the means through which English/global culture interacts in relation to the Greek context, thus, resulting in the production of a new sort of register within the target text. Particularly, it is the use of words and names coming mostly from the world of the global media and market that is an integral characteristic of Thompson's text and that promotes the author's intention to provide the wider audience with an updated reading of addiction. These terms are mostly names of world-famous celebrities, fictional characters or products that are more or less known to the public on a global scale due to their commercial success. By using branding terminology, the writer aims to produce a text that sounds as if it is part and parcel of the post-modern, consumerist world we live in enhancing, thus, the strain of updatedness that pervades the author's argumentation. The author's intention is to motivate readership to reconfigure addiction in different terms under the prism of the consumerist ethos; an aspect that as he suggests has been, consciously or not, neglected by experts. What he achieves, therefore, by resorting to product terminology, is to get his message across in a transparent manner that is equally digestible to the examples employed for illustrating the writer's point in relation to addiction nurturing processes. All in all, product terminology paves the way for an intricate interplay between the author and his audience in a twofold manner. Firstly, it facilitates the negotiation the gap between message producer and receivers by addressing common background knowledge and frames the information disseminated in more or less familiar terms. Secondly, it allows the author to stress the conspicuous role of the media and market in the formation of modern reality and, thus, implicitly solidify conspiracist readings with regard to the part the environment plays in relation to the spread of addictive behaviors.

In the examples provided, we elaborate upon the way the aforementioned elements have been maintained in the Greek text where the dispersed use of English terms demonstrates an upgraded awareness on the part of the implied author and adds to the credibility of his argumentation. This move helps the translator preserve the original's systematic representation of reality in market terms. Moreover, it convinces the target reader with regard to the newness and newsworthiness of Thompson's work while not deviating from the commercial communication pertaining to prevalent market discourse (Murdoch 2007). First of all, any character (e.g *Sarah Jessica*

Parker, Hugh Laure, Matthew Perry, Eminem, Courtney Love etc.), product (e.g. *cupcake, iPhone, Vicodin, Angry Birds, World of Warcraft, Facebook, Twitter* etc) or brand name (e.g. *Apple, Sprinkles, Starbucks, Zogenix* etc.) encountered throughout the original are used verbatim in the Greek version. These are all persons and concepts that are supposed to be known to the Greek audience. Any attempt to render these terms in Greek would sound unnatural or hinder immediate understanding; a move that goes against the innate fluent character of the text. The power of these terms lies in the fact that they address the implied reader's cosmos immediately by addressing in a clear and straight manner his/her experience of the world while mostly appealing to the visual; a strain compatible to the proliferating demand for representation that is usually encountered in the majority of tabloid press (Murdoch 1999). The same applies for less known names to the target audience -- like, for example, those of *Craig Nakken, Xanthe Clay, Hogarth etc.* -- since this strategy is supposed to facilitate understanding by giving intact the information needed to the reader so that s/he to conduct any research that he/she may find of interest. Addiction is, therefore, presented with consideration placed on the global aspect of addictive behaviors as exemplified in the original text. This intention is communicated to the Greek target reader through the use of foreign terms that aim at evoking universalist readings and bridge the gap between the author and his readers.

However, there are a few cases throughout the text where the translator has opted for an English term along with a translation as, for instance, in the case of Hogarth's work *Gin Lane (Η Πάροδος του Τζιν)* or in that of *Magnolia's Bakery (Ο Φούρνος της Μανόλια).* In these cases, the Greek translation is supposed to clarify the meaning as a way of reproducing the flow of the original. Something similar holds good for the translation of Nakken's work *The Addictive Personality*; a book that has been translated in Greek as *Το Προφιλ του Εξαρτημένου*. In this case, the translator chooses to place the Greek title along with the original in parentheses because readers are probably not aware of the fact that there is a translation. In this way, the translator facilitates the implied reader to conduct any sort of research in either Greek or English in case s/he is interested. Instances where a Greek rendering is preferred aim at making the target reader feel more at ease with Thompson's argument and come closer to the writer's viewpoints because of the degree of intimacy cultivated between the implied readership and the source used. This applies to the transliteration of the

Greek-origin expert on technologies, *Milo Yiannopoulos* as *Μίλο Γιαννόπουλος*. In this case, the translator aims at placing emphasis on the Greek element and, therefore, achieves to make the target reader become more open to the author's argumentation. Moreover, it is assumed that it would definitely seem somehow strange to potential readers to have a Greek name written in English; a fact that would remind them that the text they are given is actually a translation. The translator, therefore, intervenes in order to safeguard the communicative aspect of Thompson's text. The same goes for the case of *Dr. House/ Δρ. Χάους* as well as the *Sex and The City* protagonists *Miranda and Carry/ Μιράντα και Κάρυ*. The Greek transliterations of these fictional character names are considered more appropriate since the average Greek reader is also supposed to be aware of this smash-hit series since s/he has most probably watched it subtitled on television. These inconsistencies with regard to transliterations show no lack of consideration on the part of the translator. On the contrary, the translator mediates in order to negotiate amongst the different, and sometimes even conflicting, contextual dynamics accountable for the production of meaning in relation to both the source and target audience. The translator's intention is always to mitigate so as to recreate in similar terms the communicativeness existing in the original. In other words, the translational choices made are compatible with the prevalently open character of the author's text that values hybridity of speech and argumentation.

Instances illustrating the communicativeness of Thompon's text are also related to the variable of tenor. As we have already explained, the writer aspires to simplify the talk on addiction and promote a more open-to-the-public reading of addictive behaviors. To achieve this, he constantly finds new ways to establish a friendly relation between himself and his readers that point to his experiences as both a common man and an ex-alcoholic. The writer's primary intention is to inform the readership about the reality of addictions in relation to our everyday experience on the basis of what he has been through and not on what experts say. The instances selected below are fine examples of the casualness of Thompon's discourse and his will to address his readers in the most immediate manner possible in order to motivate them to think of addiction 'out of the box'. In the example that follows, we provide an instance of direct address that illustrates the author's will to come closer to the audience and identify himself as one of them that, either consciously or not, are all the

more entrapped into the intricate web of seemingly innocent but, neverthesless, addictive behaviors.

Example 3

ST: That's the subject of this book: a social environment in which more and more of us are being *pulled* towards some form of addiction, even though we may be aware of the fact and never become *full-blown addicts*.

TT: Αυτό είναι και το θέμα του βιβλίου *που κρατάτε στα χέρια σας*: ένα κοινωνικό περιβάλλον στο οποίο όλο και περισσότεροι από εμάς *ωθούνται* σε κάποιου είδους εθισμό, χωρίς ωστόσο να το συνειδητοποιούν ή *να εθιστούν απόλυτα σε κάτι*.

In this extract, two points are made clear. On a surface level, the author manifests the theme of his book and the perspective he adopts with regard to the issue of addictive behaviors. On a deeper level, however, through the use of the inclusive *we* he positions himself as one among the many users that have their own place within the wide spectrum of addictions. The writer states his views but at the same time he addresses the impied reader on equal terms as he acknowledges the fact that they are equally affected by market forces that make them succumb to some sort of addiction regardless of how harmful this may prove. The writer does not own a conspicuous place in relation to the field of addiction. What he aims at is to share what he has experienced and what he thinks of in terms of addiction dissemination. The translator preserves the inclusive character of the original through the use of *εμάς* that again places the author on the same basis as his readers. At this point, we should note some more elements that reveal significant aspects of Thompon's argument. Firstly, it is the use of *more and more* rendered in Greek as *όλο και περισσότερο* that portrays the increase the writer wants to underscore in terms of addiction worldwide. Secondly, it is the use of the verb *pulled* translated as *ωθούνται* in the Greek version that aims at highlighting the force exercised upon users so as to turn into abusers of substances and activities. Lastly, the use of the term *full-blown addicts* lexicalized in Greek with the paraphrase *να εθιστούν απόλυτα σε κάτι* indicates the writer's intention to proceed into a classification of addicts and addictive behaviors that gives an end to the clear-cut distinction drawn between addicts and non-addicts. All in all, the choices made illustrate some main points as well as the relation established between the addresser and the addresees. Before moving on to the next example, what should be pointed out

is the addition made on the part of the author at the opening sentence *που κρατάτε στα χέρια σας*. By adding this, the translator aims at stressing the inclusiveness and immediateness achieved in the English text through the use of simple language (*pulled, more and more, become aware*) and abbreviations (*that's*) that cannot be lexicalized on exactly the same level of formality in the Greek text. For example, the verb *pulled* is more informal in relation to the Greek *ωθούνται*. The same goes for *become aware* and *συνειδητοποιούν*. Therefore, by stressing the aspect of immediateness the translator attempts to achieve equilibrium in terms of effect between the source and the target text.

In Examples 4 and 5, we will elaborate on some more instances where the writer immediately addresses the implied reader setting a conversational tone on which the development of his argument is going to be based. Here the author asks for the readers' opinion of the cupcake and the iPhone; two of the world's most widespread trends. Without explicitly taking sides, the author invites the audience to question the quality of these products and the means through which they have achieved market success on a global basis.

Example 4

ST: This can't possibly be junk food, *can it?*

TT: Κάτι τέτοιο δεν θα μπορούσε να είναι ανθυγιεινό*, σωστά;*

Example 5

ST: Your iPhone does everything you could require of a mobile phone and more, so you really don't need the upgraded model that Apple has just released…*do you*?

TT: Το iPhone σου κάνει όλα όσα θα μπορούσες να ζητήσεις από ένα κινητό τηλέφωνο και ακόμα περισσότερα, και έτσι δεν χρειάζεσαι το αναβαθμισμένο μοντέλο που η Apple μόλις κυκλοφόρησε….*σωστά*;

Interacting with the implied reader is a means through which the author implicitly manages to achieve persuasion and give the reader the impression that they produce knowledge on addiction together by equally contributing to the process of understanding addictive behaviors better. This call to work together and evaluate the points illustrated as a means to gain insight into the way people respond to stimuli

reflects the sort of rhetoric Thompson employs aiming, thus, to formulate audience reaction and expectations in a manner that validates his argumentation. Addressing the audience directly serves a twofold purpose on the part of the author; first, to introduce conspiracy readings by drawing readers' attention to what is implied but remains unsaid and second, to disassociate himself from any responsibility with regard to evaluative remarks that are not based on concrete evidence as it would be expected from a journalist of Thompson's status. By offering the reader the freedom to answer on their own, the author attributes possible interpretations in some way to an external source. The tactics of indirectly indicating alignment and advancing a certain view is an integral feature of journalistic discourse (White 2006: 41). However, it is also a means to underline the author's status as one among the many people who share the same thoughts and worries with relation to what is true or false in terms of addiction and addiction-nurturing processeses. Author and readers share the same background and what they are now called to do is to cooperate and re-evaluate the data given from a consumerist perspective that is going to shed light upon why science and medicine have failed to do so. The author engages the readers into a process of knowledge exchange and sharing of experiences that occurs between equals that ultimately intends to make both parts represent the world of addiction on practical grounds. The translator, on her part, has endeavoured to maintain this interaction taking place between Thompson and his readers. However, as far as the Greek text is concerned, one could argue that the writer is placed in a somehow superior rank through the repetitive lexicalization of the question tags encountered as *σωστά* that points to the author's will to establish rightness with regard to interpretations of addiction; an element that does not exist in the original. This choice on the part of the author may not be compatible with the friendly and negotiable tone found in the original text. However, it is a choice the translator took the liberty of making on the grounds of the medium Thompon has selected to convey his message. Therefore, the mode of discourse plays a decisive role in relation to the range of linguistic means the translator is eligible to use as a means to linguistically realize aspects of the text while trying to maintain balance between source meaning and target audience expectations.

As it has already been pointed out, the Greek audience is not familiar with alternative readings of addiction like the one purported by Thompson. In the example

that follows, we will explore some instances where the mode of discourse chosen allows the translator to mediate and bring Thompon's text closer to Greek readers' standards by exploiting the authority that a book as a medium exerts upon the intended audience. In this case, the author, after pinpointing his main arguments with regard to his reading of addiction, addressees the implied reader and prepares him/her so as to later introduce them to the former's personal narrative concerning addiction and mainly his heavy alcoholism.

Example 6

ST: Believe me, *I speak from experience*.

TT: Πιστέψτε με, *μιλώ εκ πείρας.*

The statement/inclination made on the part of the author in simple and clear terms is rendered in a conspicuously formal manner in Greek. The use of Greek formal form *εκ πείρας* underlines the translator's intention to endow the author's logos with a sense of expertise and authority that goes against the simple and almost confessional tone found in the original sentence. The intention of the author to 'confess' what he has been through becomes clear in both cases. What differentiates the two extracts is the sort of relations set up between the author and his readers. As far as the English text is concerned, the author addresses his readers on equal terms. On the contrary, the author in the Greek version, sounds as if trying to stress his expertise in relation to his readers. An alternative lexicalization that would permit the translator to maintain balance between the Greek and the English text on the level of tenor would be: ξέρω *καλά για τι σας μιλώ*. However, this lexicalization is a rather free rendition of the author's message that sounds too simplistic and oral concerning the level of expression that is assumed as appropriate by the Greek reader in terms of both the theme under discussion and the medium employed. To sum up, it is again the mode of discourse that gives the translator the leeway to slightly modify aspects of the text that will make the book more resonant to Greek readers' taste and expectation.

However, deviations as the one shown in Example 6 are mitigated in other instances in the text. In Example 7, for instance, the author mixes registers by employing different levels of formality so as to mark his claim with relation to the place the iPhone possesses in our day and age.

Example 7

ST: Now let's consider another *ubiquitous presence* in modern life: the iPhone, which started out as a self-conscious statement of *coolness* but which, thanks to Apple's marketing genius, has become as commonplace as a set of car keys.

TT: Τώρα ας δούμε κάτι ακόμα *που το βρίσκεις πραγματικά παντού σήμερα*: το iPhone, το οποίο ξεκίνησε σαν μια διστακτική δήλωση του πόσο *cool* μπορείς να είσαι αλλά εν τέλει, χάρη στο ιδιοφυές μάρκετινγκ της Apple, έχει πλέον αναχθεί σε κάτι τόσο σύνηθες όσο τα κλειδιά του αυτοκινήτου.

Example 7 is a characteristic instance of mixing of registers. The conversational character underlined by the use of abbreviations like *let's* and the use of attention-grabbing *Now* at the beginning of the sentence contrasts to the formality promoted by the nominalizations following (e.g. *statement of coolness* instead of an active form like *how cool you are*) contrasts to the use of higher diction (e.g. *ubiquitous presence*). However, the blending of styles found in the original is not reflected in the target version. The translator has opted for a less formal style throughout the passage by using simple words (e.g. *ubiquitous* is paraphrased as *που το βρίσκεις πραγματικά παντού σήμερα*) or even English ones in adjectival form (e.g. *cool* instead of *coolness*) acknowledging that, at first, the Greek readership is familiar with this terminology which lacks an exact equivalent, and secondly, that foreign terms endow the text with a sense of updatedeness that promotes the author's message for change with regard to the way we have been accustomed to viewing the issue of addiction. Despite deviations on the level of discourse, however, generic conventions are not to the same extent violated since the implied reader can easily detect the advertising strain underpinning the author's language.

What we arrive at, therefore, with regard to register is a mixture of different styles that reveal different aspects of Thompson's text. Field, tenor and mode may disclose different and sometimes even conflicting aspects in terms of the author's argument, producing therefore, a textual product which abounds in functions. At this point it is worth noting that Hatim and Mason acknowledge the fact that the multifunctional nature of modern texts results in a blending of registers that is not always easy to distinguish due to the absence of any formal criteria that would make this possible (Hatim and Mason 1993: 51). This is true in the case of *The Fix* as well

as the examples provided above show. The writer's will to expose his ideas in the least perplexing manner possible while leaving no room for doubt affects the way information is presented to the intended audience. In the next section of our analysis, we will focus on closer aspects of the texts that shed light on authorial intentions and the way the discourse used affects readers' response and communication.

2.2.3 The Pragmatic Aspect of The Fix

By pragmatics we mean "the study of relations between language and its context of utterance" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 59). In their study on translation, Hatim and Mason (1993) employ some basic notions of pragmatic analysis, i.e. Austin's (1982) speech-act theory and Grice's (1975) maxims to explicate how the context of an utterance can be related to issues of translation. Austin's speech acts and Grice's principles disclose interesting aspects with regard to the intricacies involved in human communication providing us with insight as far as what a sentence appears to say and what it actually says. Pragmatic considerations govern interaction as they are accountable for the impact an utterance exerts upon the intended audience. The focus such readings place on the interaction between speakers and listeners for the production of meaning is what makes pragmatic analysis an indispensable part of communicative approaches to discourse and translation. Hatim and Mason (1993) employ pragmatics to account for the different strategies the translator resorts to so as to maintain equivalence between source and target meanings and effects. It is worth noting that successful intervention on the part of the translator means maintaining balance between source and target text on an overall level regardless of what is achieved on a word-for-word or a sentence-for-sentence comparison. In other words, the pragmatic concepts employed are preoccupied with the cumulative effect discoursal relations produce and that is what a translator should aim at preserving on a satisfactory level with regard to the act of translation. In this part of our study, we will briefly portray some key aspects of Austin's and Grice's theories so as to later relate them to specific instances drawn from Thompson's text.

In his work *How to Do Things with Words*, Austin (1982) presented his theory of speech acts as a means that helps to analyze the meaning of an utterance in relation to the linguistic means chosen and the communicative situation in which it takes

place. Austin's theory of speech acts belongs to the pragmatic dimension of textual analysis. The term 'speech act' refers to the actual words a language user utters in order to realize the speaker's communicative intention. Austin's claim was that speakers often use utterances as a means to perform real-life actions rather than describe the world around them. Hatim and Mason applied Austin's speech-act theory as a tool for the detection of the communicative intentions underlying the sentences comprising a text. According to Austin, there are three kinds of actions that constitute a speech act. These are: a) the **locutionary** act, which refers to the action performed when uttering a well-formed, meaningful sentence, b) the **illocutionary** act, which means the communicative force that accompanies an utterance, and c) the **perlocutionary** act, which is the effect of an utterance on the hearer/reader. The locutionary act involves choice on the level of lexis as well as syntax to form a sentence with a determinant sense. The illocutionary act pertains to the speaker's volition and, essentially, permeates the communicative force of an utterance. Examples of illocutionary acts include accusing, apologizing, giving permission, blaming, thanking etc. Finally, the perlocutionary act refers to "the extent to which the receiver's state of mind/knowledge/attitude is altered by the utterance in question" (Hatim & Mason 1993: 60). In other words, a perlocutionary act represents a consequence or by-product of speaking whether intentional or not.

Various attempts have been made to provide a classification of the different speech acts. Hatim and Mason (1993) opt for the one proposed by Traugott and Pratt (1980) which is fundamentally based on Searle's (1976) categorization (Hatim & Mason 1993: 60). Traugott and Pratt (1980), distinguish six categories of speech acts. These are: a) **Representatives**, that represent a state of affairs and commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition (e.g. asserting, stating, telling, reporting etc), b) **Expressives**, that disclose the speaker's emotional state or attitude (e.g. apologizing, blaming, praising etc.), c) **Verdictives**, that refer to the act of evaluating andpassing on judgements (e,g.assessing, estimating), d) **Directives**, that express the speaker's will/desire for the addressee to do something (e,g ordering, commanding, questioning etc) e) **Commisisives**, which commit the speaker to a future course of action expressing his/her intentions (e.g. promising, threatening etc) and f) **Declarations**, meaning utterances which bring about change to a state of affairs (e.g. baptizing, declaring a war etc.) (Grundy 1995; Huang 2007; Hatim & Mason 1993).

Speech act classification allows the translator to pinpoint authorial intentions when uttering a particular sentence, thus, guiding him/her to make the most appropriate choice so as to maintain equivalence in the target product according to the rhetorical purpose of the original text. To complement the communicative framework on which their communicative analysis is based, Hatim and Mason (1993) in their work relate speech act theory to Gricean maxims, therefore, highlighting the importance of context in which an interaction takes place.

Grice (1975) argued that speakers intend to be cooperative when they are communicating (Grundy 38; Hatim & Mason 1993: 62). By cooperative we mean "[m]ake your coversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (Grice 1975 in Grundy 1995: 37) Grice's *Cooperative Principle*, as it is named, consists of four maxims: a) the maxim of **quantity** b) the maxim of of **quality** c) the maxim of **relation** and d) the maxim of **manner**. Quantity means making one's contribution as informative as possible on the basis of the purposes of the exchange taking place while neither being less or more informative than required. Quality refers to the truth-value of one's contribution and means not saying something which you lack evidence for or believe to be false. Relation is being relevant. Last but not least, manner adheres to avoiding obscurity of expression, ambiguity of meaning as well as being brief and orderly. These four maxims are considered to illustrate the way one can achieve successful communication. However, participants tend to violate maxims in real-life communication. These deviations are perceived as a means to transmit non-conventional meanings and hints with regard to the issue under discussion or the speaker's/receiver's position. These violations are called *implicatures* and are integral in relation to understanding the different functions of an utternace and the possible facets that are involved in the development of communication. At this point we should note that Grice (1975) distinguishes between two types of implicatures: *conversational* and *conventional* ones (Dirven & Verspoor 2004). Conversational implicatures are the result of the violation of the maxims proposed by the Coooperative Principle – "information inferred but not literally expressed in the speech act" (Dirven & Verspoor 2004: 165) -- whereas conventional implicatures are related to what is inferred when uttering a sentence and is tied to linguistic expressions (Dirven & Verspoor 2004). When talking of implicatures, Hatim and

Mason (1993) are referring to converstional ones since these are most of interest to them in relation to the communicative approach they have adopted with regard to text analysis and translation.

Having the aforementioned key concepts in mind, we can now proceed to an analysis of these features in relation to the act of translation. At this stage, we will draw upon specific instances from both the source and target text in order to elaborate on the way certain choices made on the part of the translator affect message reception. More particularly, we are going to focus on the different ways actions are rendered in the target version in relation to the lexical environment they are encountered and their contribution to the diffusion of Thompson's message with regard to addictions. The cases presented are indicative of the translator's intention to bring to the surface the narrative perspective developed in the original as well as the distinctive voice of Thompson's that affirms the resonance of his argumentation. In our first example, we will elaborate upon the translation of the title of the book in Greek and the way the choices made are rhetorically-motivated in relation to effectively communicating the author's purpose.

Example 8

ST*: The Fix:* How *Addiction* is *Invading* Our Lives and *Taking over* Your World

TT*: ΕΘΙΣΜΟΙ:* Πώς οι *Καταχρήσεις Εισβάλλουν* στις Ζωές μας και *Καταλαμβάνουν* τον Κόσμο σας

As we can see in this example, the translator's concern is focused on the preservation of the overall impact of the transferred message so as to clarify the purpose of the text. 'Setting the scene' for the implied Greek reader about the subject of the book is of primary significance due to the target reader's assumed lack of familiarity with a reading of addiction outside the sphere of medicine or science. Taking into account the average reader's inconvenience and the translator's aim for balance between the source and the target text is what makes communication effective as well as efficient. Both titles evoke the same feeling of urgency and anticipation to the reader concerning the mechanisms of the apparatus responsible for the diffusion of addictive behaviours. This is achieved through the use of equally loaded lexis that substantiates reports of a bleak reality in relation to addiction. More specifically, the

Greek verb *εισβάλλουν* is an exact equivalent to the English *invading*, projecting the same sense of penetration and vulnerability. This phobic sense is further underscored by the use of *καταλαμβάνουν*/*taking over*, thus, underlining the increase in agony owing to an imminent loss of control over the diffusion of addictions. The perlocutionary effect of the utterance is reinforced in the Greek extract through the rendition of *addiction* as *καταχρήσεις*, instead of a less forceful option like *εξαρτήσεις* or *εθισμοί* aiming at overwhelming the reader with anxiety about the addiction epidemic. The title of the book, in brief, seeks to achieve the entrance of the reader into the dark reading of reality prompted by the author. The implied reader is urged to read the book and let the author 'enlighten' them about what is currently happening and what is about to follow regarding the future of addiction.

However, on a deeper level, the same item could also be read as a trade puff with the mere function of blustering or boasting about the book's content in a manner reminding of common commercials. The penetration of market discourse, as denoted by the use of *invading* and *taking over* in such a short sentence, constitutes a conspicuous element of the original and seems, even from the very beginning, to conquer the scene. This reading of the title serves the author's purpose to acclimatize the implied reader with the trend of evocative advertising (Durant 2010: 179); a characteristic of modern media discourse and especially tabloids that seems, nevertheless, to have intruded many aspects of our daily lives. Using strong language is, therefore, a means of making the reader alert with regard to the ways products around us 'bombard' potential consumers with promises that possibly fail to live up to the buyers' expectations. In other words, the title is itself an example of the tricks markets employ to sell products. The writer's intention is not to undermine the validity of his work. In all probability, what he intends to achieve is to turn the passive reader into a critical judge of the environment they live in and call him/her to evaluate the ways, consciously or not, commercial culture has managed to gain dominance over the way we interpret reality in our day and age.

Before concluding with our analysis of the work's title, we should note that, despite the overall equivalence achieved with regard to impact, there are still some slight differences between the two renderings that the translator fails to communicate due to target language limitations. As far as the *The Fix* is concerned, the implied English reader is at first reading confronted with some sort of contextual ambiguity on

account of the variety of lexical meanings that the word ‘fix’ can possibly carry. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English*, the term ‘fix’ as a noun may mean:

> a) [C usually in singular] a situation in which someone does something dishonest in order to make certain that a race, competition or election is won by a particular person
>
> b) [C usually in singular] (informal) an awkward or difficult situation
>
> c) a solution to a problem, especially an easy or temporary one
>
> d) (slang) an amount of an illegal drug or substance that usually has an effect on the user
>
> e) (the calculation) of the position of a vehicle, usually in relation to the earth

In spite of its simplicity of form, it is the multiplicity of its meaning that makes *The Fix* as a title a cumbersome item to translate into Greek. The word can take on distinct meanings on the basis of the context it is presented and its contribution to the projection of textual messages. As far as the original is concerned, we see that the main title’s meaning is clarified through the use of the subtitle. *The Fix: How Addiction is Invading Our Lives and Taking over Your World* is a book on addiction that is going to inform the reader about the ways through which people fall into the vicious circle of dependence(s). The same kind of textual relation between the main title and subtitle does not exist in the Greek text where the noun *Εθισμοί* declares the field of inspection immediately and leaves no room for wondering over the message conveyed. The subtitle in the target version plays an ancillary role since it exemplifies the meaning of the title. Despite the fact that this difference may be a subtle one, it indicates a greater amount of explicitness in the target version that is related to the Greek tendency for exemplification; a strategy compatible with the positive politeness[8] face of the Greek language (Sidiropoulou 2004: 36). Last but not

[8] *Politeness* in linguistics refers to the act of showing awareness and consideration of another person’s public self-image. Politeness theory posits that choices in employing a particular politeness strategy depend upon the social circumstances in which a speech act occurs. Politeness relies upon two faces; the negative and the positive. Negative face addresses the speaker’s need to be independent and free from disposition in contrast to positive face which addresses the need to be connected, to belong, to be a member of a group. Positive politeness face is related to the speaker’s goal to address the positive face of the hearer by highlighting, for example, friendliness or camaraderie between participants. Exemplification is considered one of the strategies to establish positive politeness (Yule 2009: 191-192).

least, there is another difference between the English and the Greek title regarding the meaning implied. The term *fix* as a verb is a synonym of 'repair'. This means that, on a deeper level, the author promises to 'fix' the potential reader's conception of what addiction actually is by providing him/her with an alternative account regarding addictions. This implication is absent in the Greek text since there is no equivalent term in the target language to render the multiplicity of meanings that the English correlative carries.

In the example that will be mentioned next, we expose some more instances where the translator has tried to maintain the meaning purported in the original and preserve the impact intended by the author. However, this is not always possible due to discrepancies in linguistic means and demands that force the translator to slightly modify meaning so as to produce a highly communicative product according to the Greek readers' standards and expectations. In Example 9, we have an extract from Thompon's introductory paragraph where he describes the qualities of the cupcake that have made it a 'must' among consumers. However, after referring to the greatest of its qualities -- that is its homemade character -- the author overturns the readers' expectations with a state that instills doubt with regard to the truthfulness of what he has said up to this point.

Example 9

ST: Your *mother* made them! Or so the advertising *suggests*.

TT: Η *μανούλα* σου τα έφτιαχνε! Ή ***έστω*** έτσι *λέει* η διαφήμιση.

In relation to the first sentence, the use of the mother figure entails a sense of originality and tastefulness that can make even the most demanding of consumers succumb to the lure of a cupcake. The use of the Greek dimunitive *μανούλα* further underscores the sense that exists in the original. In both cases, the use of the exclamation mark at the end highlights the meaning of the sentence. However, the following sentence subverts the truth-value of what has already been said through the use of *Or* at the beginning and the meaning inferred through the verb *suggests*. In other words, the choices made on the level of discourse provoke the reader to question the validity of the qualities so tellingly put by the writer in the first place. The Greek equivalent λέει does not trigger the same amount of questioning. However,

equivalence on the level of speech acts is achieved through the use of *έστω* that gives way to a similar sense of disbelief by minimizing the force of the verb *λέει*. The translator opts for *λέει* instead of other alternative lexicalizations as *ισχυρίζεται* or *υποστηρίζει* since these lexical choices are considered to violate the overall oral character of the text. Last but not least, we should note that the rebut in expectations created by the second sentence constitutes a violation of the maxim of relevance as well as of manner since it generates obscurity in relation to the truthfulness of the speaker's words and intentions. This 'break' in narrative development reveals the basic orientation of Thompson's message; that is his will to shed light on the 'dark' aspect of consumerism and its relation to the dissemination of addictive behaviors.

Example 10 constitutes another instance where the translator is again at pains to depict the narrative aspect of serious dependence and desperation found in the original. Here, the writer, after providing the reader with a brief account of the history and development of addiction through the ages, moves on to today to reach the conclusion following:

> Example 10
>
> ST: To put it another way, *we reach out* for a fix.
>
> That's a word we associate with helpless addicts. They talk about their *'fix'* because it feels as if they have temporarily *fixed* themselves when they take the drug of their choice.
>
> TT: Για να το θέσουμε διαφορετικά*, ψάχνουμε* τη *'δόση'* μας.
>
> Αυτή είναι μια λέξη που παραπέμπει σε εξαρτημένα άτομα που βρίσκονται σε απελπιστική κατάσταση. Μιλάνε για το *'φιξάκι'* τους γιατί έχουν την αίσθηση πως '*φτιάχνονται'* έστω και για λίγο όταν παίρνουν το ναρκωτικό της επιλογής τους.

At first, the use of *reach out* in the English text connotes a sense of craving and anticipation that the Greek verb *ψάχνουμε* fails to create in the target version. *Reach out* communicates a greater degree of involvement and dependence that the translator aims at compensating through the rendering of the noun *fix* as '*δόση'* within inverted commas. In this manner, the translator alludes to the meaning of the original sentence while making up for the absence of an exact equivalent in the target version. The lexicalization *δόση* is also preferred due to its medical connotations that allude to the

sense of relief that the author implicitly refers to through the use of the phrasal in his effort to trigger images and responses appropriate towards someone who is in need of a treat. Therefore, the choices made on the level of diction aim at bringing to the reader's mind images that stem from his/her knowledge of the vicious circle of addictive behaviors. At this juncture, we should note the discrepancy between *δόση* and *φιξάκι* that is opted for in the next paragraph as a lexicalization of the same linguistic item. *Φιξάκι* is a term that comes from the drug slang and fits the kind of discourse used throughout the text. Through the rendering of fix as *φιξάκι* the translator attempts to reproduce the effect created in the original text where the word fix is placed within inverted commas. The use of an insider's term in the Greek text empowers the denotative and the connotative aspect of the rendering 'φτιάχνονται' as a lexicalization of the verb fix in the same sentence. What we miss in the Greek version is the immediate linkage of effects created through the repetition of the word *fix*. However, by pointing out the different facets of the term in the Greek text, the translator tries to engrave a similar effect on the level of textual impact trajectory for the target audience. Moreover, the choices made mark the immediate relation and the clear manner in which the different items are connected to one another. To sum up, the choices made retain the cooperatitive aspect of Thompon's attempt to explicate the phenomenon he is about to analyze throughout his work.

Example 11 constitutes another instance where the translator is encountered with difficulties with regard to communicating the full thrust of the original's utterance. This move on the part of the translator is a choice prompted by her intention to make the end-product more digestible for the Greek reader who is assumed to be less familiar with the ideas introduced by the author and the conspiracist implications scattered throughout the text.

Example 11

ST: For example, these days our fixes *are often delivered* to us through social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter that enable us *to manipulate* our circle of friends.

TT: Για παράδειγμα, στις μέρες μας πράγματα με τα οποία έχουμε φάει κόλλημα *τα βρίσκουμε* συνεχώς μπροστά μας με τη βοήθεια των μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης

όπως το Facebook ή το Twitter γιατί μας επιτρέπουν να *ελέγχουμε* τον κύκλο των φίλων μας.

To begin with, the use of the verb *deliver* in the Greek text implies some sort of intent that the Greek *βρίσκουμε* does not, as it refers to something that seems rather coincidental. The use of the passive in both cases highlights the inability of the implied consumer/victim to stand his/her ground and resist the temptation but at the same time allows the author not to name those responsible. The vocabulary used, in other words, is consistent with the conspiracist strain underlying Thompson's narrative. As Fowler (1991) notes: "Anything that is said or written about the world is anticipated from a particular ideological position: language is not a clear window but a refracting, structuring medium". Bleak readings are further underlined by the use of the verb *manipulate* later in the sentence that aims at illustrating the negative way fixes have affected human relations. Again the Greek rendering *ελέγχουμε* fails to reproduce the element of deviousness existing in the original. However, in order to make up for the loss of implied meaning on the level of separate linguistic items, the translator modifies other elements to preserve the impact of the original. This is again evident in the way the translator has chosen to interpret *fix* in relation to its surroundings. More specifically, the paraphrase *τα πράγματα* με *τα οποία έχουμε φάει κόλλημα* stresses the level of fixation that the author aspires to analyze and makes it more intensive to that found in the original. It is more than obvious that in this case, the translator is flouting the maxim of quantity in relation to the original text. The original author opts for density of expression and meaning whereas the translator once again chooses to make the Greek version more informative in relation to the original. The translator explicates the original's meaning but the use of the idiolectic expression *φάει κόλλημα* adds to the meanings related to obsessive behavior. Therefore, by giving prominence to certain units of meaning that allow stretching of effect the translator succeeds in reproducing the impact of the original speech act and bringing to the fore the compulsiveness engraved within the English discourse.

In our next example, we will analyze another instance where the translator is flouting the maxim of quantity in relation to the original as a means of making the meaning of the original clear and enhancing understanding for the Greek reader who may not be familiar with some concepts or terms.

Example 12

ST: Does that mean that people around me are *turning into* addicts? That's never an easy question to answer, because 'addict' is such a *loaded term*.

TT: Μήπως αυτό σημαίνει ότι οι άνθρωποι γύρω μου *μεταμορφώνονται* σε εθισμένους; Δύσκολο να απαντήσει κανείς *αν σκεφτούμε τις ποικίλες προεκτάσεις και νοήματα που φέρει ο όρος* 'εθισμένος'.

First, it is the translation of turning into as *μεταμορφώνονται* instead of a more neutral term like *γίνονται* or *μετατρέπονται* that draws the readers' attention in terms of the Greek text. *Μεταμορφώνονται* is rather an equivalent of transform and conveys a sense of change that alludes to the grotesque. What one could argue is that the Greek lexicalization adheres to the stigma of addiction and perceptions that deal with it as an epidemic; something that cannot be detected and goes against the trajectory of the original However, the choices on the level of lexis are not the only deviation on the part of the translator. One can easily see that the Greek rendering does adhere to the brevity and density of expression found in the English text. This is due to the challenge the rendition of the phrase *loaded term* posed for the translator. The translator violates the maxims of manner as well as quantity to provide the reader with a faithful and at the same time comprehensible rendition through the paraphrase *αν σκεφτούμε τις ποικίλες προεκτάσεις και νοήματα που φέρει ο όρος* that conveys the meaning of the utterance in full. This explicating and informative tendency is, as we have already noted, justified on the basis of the positive politeness face of the Greek language that contributes to adapting Thompson's discourse to target language conventions. Moreover, this explication tendency is a characteristic that underscores the orality of Thompson's text according to Greek language standards that require from the speaker to be more informative in contrast to the English ones (Sifianou 1992). Lastly, in correspondence to the aforementioned, violating the economy of speech found in the original proves to be a satisfactory tool for cases where the Greek language lacks an equivalent. Therefore, violation of maxims in translation may resolve issues of untranslatability that the translator has been called to face throughout the text.

To sum up, what interests the translator is to appreciate the function of particular utterances and the way they disclose the ideological stance of a text as a

whole. The translator has to delve into the linguistic evidence provided in the original in order to be able to recast source motivation and impact appropriately. Modifications are employed where necessary only to formulate elements of the original in a manner that will make the text more comprehensible for target readers, thus, achieving an equivalence of resonance to the intended readership. Translating is overall conceived as an act of negotiating meaning between source and target where the interplay amongst different pragmatic aspects determines the choices made to reproduce an equally dynamic and fluent result with respect to the target's cultural background and expectations. Having explored the pragmatic dimension of Thompon's text and the way it affects translational decisions, we will move to semiotics; the third aspect involved in the act of translation.

2.2.4 The Semiotic Aspect of The Fix

"**Semiotics** is the science which studies signs in their natural habitat – society" (Hatim & Mason 1993: 67). The three parameters of genre, discourse, and intertextuality constitute what Hatim and Mason name the *semiotic dimension* of a text. The notion of **genre** refers to the text-type employed for constructing meaning within a certain text (Dirven and Verspoor 2004: 191). "Genres are 'conventionalized forms of texts' which reflect the functions and goals involved in particular social occasions as well as the purposes of the participants in them" (Kress 1985: 19 in Hatim & Mason 1993:69). The generic conventions underlying a text account for the kind of **discourse** used or, in other words, the set of linguistic patterns and structures selected to produce meaning on the basis of the theme presented and viewpoint adopted. "Discourses are … modes of talking and thinking which, like genres can become ritualized" (Hatim & Mason1993: 71). This means that the genre and, consequently, the discourse of a certain text can be formulated in accordance with message requirements and vice versa. On a broader level, this interrelation between genres and discourses can be explored from the perspective of an interrelation between different texts. Intertextuality, as a notion, refers to the relationship that a text shares with other texts (McLoughlin 2000:91). According to Hatim and Mason, **intertextuality** is an important concept for translation since it helps us "relate textual occurrences to each other and recognize them as signs which evoke whole areas of

our previous textual experience" (Hatim & Mason 1997: 120). Defining these three aspects helps the translator delineate the linguistic varieties informing source argumentation in relation to their role regarding message production and reception.

In this part of our study, we will analyze the semantic aspect of Thompson's texts by focusing on the way certain linguistic choices have affected the way meaning is produced. More specifically, it is the editorial tabloid genre of the original that gives way to simplification of expression; a tactic that the author consciously resorts to as a means to bring addiction closer to his reader and endow his text with a sense of transparency that claims to excel everything that has been written before in relation to addictive behaviors. Moreover, it is the evident commercial strain underlying most of Thompson's discourse that reminds readers of media narratives and helps them interpret the author's words on the basis of background knowledge prevalenty deriving from the world of media. Flexible and open to interpretation notions, as the one of *addiction,* are employed to facilitate the translator's project of preserving the impact created. The notion of *addiction* plays an instrumental role from both a linguistic and a thematic standpoint. More specifically, the recurrence of the term and its derivatives set the frame within which the author presents the phenomenon by employing simple terminology which makes the message transparent for the average reader. The author resorts to the concept of *addiction* repeatedly because it is a rather open-ended term that can embrace different aspects of the phenomenon. The use of alternative terms that may lexicalize subtle differences within the area of addiction is systematically avoided. *Addiction* is the umbrella term that contains any meaning necessary whether the producer talks about addictive behaviors as a global phenomenon, a medical state, or a matter of social significance. This move on the part of the author serves his goal for producing a text that anyone can read and learn from about the market apparatus responsible for the spread of different addictions. Normative and stereotypical readings of addiction find their way through Thompson's text so as to either implicitly or explicitly but always in simple terms further support with evidence the author's claim regarding the present and future of addictions.

However, there are discrepancies between the Greek and the English text in the way this key concept is exploited in order to produce meaning. More specifically, the translator opts for lexical variation and employs the difference between *addiction/εθισμός* and *dependence/εξάρτηση* to present the issue under discussion in a

more detailed manner. It is the disparity in expectations and conventions that determines the translator's choices with consideration given to the response of the target audience. The Greek reader is not familiar with reading about addiction in such a loose and oral manner as that promoted by Thompson. Imitating the simplicity of the writer's logos would make the implied Greek reader resistant to the message presented because s/he has not been accustomed to reading about addiction in such broad terms. This is an outcome that goes against the original author's intentions and the kind of relation he aspires to establish with the intended readership. Therefore, the translator's intervention can be justified on the grounds generic and intertextual influences exert on the kind of discourse used in the target version. It is the aim of equivalence between source and target that gives prominence to the relay of effects the author's language and argumentation eventually have upon the implied reader. Before moving to the analysis of concrete examples and compare the choices made in the English and the Greek text, we will refer to the importance of the concept of addiction on a thematic level in relation to Thompson's text so as to pinpoint the dimensions that interest the translator in relation to the act of reproducing the impact on the target audience.

The table below shows how often the word *addiction* and its derivatives appear in the first chapter of the book. The findings of the table are indicative of the significant place that *addiction* owes to the development of the rhetorical purpose of the text.

Term	Times encountered
Addiction	**19**
Addictions	**4**
Addict	**7**
Non-addict	**1**
Addicts	**11**
Addicted	**3**
Addictive	**20**
Non-addictive	**1**

Table1: *Frequency of the Term 'Addict' and its Derivatives*

It is worth noting that the terms *non-addict* and *non-addictive* are used only once. This choice might reflect the author's intention to avoid terminology that contradicts the enlargement of the scope of addiction as proclaimed by his market reading. Thompson's aim seems to be that of expanding the definition of *addiction* and *addicts* so as to create an inclusive concept that applies to the majority of readers. By broadening his definition of addiction, Thompson evokes the empathy of the readership and at the same time highlights the urgency of his message. Addiction is a universal issue as he repeatedly stresses and that is what makes his argument worth reading. This move complies with the author's intention of de-labelization of the term *addict*, too. Erasing the opposite contributes to the collapse of binaries and, consequently, the elimination of the stigma that classifies addictive behaviors within the spectrum of pathological disorders. In a nutshell, the terms *addiction* and *addictive* prove integral for the development of Thompson's argumentation. It should be noted that the adjective *addictive* is usually encountered as an attribute of the noun *behaviour* providing the author with an alternative lexicalization of the concept of addiction. Through the use of alternatives, the author achieves the enrichment of his speech without implementing additional interpretations or definitions that may confuse the average reader and perplex the writer's message. The simplification of the lexis and, consequently, style used corresponds to the author's understanding of addiction from an empirical standpoint. The recurrence of the same notion and its alternatives weave a network of interrelated ideas that facilitate the tracing of ideas within the text enhancing both the coherence and cohesiveness of Thompson's argument. Opting for simplicity of expression maximizes the readability of the text. However, simplicity of diction results in the enrichment of the responses evoked since regardless of what the author sets out to achieve, he is still making use of loaded words endowed with a strong connotative meaning that aim to lead the way the argument is constructed as well as the readers' response.

To sum up, the use of *addiction* as a superordinate and the overall inclination towards overt generalizations according to the author is part of the attempt to simplify the issue under discussion. This inclination for overt clarity is a characteristic of the conversational nature of the original text. Nevertheless, the same oversimplification in terms of lexicalization is not a characteristic that complies with the conventions and expectations of the Greek audience. The difference between *εθισμός* and *εξάρτηση* is a

constitutive element of addiction discourse in Greek texts. *Εθισμός* refers to the phenomenon of addiction and the final stage regarding the addiction-nurturing process. On the other hand, *εξάρτηση* refers to the process of developing an addiction[9]. Although it is true that there are times that these terms are used interchangeably in everyday communication, the Greek reader is expected to show reticence when overt-conversationalism is practised in written discourse. Therefore, drawing a line between the terms *εθισμός* and *εξάρτηση* endows the text with a nuance of credibility that is assumed to lessen resistance to Thompson's argument. The examples below elaborate on instances where the disparity between *εθισμός* and *εξάρτηση* is exemplified in relation to the context in which it is encountered in the English text and its function within the Greek translation.

Example 13

ST: *Addiction* has never been confined to substance abuse and, with each passing week technology unveils a new object, process or relationship we can obsess over.

TT: *Η έννοια της εξάρτησης* δεν περιορίζεται αποκλειστικά στη χρήση ουσιών, και κάθε εβδομάδα που περνά, η τεχνολογική πρόοδος παρουσιάζει ένα καινούργιο αντικείμενο, μια νέα δραστηριότητα ή σχέση η οποία μπορεί να μας γίνει εμμονή.

In Example 13, the writer tries to provide his readers with a simple but practical definition of what he means when he refers to addiction throughout his text. Here *addiction* is best described as *εξάρτηση* since it is the relation between the meaning of the word and the activities presented that better fits the concept of progressive consumption instead of that of condition. The writer points to the behavioral aspect of the notion and that is why *εξάρτηση* is considered a more appropriate lexicalization. Moreover, the personification of addiction in the English text demands a lexicalization of the term that involves the element of progression and change as *εξάρτηση* is not a static condition. The addition of the word *έννοια,* however, to the Greek text lessens the communicative thrust produced in the original. The translator opts for a more neutral rendering that minimizes the impact created and endows the text with an aura of scientificity that does not exist in the original. A different

[9] The difference between εθισμός and εξάρτηση is based upon the work of the Community Education Officer of the Australian Greek Welfare Society, Antonis Maglis *What is Addiction?* (*http://www.agws.com.au/Drug/Docs)*

lexicalization of the same term is instead opted for in Example 14, where the writer talks about the state of being addicted to an object or experience.

Example 14

ST: *Addiction* is easier to understand as a concept if we focus on clearly observable behavior – that is, the search for a fix and its consequences.

TT: Η *έννοια του εθισμού* γίνεται ευκολότερα κατανοητή εάν εστιάσουμε σε ορατές συμπεριφορές –δηλαδή, στην αναζήτηση μια προσκόλλησης και στις συνέπειες αυτής.

In this case it is the approach adopted towards translation as a concept that leads the translator to render addiction as *εθισμός*. Here *εθισμός* better adheres to the way the word is used, as a phenomenon that can be observed and related to specific instances and behaviors. Something similar occurs in terms of the translation of the term *addict(s)* that is in some cases rendered as *εθισμένοι* and in some others as *εξαρτημένοι* based on the same grounds on which the distinction between *εθισμός* and *εξάρτηση* is realized in Greek.

In Example 15, the author refers to a series of actions that constitute different realization of addictive behaviors. The focus of the author lies in the activities/ processes that make someone an addict. That is why the translator opts for the translation of *addicts* as *εξαρτημένοι* instead of *εθισμένοι* as a means to convey the sense of urgency and motivation that exists in the original.

Example 15

ST: When our hand creeps out towards yet another square of organic chocolate, or when we play just one more game of Angry Birds before setting off for work, or when we check a secretly bookmarked porn site for new arrival, we're behaving like *addicts.*

TT: Όταν απλώνουμε το χέρι μας για ένα ακόμα κομμάτι οργανικής σοκολάτας, ή όταν παίζουμε ένα ακόμα παιχνίδι Angry Birds πριν ξεκινήσουμε για τη δουλειά, ή όταν τσεκάρουμε στα πεταχτά ένα κρυφό πορνό ιστοσελίδα στη λίστα των αγαπημένων για νέες αφίξεις, συμπεριφερόμαστε σαν *εξαρτημένοι*.

The opposite happens in Example 16 where the author concentrates on the phenomenon rather than on the process of addiction. In this case, it is the use of the notion of labeling that -- in a manner similar to the one of *concept* in Example 14 – guides the translator to render *addicts* as *εθισμένοι*. It is, therefore, on the basis of contextual meaning that the translator opts for the rendition of a term in the target language.

Example 16

ST: I felt a shiver of recognition when I first read those words. But it wasn't just my own behavior that came to my mind, or that of people whom society can conveniently label *'addicts'*.

TT: Όταν πρωτοδιάβασα αυτά τα λόγια ένιωσα ένα ρίγος καθώς θυμήθηκα τον εαυτό μου. Ωστόσο, μέσα σε αυτή την περιγραφή δεν είδα μόνο εμένα ή άλλους που η κοινωνία εύκολα τους χαρακτηρίζει *'εθισμένους'*.

Drawing a line between these two essences of the same lexical item adds to the Greek text an aura of scientificity that upgrades the discourse of the end-product and makes it more appropriate in relation to the Greek readers' taste and standards. These modifications on the part of the translator implicitly lessen the resistance assumed to Thompson's argument as the Greek audience is supposed to be more skeptical towards the approach recommended due to cultural/contextual presuppositions and experiences (see section 2.2.1). However, these slight alterations on the level of discourse maintain the impact of the original in the target language intact. The lexical choices made in the Greek text do not interfere with, but rather preserve, the effect that Thompson's words aim to cultivate in the implied reader. The conversational and informative disposition of the original and its claim upon the reality of addiction is left intact, too. In brief, translatory intervention achieves equivalence of appeal to cultural codes and existing knowledge of the public, therefore, appropriately re-staging the impact of the original.

Taking into consideration the cultural background informing translational choices is an extension of the notion of semiotics that is termed as semantics; form semiotics and pragmatics (Thomason 2012: 1). The notion of semantics further informs the relay of processes developing throughout a text. A semantic approach proves a useful means for accounting for the hybridity of form and multi-functionality

characterizing modern texts (Hatim & Mason 1997: 138). The study of semantics provides the translator with an in-depth look into the denotative as well as connotative meanings regulating exchange between writer and readers depending on context. Investigating the different routes through which in-text meaning is formed and relating them to cross-cultural differences and assumptions offers the translator the tools necessary for transferring source intentions and content successfully, ensuring equivalence of effect and texture in the target version. Identifying the ways meaning is inscribed in the source facilitates the process of appreciating the link-ups defining textual relations that are accountable for the appeal that a text exerts upon a certain audience. Thus, a translator's choice is better informed in terms of accommodating meaning to the target context.

The schema provided in Figure 5 offers an exemplary representation of the different factors affecting discourse production and the way they are related to one another in order to create a communicatively competent result. As shown, cultural background informs our experience of the world which in turn informs the linguistic means selected to communicate knowledge to an audience. The choices made on the level of communication generate existing cultural values as illustrated by the arrow leading from the bottom box to the top box of the figure. The same relay of influences applies to the act of translation with the difference that the translator as a mediator/communicator between different cultural contexts has to take into consideration what is linguistically/communicatively appropriate in both the source and target language.

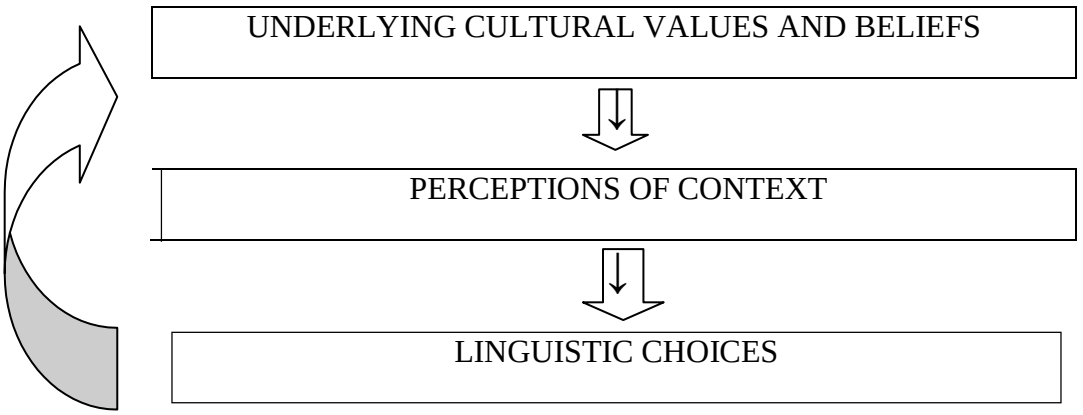

Figure 5. Culture, Context, Language Connection (Meier 2010: 77). *The figure presents a general outline of the relationship between underlying cultural values and beliefs and linguistic choices as mediated by context.*

The next chapter of our analysis works on a supplementary level to the aspect of semiotics as explored by Hatim and Mason, and it will try to focus on linguistic demands with regard to the media character of Thompon's text. More specifically, in this section, we will further explore the interrelation between the discourse of the text and message production from the perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), a sociolinguistic approach proposed by Fairclough (1995), in an attempt to pinpoint those elements that bring to the fore the journalistic character of Thompson's text.

2.3 Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis studies the relationship between the use of language and social context. In particular, it aims at explaining the linguistic characteristics of social and cultural processes that shed light on the way ideologies interact with discourse. According to Luke (2002: 100):

> *CDA involves a principled and transparent shunting back and forth between the microanalysis of texts using varied tools of linguistic, semiotic and literary analysis and the macroanalysis of social formations, institutions and power relations that these texts index and construct.*

Calling the approach 'critical' is, according to the author, "a recognition that our social practices, in general, and our use of language, in particular, are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions" (Fairclough 1995: 54). In other words, the way one chooses to express oneself reveals a whole set of assumptions underpinning communication regarding power relations, ideological background and identity issues that formulate the kind of relation between the producer(s) and receiver(s) of a message whether either part is actually conscious of this or not. Fairclough projects the importance of the semiotic dimension of a text to explore the dialectical relationship existing between language and society. The key notion with regard to Fairclough's approach is that of **genre** which is identified as "the use of language associated with a particular social activity" (Fairclough 1993:

138). Genre is considered to be both a stable and at the same time open to change concept due to its interrelation with another core idea. That is **discourse**, which is defined as "any time of semiotic activity, verbal or non-verbal, visual or written, that aims at the production and communication of a certain meaning" (Fairclough 1995: 54). The importance of discourse lies in the fact that it is used by both social theorists and linguists who employ it as a means to investigate linguistic activity in real-life in order to project the use of language as a "socially shaped and socially constitutive" practice of identities, relationships and representations (Fairclough 1995: 55). Fairclough underscores the complexity of the interrelation between language and context by introducing into his model the concept of **intertextuality** which corresponds to the interpretive analysis of different genres and discourses in association with one another and the context they are engaged in. Fairclough, in short, is interested in exploring 'languaged' practice (Fairclough 1995: 2) and elaborates upon the constitutive role linguistic and social imbrications play in the construction of textual meaning. Figure 5 offers a schematic representation of Fairclough's critical discourse model of analysis that summarizes the relation between the different parameters accountable for the conception and the production of meaning in a text.

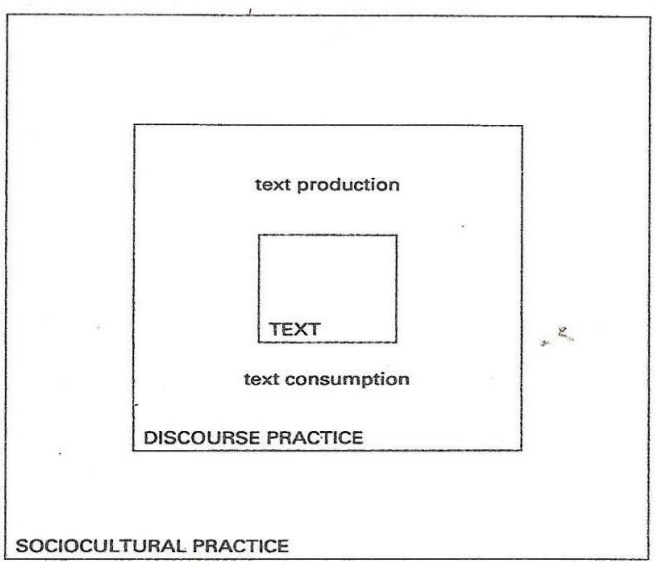

***Figure 5**. A framework for critical discourse analysis of a communicative event (Fairclough 1995: 29)*

The overriding objective of Fairclough's model is to give account of the ways in which and the extent to which social changes are changes in discourse (Fairclough 1995: 1). The semiotics of the text are, therefore, employed in order to investigate the full communicative thrust of an utterance. Fairclough's approach is informed by Halliday's systemic functional model of language as that of Hatim and Mason's (1993). Another similarity between the two approaches is that Fairclough also places emphasis on the process of mediation[10], which is read as an indispensable act with relation to effective meaning production and reception:

> Discourse practice, orders of discourse,and intertextual analysis have a crucial mediating role in this framework; they mediate the relationship between texts on the one hand and (nontextual parts of) society and culture on the other" (Fairclough 1995: 10)

This extract of Fairclough's work makes evident the common traits that his perspective shares with Hatim and Mason's (1993; 1997) reading of textual and contextual relations. The difference between these two approaches lies in the fact that Hatim and Mason read the relation between language and context with regard to the process of translation whereas Fairclough is interested in the way these two elements affect the production of media discourse. This media perspective of Fairclough's critical approach proves particularly useful to our analysis of Thompson's text since it allows us to shed light on the journalistic strain underlying the writer's discourse. In the paragraphs that follow, we will attempt to detect the choices made on the part of the translator that reflect the editorial tabloid strain underpinning the original and the way this is exploited by the writer as a means to enhance the resonance of his argumentation to the intended audience.

According to Fairclough, there are three fundamental concepts that determine the analysis of media discourse and are responsible for media output. These are *representations, identities and relations*. These notions form Fairclough's working assumption that "any part of the text will be simultaneously representing, setting up identities and setting up relations" (Fairclough 1995: 5). To make it more specific, each concept corresponds to a particular set of questions that any media text needs to

[10] The term mediation has been widely employed to describe the relation between language use and society, which means that the relationship of language and society is not direct, and language or discourse is just the medium to bring out values, beliefs, conventions and norms of society.

answer; a) *representations* answers the question "How is the world (events, relationships, e.t.c) represented?" (Fairclough 1995: 5); b) *identities* refers to "What identities are set up for those involved (reporters, audiences, 'third parties' reffered to or interviewed?" (Fairclough 1995:5); and c) *relations* refers to "What relationships are set up between those involved (e.g. reporter-audience, expert-audience or politician-audience relationships?" (Fairclough 1995: 5). In Example 17, we have an exemplary illustration of the way in which the modern world is presented throughout Thompson's work, pointing to the capitalist/consumerist drive that paves the way for frivolous trends, like that of cupcake, to conquer the scene of the global marketplace.

Example 17

ST: In the gossip magazine world, where *shopping* is the only serious rival to *celebrity* in terms of aspiration, *cupcakes* are consumer-desirable in a way a Victoria sponge isn't.

TT: Στον κόσμο των κουτσομπολίστικων φυλλάδων, όπου το *shopping* είναι ο μόνος αντάξιος αντίπαλος των *celebrities* σε θέμα φιλοδοξίας, τα *cupcake* είναι ζηλευτά από τους καταναλωτές σε τέτοιο βαθμό που σίγουρα το απλό παντεσπάνι δεν θα μπορούσε να ανταποκριθεί

The translator here is called to render Thompson's words in a manner that corresponds to the ideology informing language practice on the part of the author. Particularly, the world here is represented as a consumer-governed place where lifestyle products and role models rule over people's/ buyers' desires and goals. This is a phenomenon detected on a global scale. In order to effectively transfer the writer's depiction of modern reality, the translator has opted for maintaining some English but, nevertheless, known to the Greek audience, terms in her version. Thus, she manages to convey to the intended readership the denotative as well as the connotative meaning pervading authorial discourse. A Greek rendering of those words like *ψώνια*[11] instead of *shopping* and *διάσημοι/διασημότητες* instead of *celebrities* would lessen the force of Thompson's argument and the sense of contemporariness that the original aspires to convey. As far as the issue of identity is concerned, the author speaks from the vantage point of the expert/ insider who can tell

[11] The lexicalization of shopping as ψώνια in relation to the notion of celebrities would probably confuse the reader with regard to the author's message since in Greek, the word ψώνιο is a derogatory term referring to someone who thinks that s/he is superior to others.

what is happening in relation to the way media affect people's behavior. This is a claim that he can make as both a journalist and an ex-addict. The identity that the author establishes for himself, in this particular instance, is quite different to that of the victim and common man who just tries to communicate what he has experienced and believes in relation to addictions. On the other hand, the discourse used is too conversational to ooze any authority. What we actually have in this extract is the two 'faces' of Thompson that, although contradictory, somehow work together so as to inform the author's behavior throughout the text. Thompson generally proclaims to be a vulnerable man and someone who has suffered a lot from addictions. This is the profile that he prevalently uses as a means of creating a friendly relation with his readers. Concomitantly, it is his status as a journalist that enables him to find the right means to speak his mind and make the public aware of the phenomenon of addiction. This serious 'face' of Thompson's pops at specific instances, as the one under discussion, and contributes essentially to making his argument convincing for the target reader. To conclude, it is the author's expertise, upon both the theme and the way language works that make Thompson the most appropriate source to address in order for the public to become aware of what addictive behaviors mean for the modern man. In this extract, we see clearly the translator's attempt to conform her speech to the multiple roles that the persona of Thompson owns throughout the text.

The tabloid discourse of the original gives the writer the leeway to formulate his behavior on the basis of the purposes he aspires to fulfil at different times. The same applies for the translator. As far as Example 17 is concerned, the maintenance of English words is an appropriate means to draw the readers' attention and at the same time underline the conversationalism underpinning the author's expression. These choices on the level of diction remind the reader that what they are given is not an actual study but a recording of impressions and opinions made by the author on the basis of what he has been through as an ex-addict. What, in other words, the reader is exposed to is not a valid investigation into addiction but a record of interpretations of the world around us. The overall style in which the writer's words are rendered is close to that of a tabloid Greek magazine where global English terms are usually left intact as a means that endows the text with an aura of updatedness that is supposed to convince about the credibility of the outlook proposed. However, it is the forcefulness and declamatory value of the words selected in the original that instill into the reader

the confidence that the speaker knows well the subject he is talking about more than just well. The translator has to respond to this aspect of the text and that is why she uses equally strong words (*αντάξιος, ζηλευτά, θέμα φιλοδοξίας*) to illustrate the inconsistency of the author's part that derives from the multiplicity of aims he aspires to fulfil in the simplest and most economic of manners.

This mixing up of roles and functions reminds of the sloppiness of an oral narration where the speaker's volition to persuade takes different turns throughout the act of narrating in order to fully express his/her viewpoint and at the same time verify the hearer about the validity of the story presented. The implied reader of both the source and target version is called to cope with this clash of discourses that is, nevertheless, compatible with the means s/he is accustomed to using when trying to transmit his/her full message to an audience. In other words, the shifts made throughout the translation in terms of discourse are dictated by the author's intention to mimic actual conversation patterns. These shifts also correspond to the change in roles that the author occupies in different instances. Example 18 is another case where the author tries again to balance his role as a lay person and an expert on the issue of addictions.

Example 18

ST: *In fact, let's get this point out of the way right at the beginning* of this book. In the past couple of decades, *countless* scientific studies have attempted to pinpoint *what is about either the brains or the upbringings* of addicts that leads them to adopt self-destructive lifestyles. *They have failed to do so.*

TT: *Για να λέμε όμως τα πράγματα όπως έχουν*, νομίζω πως πρέπει, *από την αρχή κιόλας του βιβλίου, να βγάλουμε το επιχείρημα αυτό από τη μέση*. Τις δύο τελευταίες δεκαετίες, *αμέτρητες* επιστημονικές μελέτες αποπειράθηκαν να προσδιορίσουν επακριβώς *τι είναι αυτό στη λειτουργία του εγκεφάλου ή στην ανατροφή* των εξαρτημένων ατόμων που τα οδηγεί να υιοθετήσουν αυτοκαταστροφική συμπεριφορά. *Οι προσπάθειές τους έχουν αποτύχει παταγωδώς*.

The use of hedges (e.g. *In fact, at the beginning*), imperatives (e.g. *let's*), phrasals (e.g. *point out*) and plurals which mark the writer's words (e.g. *brains, upbringings*) endow Thompson's text with a sense of orality that reminds readers of real-life communication. This sense is what the translator tries to maintain in the Greek

passage through the use of equally casual patterns of speech like *Για να λέμε όμως τα πράγματα όπως έχουν and να βγάλουμε το επιχείρημα αυτό από τη μέση.* However, the translator does not manage to maintain this throughout due to linguistic limitations in the target language. More particularly, *brains* is rendered as *λειτουργία του εγκεφάλου* and *upbringings* as *ανατροφή*; two lexicalizations that give the author's speech a more formal character in contrast to the level of expression used in the original. The translator tries to make up for this loss of the casual style of the original via the addition of strong words as that of *παταγωδώς* that make up for the loss of the oral character of the English text. The translator exploits the definite nature of Thompson's speech and arguments as expressed through loaded language (e.g *countless, self-destructive, have failed*) and extends their impact in order to re-create the tabloid nature of the original. To cut a long story short, what we actually have in both cases is the author's strategy to contain different aspects of a multiple phenomenon like that of addiction to journalistically manageable dimensions that will allow him to open up the spectrum of his readers and address the wider audience.

All in all, the different roles the author owns throughout his narrative on addictive behaviors determine the language he uses and, consequently, the choices made on the part of the translator in her attempt to recreate the multi-functional and democratic logos of Thompson's text. The translator's ultimate aim is to preserve the uniqueness of Thompson's discourse that betrays the writer's journalistic background and his preoccupation with audience reactions. Fairclough's three-dimensional approach to media discourse is the tool that helps the translator delineate the writer's means for achieving his purposes and, finally, sketch the 'critical' goals that she is called to realize in the Greek version. In the final part of our analysis, we will conclude our inspection over the communicative approach adopted by providing more arguements with regard to the translator's choice to work out relations between textual and contextual constituents in a rather seamless manner for the target reader on the basis of Herman's notion of the *Translator's Voice.*

2.4. Herman's Notion of the Translator's Voice

Our communicative approach to Thompson's narrative is complemented by Herman's notion of the *Translator's Voice* (Hermans 1996: 27). Herman's concept

stresses the need for traceless intervention and assimilation of the translator's voice into that of the writer's, complementing, therefore, the communicative trajectory adopted throughout the translation of the English text. Translator's Voice refers to the translator's discursive presence throughout the target text. Specifically, Hermans identifies the Translator's Voice as a "second voice" underlying a text regardless of its remaining more or less traceable through translational intrusions that mediate the values inscribed in the original (Hermans 1996: 27). Whether in a manner overt or covert, the translator is always present within the target text since s/he is the one accountable for conveying meaning to the intended audience. "Even if the author's voice is hidden, it is always in the text" (Zhang 2016: 178). The silencing of the translator's presence is considered essential on the basis of our communicative reading of *The Fix,* since stark intervention on the part of the translator would be considered as violating the original text's fluent, conversational character and immediate kind of relation established between the writer and the readers. The force of Thompson's account depends highly on the immediate, friendly connection that the writer aspires to establish so as to facilitate sharing experiences and personal views between himself and his readers. The translator's deliberate invisibility is in perfect accordance with Herman's argument concerning the translator's place within the target text. According to Hermans (1996:44):

> A translation is a 'good' or 'proper' or a 'real' translation… if there are no loose ends, no foreign bodies; it should not contain anything that might affect the integrity of the original. Translators are good translators if and when they become transparent, invisible, when they have spirited themselves away. Only a Translator who speaks 'under erasure' can be trusted not to violate the original. The loyal absence of the one guarantees the primacy and aura of the other.

Hermans, thus, positions himself in favour of utter assimilation of the translator's voice into that of the author's on the basis of promoting unobstructed communication. Talking on the Translator's Invisibility, Venuti notes: "The voice that the reader hears in any translation made on the basis of simpatico is always recognized as the author's, never as a translator's, nor even some hybrid of the two" (Venuti 1995: 238). There is always the illusion that there is an immediate interaction between the author of the text and the target reader; an element that complies with a communicative approach to the text. As far as *The Fix* is concerned, the lack of any

paratextual signs (like notes or indexes that explain foreign concepts for the target reader outside the flow of the text) prevents the implied readership from detecting the translator's presence throughout, therefore, maintaining the illusion that the reader has immediate, unfiltered access to the original author's world. Any intervention in the narrative is made in rather inexplicit terms through the use of in-text explications. In the examples provided, we will analyze some of the instances where the translator's discursive intervention aims at facilitating comprehension, however, without making this apparent to the target reader.

Example 19

ST: For me these findings fall into the *'No shit, Sherlock'* category of scientific *discoveries*.

TT: Προσωπικά, θεωρώ πως τα εν λόγω επιστημονικά *'ευρήματα'* ανήκουν στην κατηγορία *'σιγά τα νέα!'*

In this extract, we have Thompson's evaluative comment on the scientific/medical findings made in recent years with regard to the dissemination of addiction and the causes that prompt a user to become an abuser of a certain activity or substance. Through the use of the informal, idiomatic expression *No shit, Sherlock* in the place of an adjective, the author makes explicit both his point and the larger frame within which his analysis of addiction is going to take place. The English idiom is a sarcastic expression used to stress that the speaker pointed out or discovered something well-known and obvious and is used mainly in oral contexts. The choice made on the part of the translator aims at ensuring that the target equivalent allows an adequate rendering of the original utterance that matches both meaning and inference intended by the author. Despite the preference for a non-idiomatic expression in the Greek text, the exclamatory *σιγά τα νέα!* indicates the same degree of irony encountered in the original text. Moreover, the use of *τέτοια* further underscores the negative evaluative disposition of the author in terms of the *discoveries* mentioned. It should be noted here that the exact lexical equivalent of *discoveries* in Greek is *ανακαλύψεις* and not *ευρήματα*. However, using a more formal word within inverted commas increases the difference between it and the colloquial *σιγά τα νέα!*, thus, intensifying the sense of irony pervading the utterance. Last but not least, the Greek *ευρήματα* infers doubt in terms of the scientificity of the findings projected and

prepares the reader for the questions that are later going to be posed regarding the value of modern medical methods. What the translator manages, therefore, is to render the impact of the original on the target audience as naturally and smoothly as possible.

A similar case of intervention is encountered in Example 20, where the translator prefers *καταναλωτική διαταραχή* as a lexicalization of the term *Stop and Go impulses*.

Example 20

ST: Different parts of the human brain govern what some scientists call the *Stop and Go impulses.*

TT: Διαφορετικά τμήματα του εγκεφάλου ελέγχουν αυτό που μερικοί επιστήμονες ονομάζουν *καταναλωτική διαταραχή*; *ή με άλλα λόγια τον εγγενή μηχανισμό που μας ωθεί να αποκτήσουμε κάτι ή μας αποτρέπει από μια τέτοια πράξη.*

The Greek option is actually a paraphrase of the English term that works as a superordinate in relation to the phenomena described by the author in the following paragraphs. The term *Stop and Go impulses* is an informal lexicalization of the term 'Impulse Control Disorders'[12] from which the translator borrowed the word *διαταραχή/disorder* in order to reproduce the source-text meaning. The adjective *καταναλωτικός* is opted as a more general, one-item word that substitutes the associative meaning derived from the strong *Stop and Go* attribute that the two verbs effectively compose. The neutrality of the adjective *καταναλωτικός* is complemented by the explication that follows (*ή με άλλα λόγια τον εγγενή μηχανισμό που μας ωθεί να αποκτήσουμε κάτι ή μας αποτρέπει από μια τέτοια πράξη*), which aims at transmitting the full force placed on the kinetics of the visual as expressed in the source through the contrast that the *Stop and Go* imagery mentally creates. One can easily detect the discrepancy between the economy of the English text and the reason-giving tendency of the Greek one.

[12] The term is first encountered in a previous paragraph of the original text and is translated as Διαταραχές Ελέγχου των Παρορμήσεων.

In Example 21, the translator is called to intervene once again in order to bridge the gap between the source and target audience, this time by providing culturally equivalent lexicalizations to those found in the original text.

Example 22

ST: It's easy for the *urban sophisticates* to mock American *'rednecks'* or British *'chavs'* who stuff themselves with fast food, and easy to recognize that they're in the grip of some sort of addiction.

TT: Είναι εύκολο για τους *σοφιστικέ Νεοϋορκέζους αστούς* να κοροϊδεύουν τους Αμερικάνους *'βλαχαρέους'* ή τους Βρετανούς *'αλητάμπουρες'* που μπουκώνονται στα fast food, και το ίδιο εύκολο να τους χαρακτηρίζουν δέσμιους κάποιου εθισμού.

More specifically, *rednecks* is a derogatory term referring to the poor whites living in the Southern part of the United States. *Chav*, on the other hand, is a pejorative epithet used in Britain to describe a particular stereotype of anti-social youth dressed in sportswear. To preserve the meaning of the original, the translator is called to move beyond the lexical meaning of the words used in the original and transmit the gist of Thompson's words. Thus, the translator opts for more general attributes like *βλαχαρέους* and *αλητάμπουρες* that reflect the same sense of negative labelling. We should bear in mind that in terms of meaning the author's purpose is rather to parodize the easiness with which people usually tend to label others since even the phrase *urban sophisticates* is essentially ironic. The translator's strategy of substitution, therefore, conveys the overall communicative thrust of the source. What we should also point out in terms of translatory choices in Example 22 is the borrowing of the word *fast food* in the Greek text. Borrowing of global terms that are known to the Greek audience is a strategy preferred throughout the translation, as we have already mentioned, since it is assumed to endow the argument presented with an aura of contemporariness that is compatible with the author's intention to subvert people's mindset in relation to addictions.

Herman's theory of the Translator's Voice conforms to the intention of recreating the immediacy that characterizes the English text. The decisions made throughout may divert in terms of formality or lexical meaning; however, they are always compatible with the conversational, direct style of the source. Paratextual notes or any other traces that would make the translator's presence apparent to the

target reader are systematically avoided. As Kovala (1996: 119) notes, translations "are texts that are filtered through many selection and modification processes before reaching the reader". All in all, Herman's preference for assimilation fits the translator's overall communicative approach.

2.5. Concluding remarks

Treating a text as a communicative event requires placing emphasis on the interpersonal function of language, i.e. the use of language for the sake of interaction (Dirven & Verspoor 2004: 149). The 'language-as-communication' concept of Hatim and Mason provides us with the means necessary for producing an equivalent to the original product in the target language on the premises of contextual differences and linguistic preferences. Register analysis allows us to trace the shifts in discourse and style that determine textual meaning. Pragmatic theory also proves a useful means for illustrating the relay of effects that shape the communicative thrust of an utterance, thus, contributing to the configuration of textual impact as a whole. A close inspection of the semiotic aspect further underscores the role of language in relation to message formulation and transmission. All in all, equivalence of communicative effect plays a crucial role in transmitting the original message eloquently as well as effectively in the target language. As functional theorists note, the impact of the target text on target readers should be the same or analogous to that of the source text to the original receivers (Sidiropoulou 2004: 86). Any modifications in the target version are justified on the grounds of translatability and cultural difference. It is the straightforwardness and simplicity of Thompson's style and tabloid inclination that demand an equally communicative reading of the message into the target language. "Translation is a matter of choice, but choice is always motivated: omissions, additions and alterations may indeed be justified but only in relation to intended meaning" (Hatim & Mason 1993: 12)

3. CONCLUSION

The analysis and translation of Damian Thompson's *The Fix: How Addiction is Invading Our Lives and Taking over Your World (2012)* indicates the importance of a communicative, reader-oriented approach to texts dealing with sensitive issues and addressing a wider audience. Hatim and Mason's approach (1993; 1997) to translation encouraged the translator to move beyond the level of elementary lexical equivalence and take into account the constraints governing message perception and construction in the target language so as to re-produce the impact of the original upon the intended readership. Communicative interests urged the translator to reframe information and draw tactics from linguistic or non-linguistic resources to set up an interpretive context for the target reader that would facilitate their involvement into the textual world of Thompson's argument. The pragmatic and semiotic dimensions of the source text played a constitutive role throughout the process of translation since they determined the kind of discourse adopted for the construction of meaning and development of authorial intentions. The ideas of Fairclough (1995) and Hermans (1996) in support of the communicative framework employed placed further emphasis on the translator's task of maintaining balance between the source and target product with regard to both content and style.

To achieve this, the translator was called to see through the network of words and structures that took part in the meaning-production process occurring in the original text. It is the interplay of dynamics between the personal and the collective that had to be projected in the target version so that the Greek reader could grasp the overall meaning of Thompson's text. The prevalently conversational and straightforward writing style of Thompson's accounted for the shifts in perspective and intentions underpinning authorial discourse. Effective translation of the text, demanded the translator to remain invisible throughout the meaning-negotiation processes and delegate comprehension to the reader in order not to lessen the force or distort the character of the original text. Nevertheless, "no matter how hard the translator tries to report what the author said and keep the target text as close as possible to the source text, the translator always ends up doing things 'at least slightly new'" (Robinson 2003 in Zhang 2016: 184). Modifications in terms of articulation intended to adjust Thompson's style to the target reader's expectations, therefore, facilitating message perception. Any minor alterations on the level of lexis were

always dictated on the basis of communicative effect and clarification of possible ambivalences that might emerge due to the transfer of the original text into a foreign context. The translator's intervention, in any case, is difficult to trace because of the emphasis placed on transparency and straightforwardness of textual interface.

The deductions made with regard to Thompson's work underscore the double status of the translator as a receiver and producer of textual meanings during the act of transference of messages from the source to the target culture. The current study is an example of the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic awareness demanded to anatomize the intricate set of meanings and structures defining textual argumentation. The translator's mission was to mediate between the different contexts and find the means appropriate to smother interference and breathe vigor to a text originated in and destined for a different audience. The status of the communicator emerged as the perfect conceptualization of the translator's role with regard to the act and the end-product of re-rendering concepts as a means of bridging the gap between separate realizations of the human world.

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SOURCE TEXT

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CUPCAKES, IPHONES AND VICODIN

The 21st-century cupcake is a thing of wonder: a modest base of sponge groaning under an indulgently thick layer of frosted sugar or buttercream. It's made to look like a miniature children's birthday cake – and, indeed, birthdays are the perfect excuse to scurry down to the local boutique bakery for a big box of them. The retro charm of cupcakes helps suppress any anxieties you might have about sugar and fat. Your mother made them! Or so the advertising suggests. Perhaps your own mother didn't actually bake cupcakes, but the cutesy pastel-coloured icing implies that one bite will take you back to your childhood. This can't possibly be junk food, can it?

Now let's consider another ubiquitous presence in modern life: the iPhone, which started out as a self-conscious statement of coolness but which, thanks to Apple's marketing genius, has now become as commonplace as a set of car keys. Millions of people own iPhones, making use of hundreds of thousands of apps, whose functions range from GPS-assisted mapping to compulsively time-wasting computer

games. Your iPhone does everything you could require of a mobile phone and more, so you really don't need the upgraded model that Apple has just released … do you?

Then there's Vicodin. It's the most commonly prescribed painkiller in America. In fact, it's the most commonly prescribed *drug* in America: 130 million scripts for it were handed out in 2010 and 244 million for the overall class of drug, narcotic analgesics.[1] It's strong stuff, a mixture of two painkillers: hydrocodone (an addictive opioid) and paracetamol (non-addictive, but causes liver damage in high doses). Vicodin is intended for the sort of pain that makes you cry out in the doctor's waiting room – caused by twisted backs, rotting wisdom teeth and terminal cancer. If they swallow so many of those pills, it seems reasonable to conclude that Americans must be in a lot of pain. Or is it just that millions of people can't manage without Vicodin's deliciously soothing euphoria, even if there's nothing much wrong with them?

A cupcake, a smartphone and a common painkiller. These three objects are so innocent-looking that you could leave them on your desk at work and no one would comment (though the cake might disappear). You can easily consume all three simultaneously: swallow the pill for your bad back with a slurp of coffee while checking your text messages and picking at that yummy frosted topping.

On the other hand, each of these mundane items can get us into trouble. They are objects of desire that can reinforce addictive behaviour – the sort that creeps up on you when your defences are down. That's the subject of this book: a social environment in which more and

more of us are being pulled towards some form of addiction, even though we may be unaware of the fact and never become full-blown addicts.

It's not obvious to us now, but the most far-reaching social development of the early 21st century is our increasingly insistent habit of rewarding ourselves whenever we feel the need to lift our moods.

When our hand creeps out towards yet another square of organic chocolate, or when we play just one more game of Angry Birds before setting off for work, or when we check a secretly bookmarked porn site for new arrivals, we're behaving like addicts. The activity in question can be innocent or shameful. Either way, it reinforces the addictive streak in human nature.

That streak is there because our brains have evolved to seek out immediate, short-term rewards. Our ancestors needed to stuff themselves with energy-rich berries and to respond quickly to sexual stimulation; we wouldn't be here if they hadn't.

Our problem is that we've built an environment that bombards us with rewards that our bodies don't need and that do nothing to ensure our survival as a species. Yet, because they are rewards – that is, because they provoke specific feelings of anticipation and pleasure in the brain – we grab them anyway.

To put it another way, we reach out for a fix.

That's a word we associate with helpless addicts. They talk about their 'fix' because it feels as if they've temporarily fixed themselves when they take their drug of choice. There's no mystery about this. As

a result of heavy exposure to the drug, they have become dependent on frequent chemical rewards. Their brains are in a state of hypervigilance, waiting for the blessed relief of a chemical that, once tolerance develops, merely allows the addict to feel normal, as opposed to anxious and ill.

That much is not in dispute. Many addiction specialists go further, however. They say that the brains of addicts are fundamentally different from those of non-addicts. They are *forced* to chase these rewards because they have 'the disease of addiction'.

This book challenges that theory. It suggests that, if you keep eating chocolate biscuits until you feel sick, you're indulging in a milder version of the addictive behaviour that leads heroin addicts to overdose. I'm not equating the two situations, of course. I'm suggesting that they lie at different points on a spectrum of addictive behaviour on which everyone can be located.

Also, and more importantly, many of us are being pulled towards the dangerous end of the spectrum, thanks to technological and social changes that stimulate the most fundamental of all our instincts – desire.

Never before have we had access to so many desirable things and experiences that we hope will change our moods. I know 'things and experiences' sounds vague, but that's really the point. Addiction has never been confined to substance abuse, and with each passing week technology unveils a new object, process or relationship we can obsess over.

For example, these days our fixes are often delivered to us through social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter that enable us to manipulate our circle of friends. Installing and deleting people as if they were iPhone apps offers a quick and dirty method of changing our feelings (though, needless to say, we are furious when someone deletes us). It's a consumer experience.

In any discussion of addiction, whether of the trivial or life-threatening variety, the concept of desire is just as important as that of pleasure. Usually, it's more important. That's because the anticipation of the fix is more powerful than the moment of consumption, which often fails to live up to expectations. Sometimes we throw internal tantrums when this happens. The fix infantilises us so that, like children, we are constantly and annoyingly hungry for more.

Believe me, I speak from experience.

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I spent many years as an addict. I was pathetically addicted to alcohol between the ages of 18 and 32. It took me a long time to acknowledge the fact, though – to realise that the act of getting drunk delighted and obsessed me to a degree that set me apart from most of my friends and colleagues. My doctor tells me I'm still an addict. I'm not exactly happy to wear that label after spending such a long time avoiding so much as a sip of alcohol, but the evidence is compelling. Since giving up drinking, my addictive desires have attached themselves to one thing, person or experience after another. I can't swallow a Nurofen Plus for a

headache without hoping that I'll enjoy a little codeine buzz. I can obsess for ten minutes in front of a display of confectionery in a newsagent's. And my CD-buying habit has nearly bankrupted me. Trivial stuff compared with my drinking, but my over-reactions to these stimulations don't feel normal, exactly.

Perhaps *the* crucial feature of addiction is the progressive replacement of people by things. That deceptively simple statement is a brilliant insight, though I can't claim credit for it. It comes from Craig Nakken, author of a bestselling book called *The Addictive Personality*, who argues that addicts form primary relationships with objects and events, not with people.

He writes: 'Normally, we manipulate objects for our own pleasure, to make life easier. Addicts slowly transfer this style of relating to objects to their interactions with people, treating them as one-dimensional objects to manipulate as well.'

What begins as an attempt to find emotional fulfilment ends up turning in on itself. Why? Because the addict comes to judge other people simply in terms of how useful they are in delivering a fix. And, at some stage, everybody lets you down. Therefore the addict concludes that objects are more dependable than people. Objects have no wants or needs. 'In a relationship with an object the addict can always come first,' says Nakken.[2]

I felt a shiver of recognition when I first read those words. But it wasn't just my own behaviour that came to mind, or that of people whom society can conveniently label 'addicts'. This may come across as

a presumptuous thing to say, but over the last decade I've been struck by the way friends and colleagues, most of them psychologically far healthier than me, have begun to display aspects of the process Nakken describes. Lifestyle accessories exert an ever greater power over them, disrupting relationships, nurturing obsessions and – as I've noticed in the office – dominating conversation.

Does that mean that the people around me are turning into addicts? That's never an easy question to answer, because 'addict' is such a loaded term. It's a good word to describe people whose problems are obviously out of control, as mine were, but it has to be used carefully. Not only does it carry misleading overtones of disease, but it also implies that there's a clear dividing line between 'addicts' and 'non-addicts'. That's not true. In my experience, addiction is something that people *do* – to themselves and other people – rather than something that just happens to them; it's not like developing cancer.

Addiction is easier to understand as a concept if we focus on clearly observable behaviour – that is, the search for a fix and its consequences. Almost anyone can indulge in addictive behaviour, but some of us are more prone to it than others, for reasons that scientists don't fully understand.

In fact, let's get this point out of the way right at the beginning of this book. In the past couple of decades, countless scientific studies have attempted to pinpoint what it is about either the brains or the upbringings of addicts that leads them to adopt self-destructive lifestyles. They have failed to do so.

No one is immune from developing addictive behaviour. If there's a history of addiction in your family, you're more at risk. Likewise, if you have an impulsive personality – that is, score highly for 'impulsivity' in psychological tests – you're more likely to do something impulsive, such as try a new drug or drink that fatal last glass of whisky before jumping into your car. Indeed, a fashionable term for various addictions is 'impulse control disorders'.[3]

For me these findings fall into the 'No shit, Sherlock' category of scientific discoveries. They tell us nothing very surprising. The consensus at the moment is that addiction seems to be the product of genetic inheritance and environment. In other words, the nature versus nurture question is no closer to being settled in this area of human biology than it is in any other. To repeat: we're all at risk. That's why the contents of this book apply to everyone, not just coke-snorting hedge fund managers, bulimic receptionists and absent fathers glued to World of Warcraft.

Psychologists talk about addictive behaviours in the plural, recognising the many different impulses that tempt people. What these behaviours tend to have in common is the replacement of people by things and events. We all develop these habits to a certain degree; the people we call addicts are those people who can't or won't give them up even when they cause harm to themselves and others. Again, that's a loose definition, fuzzy at the edges. Never mind; addiction isn't an easy phenomenon to pin down.

This isn't to deny that addictive behaviour has important consequences for the brain. It does. Indeed, it can partly be explained

by the overstimulation of the brain's fearsomely complex reward circuitry.

Different parts of the human brain govern what some scientists call the Stop and Go impulses. More primitive sections of the brain – parts that we share with other animals – tell us to consume as much as possible in order to increase our chances of survival. They say: Go. More highly developed parts of the brain, capable of reasoning and not found in other animals, hold up a Stop sign when we're consuming too much of something for our own good. Classic addicts keep ignoring the Stop instruction, despite the high cost to themselves and others. They require instant gratification, whatever the consequences. Indeed, they'll often seize any opportunity to indulge in addictive behaviour even when there's no real gratification to be extracted from it. We'll discuss this puzzling paradox later.

The Stop and Go imagery helps us understand the growing appeal of the fix. As technologies develop and converge, the speed of delivery increases. So does the speed of our expectations. We now live in a world filled with life-enhancing objects and substances that promise ever faster and more effective gratification. It's as if everything that tumbles off a production line is stamped with the word Go.

Temptation peeks out at us from the strangest places. Who would have guessed, 40 years ago, that a piece of electronic office equipment – the personal computer – would morph into something so desirable that people would sacrifice huge chunks of their spare time (and

income) in order to play with it? Or that modifications to a telephone would generate global excitement?

Changes to our appetites don't come about by accident. The manager of your local Starbucks didn't wake up one morning and think: 'I know what would brighten up my customers' afternoons – an ice-blended cappuccino!' As we'll see, the Frappuccino was invented when Starbucks employed food technology to solve a specific business challenge. As a result, hundreds of thousands of their customers (including me) developed a near-obsessive relationship with something they had previously lived happily without.

The pace of technological change means we need to revise our concept of addiction. Our cultural history provides us with images of stereotypical addicts, some of them dating back centuries: the grinning harridan dropping her baby down a staircase in Hogarth's *Gin Lane*; the American Indians crazed with 'firewater'; the hollow-eyed Chinese sailor propped against the wall of an opium den; the junkie shivering in an alleyway surrounded by needles. Also, anyone who lives in a city is used to the sight of spectacular drunks and morbidly obese people whose addictions are so grotesquely out of control that we avert our eyes.

These are powerful images, but if we pay too much attention to them then we can end up with a dangerous sense of immunity. We overlook our own eagerness to self-administer fixes, those sensory experiences that temporarily lift the mood while subtly detaching us from traditional human relationships. The fix can take any number of forms. Some toy very obviously with the chemistry of the brain.

Anyone with a rolled banknote up their nose knows that – so long as their dealer hasn't ripped them off – they're about to experience the effects of a mind-altering substance. The same goes for the guy swigging from a whisky bottle. In contrast, the tubby young man who demolishes a packet of chocolate digestives while watching the football doesn't suspect that his eating habits have left his brain unusually sensitive to stimulation by sugar; he just knows that, once the packet's opened, the biscuits disappear. His habit of stuffing his face with refined sugar and vegetable fat doesn't place him very far along the addictive spectrum – but, then again, it may be enough to put him in intensive care when he has a heart attack at 50.

The most puzzling addictions are those that don't involve the consumption of any substance. Gambling is the obvious example – we've known for hundreds of years that it can tear apart families as ruthlessly as hard liquor. In academic circles, these non-substance addictions are known as 'process addictions'. It's now clear that things you don't eat, drink, smoke or inject can nevertheless disturb your brain in much the same way as drugs. And, in an age when so much digital entertainment – notably video games and online pornography – is designed to be as addictive as possible, their potential to do this is accelerating rapidly.

The global marketplace offers a bewildering selection of consumer experiences, simultaneously delightful and dangerous. It's constantly modifying products and experiences that were never previously considered to be addictive – or simply didn't exist until recently.

Also, as we'll see, corporations have learned how to supercharge old-established intoxicants by popularising new patterns of consuming them. One vivid example is the phenomenon of recreational binge drinking, particularly by women. People have always got drunk, and a minority have always enjoyed going on binges with their friends. What no one predicted was the emergence of the binge as everyday behaviour. Ordinary drinkers, with no history of a problem with alcohol, now plan evenings to end in a messy and helpless surrender to the drug. And this is seen as *normal.*

It would be silly to pretend that everyone is equally threatened by this changing style of consumption. But the prospect of whole populations learning new ways of tampering with the flow of pleasure-giving chemicals in their brains is one that should make us feel very uneasy.

With that in mind, let's take another look at the cake, the phone and the pill.

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In 1996 a tiny corner shop called the Magnolia Bakery opened in Manhattan's West Village. Its old-fashioned cakes and pies quickly became the objects of guilty fantasy for women who liked to pretend that nothing more fattening than tuna carpaccio ever passed their lips. Then, in 2000, the bakery featured in an episode of *Sex and the City.* This was the moment America's cupcake craze began in earnest.

In the episode, Carrie and Miranda were filmed sitting outside the Magnolia. Carrie, played by Sarah Jessica Parker, told her friend that

there was a new obsession in her life. This turned out to be a new boyfriend called Aidan – but viewers could have been forgiven for thinking it was icing sugar, judging by the way Parker was pushing the rose-coloured cupcake into her face. Viewed in slow motion, it's a faintly disgusting spectacle. The truth is, there's no elegant way to eat a Magnolia cupcake, which is why customers adopt self-mocking smiles as the fluorescent globules of frosting tumble down their chins.

'When Carrie took her first bite, she left teeth marks in my neighbourhood,' wrote Emma Forrest, a journalist living opposite the bakery. 'Not long after the episode was broadcast, the tourists started to arrive and the bakery started charging them if they wanted to take photographs of Carrie and co's favourite haunt. With the influx of tourists came the rats, as half-eaten cupcakes were dumped into overflowing bins outside my apartment ... Riding on this extraordinary upturn in its fortunes, Magnolia changed its hours, and stayed open to midnight throughout the summer. I was kept awake each night by the hoots and hollers coming from the queue that now snakes all the way around the block.'[4]

In 2006 and 2007 I spent quite a lot of time in the West Village visiting my friend Harry Mount, then New York correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. By this time, *Sex and the City* was off the air and the cupcake craze had gone mainstream: Magnolia-style bakeries were opening all over America. Yet, on chilly autumn evenings, there was still a queue outside the original store, and it didn't seem to consist of tourists. 'Our local stick-thin fashion victims can't get enough of the

things,' explained Harry. In which case, how come they were stick-thin? Was there a parking lot at the back where they threw them up?

That was a bad-taste private joke between Harry and me, but when I recently did a word search on 'cupcakes' and 'bulimia' I discovered a blog by a bulimic mother of two entitled 'Eating Cupcakes in the Parking Lot'. Its posts appear to have been deleted, but cupcakes feature prominently in many other blogs devoted to eating disorders. After a row with her boyfriend, one bulimic girl baked cupcakes decorated with the words 'I am sorry'. She added mournfully: 'And now where are those cupcakes? Floating along a sewage pipe.'[5]

This sort of incident isn't unusual. Abigail Natenshon, a psychotherapist who treats eating disorders, tells another horror story involving cupcakes: 'One young woman with bulimia found herself, at a time of great stress, compelled to drive into a 7–11 convenience store where she purchased three cupcakes; she then proceeded to stuff them down her throat whole in an emotional frenzy in the dark and deserted alley behind the store. As far as she was concerned, her binge had begun at the moment when she drove her car up to the front door and did not finish until she had purged the cupcakes.'[6]

The disturbing subculture of 'pro-ana' (pro-anorexia) websites actually encourages girls to starve themselves, or 'b/p' (binge and purge). A recurring question on these sites is: are cupcakes easy to throw up? Answer: not as easy as ice cream, but eating them with diet soda can help.

'It doesn't surprise me that cupcakes are favourites with bulimics,' the food writer Xanthe Clay told me. 'They're the ultimate eye-candy,

primped and styled like a teen pop star, the food incarnation of many girls' fantasies.

'In the gossip magazine world, where shopping is the only serious rival to celebrity in terms of aspiration, cupcakes are consumer-desirable in a way a Victoria sponge isn't. If having an eating disorder is about a desperate attempt to take control, then eating these artificial, too-perfect creations may be particularly satisfying. More likely, the huge sugar rush will feed the craving, and provide a quivering kick of hypoglycaemia. The texture – smooth, aerated, oily – may, like ice cream, be especially suitable for regurgitation.

'And – just my prejudice this – but perhaps the ultimate emptiness of cupcakes, those empty calories, the way they never deliver on flavour what they promise in looks, is a metaphor for the hopelessness of the woman, or man, with bulimia.'

Although a high proportion of bulimics have 'issues' with cupcakes, clearly the overwhelming majority of people who eat them don't throw them up. They do, however, seem obsessed with them. A chain called Crumbs sells 1.5 million cupcakes *every month* in 35 US stores; in June 2011, it started trading on the Nasdaq, with an opening valuation of $59 million. And market analysts predict robust growth if Crumbs moves into emerging markets such as China.

The Facebook group for Sprinkles Cupcakes had, at the time of writing, been 'liked' by 325,000 people and was spreading the cupcake gospel with near-hysterical enthusiasm.[7] For Valentine's Day: 'It's back! The first 50 people to whisper "love at first bite" at each Sprinkles receive a free

raspberry chocolate chip!' For Super Sunday: 'Whether you're rooting for the New York Giants or New England Patriots or just tuning in for the commercials, Sprinkles Super Sunday boxes will score a touchdown at any viewing party. Each box contains 6 Red Velvet and 6 Vanilla cupcakes, adorned with football sugar decorations and your favourite team's name. Just don't get tackled reaching for the last one!' There were even signs that cupcakes were trying to infiltrate the military-industrial complex: 'Sprinkles is excited to bring freshly baked cupcakes to the Pentagon! Pentagon employees can find us in the Main Concourse ...'

This is a resilient craze, as Dana Cowin, *Food & Wine* magazine's editor-in-chief told Reuters in 2011. 'I have predicted the demise of the cupcake so many times that I'm actually going to go to the dark side now and say the cupcake trend is not going to abate,' she said.[8] When an earthquake struck Washington DC on 23 August 2011, someone tweeted that you could tell it had happened because there was suddenly no line outside Georgetown Cupcakes.

Could the 'emptiness' of the cupcakes to which Xanthe Clay refers be part of their appeal? Their overwhelming sugar hit fills the consumer with what nutritionists call 'empty calories', because they have no nutritional value. But that's not to say they have no mood-altering value. Sugar triggers production of the brain's natural opioids, according to Princeton neuroscientist Bart Hobel, who led a study into sugar dependence. He found that rats which binged on sugar went into withdrawal when the supply was cut off. 'We think that is a key to the addiction process,' he said. 'The brain is getting addicted to its own

opioids as it would to morphine or heroin. Drugs give a bigger effect, but it is essentially the same process.'[9]

Opioids are also implicated in bulimia, irrespective of whether sugar is involved. Have you ever experienced that feeling of glorious relief after you've just thrown up a dodgy curry? It's not just getting rid of the food that makes you feel good; it's a natural elation produced by chemicals in the brain. Bulimics get off on it, to put it crudely.

As Abigail Natenshon explains: 'The bulimic cycle releases endorphins, [opioid] brain chemicals that infuse a person with a sense of numbness or euphoria. Ironically, the relief passes in short order, only to be replaced by anxiety and guilt for the bulimic behaviours.' Again, we need to state the obvious fact that most people don't throw up their food. But the sort of food associated with purging is also the sort of food that many of us have difficulty resisting, because its heavy concentrations of sugar, fat or salt can magnify euphoria and neediness.

It's easy for urban sophisticates to mock American rednecks or British 'chavs' who stuff themselves with fast food, and easy to recognise that they're in the grip of some sort of addiction. Just look at their waistlines. But the marketing executive who orders a cranberry muffin to go with her morning cup of coffee really ought to ask herself: why am I eating cake for breakfast?

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So what about the iPhone? Isn't it a bit much to call our love affair with this shiny gadget an 'addiction'? Researchers at Stanford University

aren't so sure: in a survey of 200 Stanford students in 2010, 44 per cent of respondents said they were either very or completely addicted to their smartphones.[10] Nine per cent admitted to 'patting' their iPhone. Eight per cent recalled thinking that their iPods were 'jealous' of their iPhones. These are strange things for students at one of America's top universities to say about their phones, even in jest. They also reveal something about how completely the iPhone has become part of these students' identities and social frameworks. They're not just tools that allow us to connect instantaneously and prolifically with others: they're also being afforded identities of their own – 'patted', protected and cherished.

Perhaps it has something to do with how these devices are engineered. They practically *force* you to perform repetitive rituals of the sort associated with obsessive-compulsive behaviour: from the initial activation of the iPhone to the weekly 'syncing' and nightly charging, your relationship to the phone is structured for you. And because the iPhone's battery life isn't quite enough to last a full day's use – and certainly not long enough to withstand hours of constant fiddling and gaming – 'pit stop' charges become a regular feature of the day. iPhone users can often be seen checking for power sockets in coffee shops so that, while they get their own fix of caffeine, their phones can get juiced up as well.

'iPhone owners live in a constant state of anxiety about their battery levels,' says Milo Yiannopoulos, editor of *The Kernel*, an online culture magazine. 'To some extent, the phone ends up structuring

their day. For example, they tend not to plan to be out of the office for more than six hours at a time, in case they run out of battery and have to start knocking on doors, USB cable in hand, begging for a few minutes' worth of charge to get them through the afternoon.'

Talk about the replacement of people by things. The 4S version of the iPhone, released in October 2011, includes a virtual assistant called Siri that responds to spoken instructions and speaks back to the user. This infant technology is already so complex that you can have entire conversations with Siri. She will then execute commands, in some cases fetching very specific data from the internet. 'Intelligent personalised assistant software is going mainstream,' says Yiannopoulos. 'Never in the history of mass-market consumer electronics has the line between man and machine been so blurred.'

It's significant that a quarter of respondents in the survey above said they found iPhones 'dangerously alluring'. They are supposed to be. Absolutely nothing is left to chance in the design of these devices. If Apple customers have an embarrassing tendency to anthropomorphise their gadgets, that is because Apple has explored the possibilities of the human mind and body more thoroughly than any of its competitors.

For example, one of the most appealing features of the MacBook laptop line has been the status light, which pulsates gently when the computer is sleeping. Early reviewers cooed over the calming effect of the light, but couldn't put their finger on why it felt so good to watch. Later, it was revealed that Apple had filed for a patent for a sleep-mode indicator that 'mimics the rhythm of breathing' and was therefore

'psychologically appealing'. As the tech blogger Jesse Young noted, while Apple's sleep light matched the pace of breathing while we sleep, Dell's was closer to breathing during strenuous exercise. 'It's interesting how a lot of companies try to copy Apple but never seem to get it right. This is yet another example of Apple's obsessive attention to detail,' he wrote.[11]

Former Apple executives – who frequently brief American technology blogs off the record about the internal culture at Apple's headquarters in Cupertino, California – describe the lengths the organisation goes to in order to create coveted products. There's a design-dominated power structure that results in hushed reverence when Jonathan Ive, Senior Vice President of Industrial Design, walks into the boardroom. 'Marketing and design have been fused into a single discipline at Apple,' says Yiannopoulos. 'Everything, from product strategy to research and development, is subordinate to making the products as beautiful and compulsive – that is, as addictive – as possible.'

It works. To quote an extreme example, in 2010 a schoolboy in Taiwan was diagnosed with IAD – iPhone Addiction Disorder. According to Dr Tsung-tsai Yang of the Cardinal Tien Hospital, his eyes were glued to his phone screen all day and all night. Eventually, 'the boy had to be hospitalised in a mental ward after his daily life was thrown into complete disarray by his iPhone addiction'.[12]

Two days after it opened in 2010, I visited the Apple Store in Covent Garden – a magnificently restored Palladian building dominated by a

· blab(v) = φλυαρώ, κάνω ακριτομύθιες

glass-covered courtyard. The heady aroma of addiction was unmistakable. The misery in the queue for the Genius Bar, where broken computers are diagnosed, was painful to behold. Legs were crossed and uncrossed and eyebrows twitched every time a Genius read out a name. I couldn't help thinking that these customers looked like addicts waiting for their daily dose of methadone.

I wanted to ask a Genius what it was like dealing with people who weren't just asking what was wrong with their laptops but pleading for (literal) fixes. But finding someone who would talk was easier said than done.

First I went down the route of asking an Apple Store manager – a friend of a friend – whether he could chat off the record about the way the company seemed to encourage addiction to its products, or put me in touch with someone who would. His first response was encouraging, but then he changed his mind. He would be in big trouble if his bosses suspected he'd put me in touch with an indiscreet ex-employee, and he'd be fired on the spot if he got caught blabbing himself.

So I tried a different route. A start-up CEO friend of mine put out a message to one of his networks. Shortly afterwards, a young man called Ben Jackson, a social media entrepreneur, emailed to say he could meet me for coffee in Soho, London, a few streets from the Apple Store where he had spent two years as a Genius.

Ben, like many former Apple employees, inhabited the cooler end of the geek spectrum, with glasses offset by a gym-honed body. He didn't need any prompting to talk about addiction to technology: the

experience of seeing the addiction every day – deliberately stimulated by the company – was one of the reasons he left the store.

'I saw a whole range of addictive behaviours. It's one of the things that made the Apple Store such a surreal place to work. At one end of the scale you have the total Apple obsessives who exhibit a sort of religious fanaticism that the company does nothing to discourage – it encourages it, in fact. They're the people who will book the same tutorial again and again, being shown how to do stuff they already know.

'When a new product is launched, it's the same faces at the front of the line every time. They treat the staff almost like celebrities, trying to ingratiate themselves. At the Genius Bar, they'll show you Apple products from years ago, and you'll have to pretend you haven't seen them before, because they need their egos massaged. It's kind of sad. Well, it *is* sad.'

But it's not only the true obsessives who are touched by addiction, according to Ben. 'There's a general perception that Apple is awesome in a way that other companies aren't – a perception that's quite at odds with the way it operates behind the scenes. Even the products are considered awesome, which is why otherwise normal people would get quite disproportionately angry and upset if anything went wrong with them. And it's also why there's such unease if people think they've fallen behind, that their stuff is out of date. But the point is that you can't keep up to date without spending a lot of money on things you don't need, because the products are just coming out too fast.

'I've seen people burst into tears because a credit check wouldn't allow them to stretch to the latest upgrade. That's when I started thinking: I need to get the hell out of here.'

Admittedly, many psychiatrists don't believe in 'internet addiction' as a medical condition, let alone addiction to a specific model of smartphone. They argue that obsessive users aren't addicted to the internet so much as to the experiences it provides, such as digital porn and computer games. But few experts would deny that gadgets such as iPhones can produce behaviour that bears the hallmarks of addiction. And it's becoming increasingly clear that the ability of manufacturers to stimulate this behaviour is racing far ahead of our ability to cope with the psychological and social problems that are created as a result.

The science of pleasure is playing a greater role in the marketing strategies of all sorts of companies: the people who waft the smell of freshly baked doughnuts at you in the shopping mall have fine-tuned their recipes in the laboratory, not the kitchen. But Apple is in a class of its own. No other company has managed to mix such a finely balanced cocktail of desire, in which the crude flavour of compulsion is disguised by a deliciously minimalist aesthetic.

'More than any other product, the iPhone has encouraged the tech industry to concentrate on getting people hooked on things,' says Yiannopoulos. 'Apple's marketing genius, and the incredible attention to detail paid to the design of their devices, filters down into the iPhone developer ecosystem.'

He cites the example of Angry Birds, a simple computer game app that, by May 2011, had been downloaded 200 million times.[13] The premise of Angry Birds is simple: players launch birds across the screen with a slingshot, judging the trajectory of flight and altering the force and initial direction accordingly. It sounds harmless enough. But type 'Angry Birds addiction' into Google and you're presented with 3.24 million results. So many people complain about being addicted to the game that it has spawned self-help pages all over the internet. Some of these pages ask whether Angry Birds addictions are changing people's brains. Self-described addicts say they don't know why they can't put the game down, and talk about compulsively tracing their fingers on tables as they subconsciously recall the catapult action of the game. These sound suspiciously like the little rituals associated with alcoholism and drug abuse.

Again, perhaps a degree of scepticism is called for: it can only be a matter of time before some opportunistic researcher diagnoses ABAD – Angry Birds Addiction Disorder (which would presumably be a particular strain of IAD, since the game is played mostly on iPhones). No doubt the Angry Birds craze will fade, as these crazes always do. But it may well leave behind a residue, in the form of the compulsive instinct to perform repetitive actions.

It's not a conspiracy theory to suggest that the primary task of iPhone game developers is learning how to manipulate our brains' reward circuits. They cheerfully admit as much. At the 2010 Virtual Goods Summit in London, Peter Vesterbacka, lead developer for

Rovio, the company behind Angry Birds, described how they make the game so addictive. 'We use simple A/B testing to work out what keeps people coming back,' he said. 'We don't have to guess any more. With so many users, we can just run the numbers.'[14]

We can just run the numbers. Remember those words. Where previously advertising and marketing were more creative disciplines that involved a huge element of risk, a new generation of manufacturers doesn't need to guess what will keep us coming back for our fix: they already know.

●

Viewers of *House*, America's most popular medical drama – and at one time the most watched television programme in the world – are familiar with the sight of Dr Gregory House, the snide, sexy, crippled anti-hero, tipping back his head and tossing a couple of Vicodin into his mouth. He's even been known to throw a pill into the air and catch it like a performing seal. The screenplays go out of their way to portray House as an addict: several times we're shown him shivering and sweating his way through opiate withdrawal. But, in the end, the Vicodin is as integral to his charm as his twisted humour. The one fuels the other.

Although Dr House, played brilliantly by Hugh Laurie, is prescribed the drug to dull the pain of a leg injury, he also uses it to stave off boredom and stimulate his work as a diagnostic detective. Any similarity to the cocaine-injecting Sherlock Holmes is surely intentional. But only the very earliest Holmes stories actually depict

drug abuse: Arthur Conan Doyle, worried that he might encourage addiction, quickly made his hero abandon the vice. Not so the makers of *House*, who have sustained the central character's dependence on Vicodin despite criticism from some medical professionals (and, reportedly, the Drug Enforcement Agency).

'Since the first episode I have been concerned with the show's message and have attempted several times to educate the writers and producers regarding the danger of Vicodin abuse,' wrote one physician, coincidentally named Dr John House, who specialises in hearing loss, a devastating side effect of Vicodin.[15] He lobbied long and hard for this symptom to be recognised in *House* and eventually it was, albeit in a throwaway line. (As I write, the series is coming to an end, and so far one symptom that hasn't been mentioned, so far as I can tell, is the awful constipation it causes: a truly realistic scenario would force the good doctor to spend most of the season straining on the lavatory.) The fictional House does succeed in giving up Vicodin after suffering rather implausible hallucinations caused by the drug and completing a period of rehab, but after a couple of seasons he is shown relapsing.

Vicodin was already a fashionable recreational drug when the show first aired in 2004. It was passed around like after-dinner mints at Manhattan dinner parties. In 2001, *USA Today* described Vicodin as 'the new celebrity drug of choice'. Matthew Perry, one of the stars of *Friends*, had already gone into rehab for his addiction to it – twice. Eminem had a Vicodin tattoo on his arm. David Spade joked about it at the Golden Globes. 'Who isn't doing them?' asked Courtney Love.

'Everyone who makes it starts popping them.'[16] Celebrities favoured it for the same reason other users did: it was (and is) relatively easy to persuade doctors to prescribe it. In the US, Vicodin falls into the Schedule III category, less tightly controlled than stronger opiate painkillers such as Oxycontin, classified as Schedule II. You can phone in a prescription for Vicodin to a pharmacy; for Oxycontin, you have to hand over a physical script.

So by the time the first *House* screenplays were being written in 2003, Vicodin was already as famous for its recreational buzz as for its painkilling properties. When the show became a hit, Associated Press writer Frazier Moore suggested that its success was thanks to the way it 'fetishises pain'. In other words, millions of Americans on painkillers could identify with Dr House's suffering.[17] If true, that's only part of the story. The scripts often refer to Greg House's pain, caused by the removal of leg muscles after a thigh aneurysm. But much of the sharpest humour centres around House's schoolboy naughtiness in trying to score more pills than he has been prescribed. That isn't the fetishisation of pain: it's the fetishisation of Vicodin. An unofficial range of *House* T-shirts, still on sale in 2011, includes one that reads: 'Wake up and smell the Vicodin'. The same logo, accompanied by a photo of Hugh Laurie looking spaced out, is also available as desktop wallpaper for your computer.

Meanwhile, the embedding of the drug in other parts of popular culture continues apace.

'The Vicodin Song', by singer-songwriter Terra Naomi, has been watched on YouTube more than half a million times. It's an

appropriately sleepy ballad which begins: *And I've got Vicodin, do you wanna come over?*

The most popular comment on the thread underneath the YouTube video reads: 'When I listen to this I think of Dr House :)) This song is really cool.'[18] Many of the 2,000-plus comments, however, aren't about the song or the show. They're about how much Vicodin you can take recreationally without hurting your liver. It's a vigorous debate:

> *FreeWhoopin1390*: Well vicodin (aka hydrocodone) gives you a good calm high. It's a super chill high to be honest. Now some people might try and tell you that 20–25 mg gets you high, let me start by saying those people are idiots. 20–25 mg will give you a relaxed small buzz for the first time. If you want a really good calm high that lasts for a while take 35–40 mg. I say 40 for the first time but that's just me. Word of caution tho, do not exceed 4000 mg of tylenol [paracetamol] which is in vicodin, in 24 hours.
>
> *Thebluefus*: If you get 40 mg of hydrocodone by taking vicodin you have reached the max for tylenol. You don't need that much to get high, especially as a first time. Just two vicodin will get you the feeling. Don't be stupid.
>
> *FreeWhoopin1390*: Are you fucking stupid? The max for tylenol is 4000 mg a day. I take 50 mg of hydrocodone at once (they are 10/500). Which means they have 10 mg hydrocodone and

500 mg tylenol. Which means I am taking 2500 mg of tylenol. Which is nowhere near the max daily dosage. But thank you for sharing what you don't know.

There are also catfights about the respective virtues of Vicodin and Oxycontin and a discussion of the regional variations in street prices. From time to time someone interrupts to say that they take Vicodin for real pain and that these junkies should be ashamed of themselves. But there are also commenters who were legitimately prescribed the drug who are now junkies themselves. They may resent being a slave to Vicodin or they may enjoy the high; perhaps a bit of both. What should we make of a comment like this?

1awareness: Bragging about pills is lame. I'm using them to make fibromyalgia feel less intense. I also have seizures which cause a lot of pain. I enjoy Vicodin.

These are commenters who describe themselves as Vicodin 'users/abusers', a term that neatly captures the ambiguity of prescription drug abuse. All mood-altering drugs, from Scotch whisky to crack cocaine, can be abused: you can harm yourself by taking too much of them. But the vast majority are *supposed* to intoxicate, even when consumed in 'safe' quantities. The Vicodin abuser, on the other hand, is hooked on a drug that the manufacturers insist isn't designed to alter moods. To further complicate matters, if the abuser is in real pain, it can be hard

to tell whether he or she is merely over-medicating or enjoying an extra recreational buzz on top of the pain relief – Dr Gregory House likes to keep his colleagues guessing on this point. But that sort of confusion doesn't make Vicodin dependence any less difficult to manage; it just means that, like so many 21st-century addictions, it is difficult to categorise and therefore difficult to treat.

As if these problems weren't bad enough, it was revealed at the beginning of 2012 that several drug companies were working on hydrocodone pills that were potentially ten times as strong as Vicodin. The new pills would be 'safer' than Vicodin, according to Roger Hawley, chief executive of Zogenix, because they wouldn't contain the paracetamol that harms the liver. Maybe so; but their time-release formula would also allow abusers to crunch them up for one hell of a hit. Zohydro, as Zogenix plans to call the drug, is scheduled for release in 2013.

This is just a guess, but it wouldn't surprise me if, all over America, clued-up Vicodin users are already telling their doctors that their pain is getting worse and maybe they could use something a little stronger …

●

The addictive qualities of cupcakes, iPhones and Vicodin aren't immediately obvious. Someone encountering a cupcake for the first time since childhood doesn't think: uh-oh, I'd better be careful not to develop a sugar addition that triggers an eating disorder and end up washing the sick out of my hair. Likewise, people buying their first

smartphone don't worry about developing an obsessive-compulsive relationship with a computer game, and until recently the recreational use of painkillers was almost unheard of. In other words, as unqualified consumers we're increasingly tempted by products about whose effect on our brain we know virtually nothing. We may not even notice the burst of tension-relieving pleasure they provide – at least, not until we realise that we can't live without them.

Using substances and manipulating situations to fix your mood isn't new. It's the pace, intensity, range and scale of this mood-fixing that is unprecedented, irrespective of whether it involves drugs, alcohol, food or sex.

Put simply, both our *need* and our *ability* to manipulate our feelings are growing. We're always searching for new ways to change the way we feel because, to state the obvious, we're not at ease with ourselves. That's a very broad-brush statement, so let me try to be more specific. Our ancestors were unable to insulate themselves from fear and despair in the way that we try to: certain forms of unhappiness, such as grief at the death of children, were more familiar to them than they are to us. Nor did they possess many fixes to address those feelings – and, in any case, experiences of such intensity aren't easily fixed, even in the short term. We, on the other hand, struggle with small but inexorable and cumulative pressures in our daily lives. These produce a free-floating anxiety that *is* susceptible to short-term fixes.

The hi-tech world that ratchets up the pressure on us also yields scientific discoveries that speed up the flow of pleasure-giving and

performance-enhancing chemicals in our brains. Indeed, producers and consumers collude vigorously in this process, which helps us cope with commitments that we feel are beyond our control. (Note, incidentally, how the verb 'to cope' has invaded so many areas of human activity: sometimes it seems that we need a 'coping strategy' just to go to the bathroom.) The jokey phrase 'retail therapy' has entered the language for a good reason. We, as consumers, know that the instant gratification of a purchase goes beyond simple pleasure at acquiring something new – it can change the way we feel about everything, albeit only for a short time. Manufacturers are well aware of it, too. They know they are the purveyors of fixes, and that the moment their fixes fail is the moment they start losing market share.

The problem is that these increasingly complex interactions between producers and consumers are also increasingly unpredictable, especially in their effects on the human body. It's not possible to predict with any accuracy the sorts of relationships that people will form with the substances and experiences thrust at them. Neuroscientists are learning new things about our reward systems all the time, but they'll admit privately that the attempt to turn these discoveries into drugs that target specific mental disorders have been shockingly hit-and-miss. Meanwhile, the rest of us know only one thing about those reward systems: how to stimulate them.

In other words, we are sitting in front of the controls of a machine whose workings are basically a mystery to us. And someone has just handed us the ignition keys.

TARGET TEXT

1. CUPCAKES, IPHONES ΚΑΙ VICODIN

Το cupcake είναι ένα από τα θαύματα του 21ου αιώνα: μια λεπτή βάση από παντεσπάνι που αναστενάζει κάτω από μια απολαυστική, παχιά στρώση ζάχαρης άχνης ή βουτυρόκρεμας. Είναι φτιαγμένο για να μοιάζει με μινιατούρα παιδικής τούρτας γενεθλίων – και, πράγματι, τα γενέθλια είναι η τέλεια δικαιολογία για να τρέξεις στο ζαχαροπλαστείο της περιοχής σου και να αγοράσεις ένα μεγάλο κουτί γεμάτο με δαύτα. Η ρετρό γοητεία των cupcakes σε βοηθά να καταπνίξεις τις όποιες ανησυχίες μπορεί να έχεις για τη ζάχαρη και τα λίπη. Η μανούλα σου τα έφτιαχνε! Ή έστω, έτσι λέει η διαφήμιση. Ίσως αυτά που έφτιαχνε η μανούλα σου να μην ήταν ακριβώς cupcake, αλλά το χαριτωμένο παστέλ γλάσο τους σε κάνει να πιστέψεις πως μια και μόνο μπουκιά θα σε γυρίσει πίσω στη παιδική σου ηλικία. Κάτι τέτοιο δεν θα μπορούσε να είναι ανθυγιεινό, σωστά;

Τώρα ας δούμε κάτι ακόμα που το βρίσκεις πραγματικά παντού σήμερα: το iPhone, το οποίο ξεκίνησε σαν μια διστακτική δήλωση του πόσο cool μπορείς να είσαι αλλά εν τέλει, χάρη στο ιδιοφυές μάρκετινγκ της Apple, έχει πλέον αναχθεί σε κάτι τόσο σύνηθες όσο τα κλειδιά του αυτοκινήτου. Εκατομμύρια άνθρωποι έχουν iPhones, χρησιμοποιούν εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες εφαρμογές, από έναν απλό χάρτη GPS έως ένα ηλεκτρονικό παιχνίδι στο οποίο μπορείς να κολλήσεις για ώρες. Το iPhone σου κάνει όλα όσα θα μπορούσες να ζητήσεις από ένα κινητό τηλέφωνο και ακόμα περισσότερα, και έτσι δεν χρειάζεσαι το αναβαθμισμένο μοντέλο που η Apple μόλις κυκλοφόρησε …, σωστά;

Έπειτα, είναι και το Vicodin. Είναι το πιο συχνά συνταγογραφούμενο αναλγητικό στην Αμερική. Στην πραγματικότητα, είναι το πιο συχνά συνταγογραφούμενο *ναρκωτικό* στην Αμερική: 130 εκατομμύρια συνταγές Vicodin γράφτηκαν μόλις το 2010 και 244 εκατομμύρια συνταγές συνολικά που υπάγονται στην κατηγορία των ισχυρών, ναρκωτικών αναλγητικών. Το Vicodin είναι μια ισχυρή ουσία, αποτέλεσμα μείξης δύο αναλγητικών: της υδροκοδώνης (οπιώδες που προκαλεί εθισμό) και της παρακεταμόλης (μη εθιστικής ουσίας που σε μεγάλες δόσεις ευθύνεται για ηπατικές βλάβες). Το Vicodin καταπολεμά τους πόνους που σε κάνουν να κλαις στην αίθουσα αναμονής των ιατρείων – δηλαδή τον πόνο που σου προκαλούν οι παραμορφώσεις της σπονδυλικής στήλης, οι σάπιοι φρονιμίτες ή ο

καρκίνος στο τελικό του στάδιο. Εάν καταναλώνουν τόσα πολλά από αυτά τα χάπια, φαίνεται λογικό να συμπεράνουμε πως οι Αμερικάνοι πονούν φριχτά. Ή μήπως απλά εκατομμύρια άνθρωποι δεν μπορούν να βγάλουν τη μέρα χωρίς την γλυκιά καταπραϋντική ευφορία του Vicodin, ακόμα και αν δεν έχουν κάποιο σοβαρό πρόβλημα;

Ένα cupcake, ένα smartphone και ένα κοινό αναλγητικό. Και τα τρία μοιάζουν τόσο αθώα που θα μπορούσες να τα αφήσεις πάνω στο γραφείο σου στη δουλειά και κανείς να μην το σχολιάσει (αν και το cupcake μπορεί εύκολα να κάνει φτερά). Μπορείς μάλιστα εύκολα να τα καταναλώσεις όλα μαζί την ίδια στιγμή: να πάρεις το χάπι για τους πόνους στη μέση με τον καφέ σου ενώ τσεκάρεις τα μηνύματά σου στο κινητό τσιμπολογώντας τη λαχταριστή γλασαρισμένη επικάλυψη του cupcake.

Από την άλλη, καθένα από αυτά τα καθημερινά αντικείμενα μπορεί να μας βάλει σε μπελάδες. Αποτελούν αντικείμενα πόθου που ενισχύουν την εθιστική συμπεριφορά – το είδος που εμφανίζεται και σε κυριεύει όταν οι άμυνες σου έχουν πέσει. Αυτό είναι και το θέμα του βιβλίου που κρατάτε στα χέρια σας: ένα κοινωνικό περιβάλλον στο οποίο όλο και περισσότεροι από εμάς ωθούνται σε κάποιου είδους εθισμό, χωρίς ωστόσο να το συνειδητοποιούν ή να εθιστούν απόλυτα σε κάτι.

Μπορεί να μην το αντιλαμβανόμαστε τώρα, αλλά η σημαντικότερη κοινωνική εξέλιξη στις αρχές του 21ου αιώνα είναι η αυξανόμενα επίμονη συνήθειά μας να ανταμείβουμε τους εαυτούς μας κάθε φορά που νιώθουμε την ανάγκη να ανεβάσουμε τη διάθεσή μας.

Όταν απλώνουμε το χέρι μας για ένα ακόμα κομμάτι οργανικής σοκολάτας, ή όταν παίζουμε ένα ακόμα παιχνίδι Angry Birds πριν ξεκινήσουμε για τη δουλειά, ή όταν τσεκάρουμε στα πεταχτά μια κρυφή πορνόιστοσελίδα στη λίστα των αγαπημένων για νέες αφίξεις, συμπεριφερόμαστε σαν να είμαστε εξαρτημένοι. Η εν λόγω δραστηριότητα μπορεί να είναι αθώα ή ντροπιαστική. Όπως και να ’χει, ενισχύει την εγγενή στην ανθρώπινη φύση ροπή προς τον εθισμό.

Αυτή η ροπή υπάρχει γιατί ο εγκέφαλός μας έχει φτιαχτεί για να αναζητά άμεσες, βραχυπρόθεσμες ανταμοιβές. Οι πρόγονοί μας έπρεπε να μπουκώνονται με βατόμουρα πλούσια σε ενέργεια και να ανταποκρίνονται γρήγορα στα σεξουαλικά ερεθίσματα. Εάν δεν το έκαναν απλά εμείς σήμερα δεν θα ήμασταν εδώ.

Το πρόβλημά μας είναι ότι έχουμε διαμορφώσει ένα περιβάλλον που μας βομβαρδίζει με ανταμοιβές τις οποίες το σώμα μας δεν χρειάζεται και δεν εξασφαλίζουν τίποτα για την επιβίωσή μας ως ανθρώπινο είδος. Ωστόσο, επειδή είναι ανταμοιβές – δηλαδή, επειδή προκαλούν συγκεκριμένα συναισθήματα προσδοκίας και ικανοποίησης στον εγκέφαλο – τις αρπάζουμε ούτως ή άλλως.

Για να το θέσουμε διαφορετικά, αναζητούμε τη ‘δόση’ μας.

Αυτή είναι μια λέξη που τη συνδέουμε με εξαρτημένα άτομα που βρίσκονται σε απελπιστική κατάσταση. Μιλάνε για τη ‘δόση’ τους γιατί έχουν την ψευδαίσθηση πως ‘φτιάχνονται’ έστω και για λίγο όταν παίρνουν το ναρκωτικό της επιλογής τους. Δεν υπάρχει κανένα μυστήριο ως προς αυτό. Αποτέλεσμα της υπερέκθεσής τους στο ναρκωτικό είναι ότι εθίζονται σε συχνές χημικές ανταμοιβές. Ο εγκέφαλός τους μπαίνει σε μια κατάσταση υπερδιέγερσης, προσδοκώντας την ευλογημένη ανακούφιση από μια χημική ουσία που, μόλις η ανοχή του οργανισμού αυξηθεί, απλώς επιτρέπει στον εξαρτημένο να επανέλθει στην κανονικότητα και να μην αγωνιά ή να αισθάνεται άρρωστος.

Ως προς αυτό δεν αντιλέγει κανείς. Ωστόσο, πολλοί ειδικοί στο θέμα της εξάρτησης το πηγαίνουν ένα βήμα παραπέρα. Λένε πως ο εγκέφαλος ενός εθισμένου διαφέρει ουσιαστικά από εκείνον ενός μη-εθισμένου. Ένας εθισμένος ωθείται στο να κυνηγά τις ανταμοιβές επειδή πάσχει από την ‘ασθένεια της εξάρτησης’.

Αυτό το βιβλίο αμφισβητεί αυτήν τη θεωρία. Υποστηρίζει πως εάν τρως ακατάπαυστα μπισκότα με γέμιση σοκολάτα μέχρι να αρρωστήσεις, παραδίνεσαι σε μια ηπιότερη εκδοχή εθιστικής συμπεριφοράς που ανάλογή της οδηγεί τους χρήστες ηρωίνης σε υπερβολική δόση – κοινώς overdose. Φυσικά και δεν εξισώνω τις δύο καταστάσεις. Αυτό που υποστηρίζω είναι ότι βρίσκονται σε διαφορετικά σημεία ενός φάσματος εθιστικών συμπεριφορών στο οποίο ο καθένας μας μπορεί να έχει θέση.

Και, το πιο σημαντικό, πολλοί από εμάς ωθούμαστε προς το επικίνδυνο άκρο του φάσματος, χάρη στις τεχνολογικές και κοινωνικές αλλαγές που διεγείρουν το βασικότερο από τα ένστικτά μας – την επιθυμία.

Ποτέ άλλοτε δεν είχαμε πρόσβαση σε τόσα πολλά ελκυστικά πράγματα και εμπειρίες που πιστεύαμε πως θα μπορούσαν να μας φτιάξουν τη διάθεση. Ξέρω ότι η φράση ‘πράγματα και εμπειρίες’ μοιάζει με αοριστία, αλλά αυτό ακριβώς είναι το ζήτημα. Η έννοια της εξάρτησης δεν περιορίζεται αποκλειστικά στη χρήση ουσιών,

και κάθε εβδομάδα που περνά, η τεχνολογική πρόοδος αποκαλύπτει ένα καινούργιο αντικείμενο, μια νέα δραστηριότητα ή σχέση η οποία μπορεί να μας γίνει εμμονή.

Για παράδειγμα, στις μέρες μας τα πράγματα στα οποία έχουμε αποκτήσει κάποιου είδους προσκόλληση τα βρίσκουμε συνεχώς μπροστά μας με τη βοήθεια των μέσων κοινωνικής δικτύωσης όπως το Facebook ή το Twitter γιατί αυτά μας επιτρέπουν να ελέγχουμε τον κύκλο των φίλων μας. Η δυνατότητα να προσθέτουμε ή να διαγράφουμε φίλους σαν να ήταν εφαρμογές στο iPhone είναι ένας βρώμικος και γρήγορος τρόπος να αλλάξουμε τη διάθεσή μας (αν και είναι περιττό να πούμε πως γινόμαστε έξαλλοι κάθε φορά που κάποιος μας διαγράφει). Είναι, πρωτίστως, μια καταναλωτική εμπειρία.

Σε κάθε συζήτηση σχετικά με τον εθισμό, είτε έχει να κάνει με κάτι τετριμμένο είτε με μια ακραία περίπτωση, η έννοια της επιθυμίας είναι τόσο σημαντική όσο εκείνη της απόλαυσης. Μάλιστα, τις περισσότερες φορές, είναι πιο σημαντική. Αυτό συμβαίνει γιατί το αίσθημα της αναμονής για τη ‘δόση’ μας είναι πιο δυνατό απ’ ό,τι η στιγμή που την παίρνουμε, η οποία συνήθως δεν ανταποκρίνεται στις προσδοκίες μας. Δεν είναι λίγες οι φορές που η απογοήτευση που νιώθουμε όταν αυτό μας συμβεί προκαλεί εσωτερική αναταραχή και θυμό. Ο εθισμός μας έχει τη δύναμη να μας κάνει να συμπεριφερόμαστε σα νήπια που διαρκώς φωνάζουν και ξεσηκώνουν τον κόσμο για να πάρουν περισσότερο.

Πιστέψτε με, μιλώ εκ πείρας.

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Για πολλά χρόνια πάλευα και εγώ με τον εθισμό. Μεταξύ 18 και 32 ήμουν απόλυτα εξαρτημένος από το αλκοόλ. Η κατάστασή μου ήταν δραματική. Μου πήρε πολύ καιρό όμως να το αντιληφθώ – να συνειδητοποιήσω ότι το μεθύσι μπορεί να με ευχαριστούσε αλλά η εμμονή μου σε αυτό ήταν τέτοια που με απομάκρυνε από τους περισσότερους φίλους και συναδέλφους μου. Ο γιατρός μου λέει πως είμαι ακόμα εθισμένος. Δεν με ευχαριστεί ιδιαίτερα το ότι φέρω ακόμα την ταμπέλα του αλκοολικού αφού έχω περάσει τόσο καιρό αποφεύγοντας έστω και μια σταγόνα αλκοόλ, αλλά τα στοιχεία είναι αδιάσειστα. Από τότε που έκοψα το ποτό, τρώω διάφορα κολλήματα, το ένα μετά το άλλο, με διάφορα πράγματα, εμπειρίες ή ανθρώπους. Δεν μπορώ να καταπιώ ένα Nurofen Plus για τον πονοκέφαλο χωρίς να ελπίζω πως θα απολαύσω λίγη από την γλυκιά έξαψη που προκαλεί η κοδεΐνη.

Μπορώ να στέκομαι σα χάνος για δέκα λεπτά κοιτώντας τα γλυκίσματα σε ένα περίπτερο. Και το πάθος μου για τα CD με έχει σχεδόν χρεοκοπήσει. Όλα αυτά δεν είναι τίποτα μπροστά στον εθισμό μου στο ποτό, αλλά σίγουρα ο υπερβολικός τρόπος με τον οποίο αντιδρώ σε αυτά τα ερεθίσματα δεν μοιάζει και πολύ φυσιολογικός.

Ίσως το σημαντικότερο χαρακτηριστικό του εθισμού είναι η σταδιακή αντικατάσταση των ανθρώπων με πράγματα. Αυτή η φαινομενικά απλή διαπίστωση δείχνει βαθιά γνώση, μολονότι δεν μπορώ να λάβω τα εύσημα για αυτή. Ο πρώτος που το διαπίστωσε είναι ο Craig Nakken, συγγραφέας του bestseller *The Addictive Personality (Το Προφίλ του Εθισμού)*, ο οποίος υποστηρίζει ότι ο εθισμένος διαμορφώνει πρωτίστως σχέσεις με αντικείμενα και γεγονότα παρά με ανθρώπους.

Συγκεκριμένα γράφει: «Γενικά, χειριζόμαστε τα πράγματα γύρω μας προς δική μας ευχαρίστηση, προκειμένου να κάνουμε τη ζωή μας ευκολότερη. Τα άτομα που πάσχουν από κάποια εξάρτηση, με τον καιρό μεταφέρουν αυτό τον τύπο σύνδεσης που έχουν αναπτύξει με τα αντικείμενα στις συνδιαλλαγές τους με τους ανθρώπους, με αποτέλεσμα να συμπεριφέρονται στους γύρω τους σαν να ήταν μονοδιάστατα αντικείμενα προς χειραγώγηση.»

Αυτό που ξεκινά ως μια απόπειρα επίτευξης της συναισθηματικής ολοκλήρωσης κάποιου, καταλήγει σε απόλυτη εσωστρέφεια. Γιατί συμβαίνει αυτό; Γιατί απλά ο εξαρτημένος καταλήγει να κρίνει τους άλλους με γνώμονα το πόσο μπορούν να του αποβούν χρήσιμοι προς δική του ικανοποίηση. Όμως, πάντα έρχεται η στιγμή που όλοι σε απογοητεύουν. Έτσι το εθισμένο άτομο καταλήγει στο συμπέρασμα πως τα αντικείμενα είναι πιο αξιόπιστα από τους ανθρώπους. Τα αντικείμενα ούτε ζητούν ούτε χρειάζονται κάτι. «Στη σχέση του με ένα αντικείμενο, ο εθισμένος έρχεται πάντα πρώτος», λέει ο Nakken.

Όταν πρωτοδιάβασα αυτά τα λόγια ένιωσα ένας ρίγος καθώς θυμήθηκα τον εαυτό μου. Ωστόσο, μέσα σε αυτή την περιγραφή δεν είδα μόνο εμένα ή άλλους τους οποίους η κοινωνία εύκολα χαρακτηρίζει ‘εθισμένους’. Μπορεί να ακούγεται ακραίο, αλλά την τελευταία δεκαετία μου προκαλεί συχνά εντύπωση ο τρόπος με τον οποίο φίλοι και συνάδελφοι (οι περισσότεροι από τους οποίους είναι ψυχολογικά πολύ πιο υγιείς από εμένα) έχουν αρχίσει να επιδεικνύουν συμπτώματα της συμπεριφοράς που περιγράφει ο Nakken. Δημοφιλή προϊόντα ασκούν όλο και μεγαλύτερη επιρροή,

διαλύουν σχέσεις, καλλιεργούν εμμονές και – όπως έχω προσέξει στο γραφείο – κυριαρχούν στις συζητήσεις.

Μήπως αυτό σημαίνει ότι οι άνθρωποι γύρω μου μεταμορφώνονται σε ‘εθισμένους’; Δύσκολο να απαντήσει κανείς, αν σκεφτούμε τις ποικίλες προεκτάσεις και τα νοήματα που φέρει ο όρος ‘εθισμένος’. Είναι ένας καλός τρόπος για να περιγράψει κανείς ανθρώπους που τα προβλήματά τους βρίσκονται ολοφάνερα εκτός ελέγχου, όπως κάποτε συνέβαινε με μένα. Ωστόσο, θα πρέπει να χρησιμοποιείται με προσοχή. Όχι μόνο παραπέμπει λανθασμένα σε ασθένεια, αλλά υπονοεί πως υπάρχει μια σαφής διάκριση μεταξύ εθισμένων και μη εθισμένων ατόμων. Κάτι τέτοιο δεν ισχύει. Η δική μου εμπειρία μου έχει δείξει πως η εξάρτηση είναι κάτι που οι άνθρωποι επιλέγουν – για τους ίδιους και για τους ανθρώπους γύρω τους. Δεν είναι κάτι που απλά τους έτυχε, όπως ο καρκίνος.

Η έννοια του εθισμού γίνεται ευκολότερα κατανοητή εάν εστιάσουμε σε ορατές συμπεριφορές – δηλαδή, στην αναζήτηση μιας προσκόλλησης και στις συνέπειες αυτής της επιλογής. Σχεδόν όλοι είμαστε εν δυνάμει εθισμένοι, απλά κάποιοι από εμάς είναι πιο ευάλωτοι σε σύγκριση με τους υπόλοιπους, για λόγους που ακόμα και οι επιστήμονες αδυνατούν να κατανοήσουν πλήρως.

Για να λέμε όμως τα πράγματα όπως έχουν, νομίζω πως πρέπει, από την αρχή κιόλας του βιβλίου, να βγάλουμε το επιχείρημα αυτό από τη μέση. Τις δύο τελευταίες δεκαετίες, αμέτρητες επιστημονικές μελέτες αποπειράθηκαν να προσδιορίσουν επακριβώς τι είναι αυτό στη λειτουργία του εγκεφάλου ή στην ανατροφή των εξαρτημένων ατόμων που τα οδηγεί να υιοθετήσουν αυτοκαταστροφική συμπεριφορά. Οι προσπάθειές τους έχουν αποτύχει παταγωδώς.

Δεν υπάρχει άνθρωπος που να μην κινδυνεύει από το να αναπτύξει κάποια στιγμή στη ζωή του κάποιου είδους εθιστική συμπεριφορά. Εάν υπάρχει ιστορικό εθισμού στην οικογένεια, ο κίνδυνος είναι ακόμα μεγαλύτερος. Το ίδιο ισχύει εάν είστε γενικά παρορμητικός – που πρακτικά σημαίνει, πως σημειώνετε υψηλά σκορ στην ‘παρορμητικότητα’ στα ψυχολογικά τεστ – καθώς είναι πιο πιθανό να κάνετε κάτι παρορμητικό, όπως να δοκιμάσετε ένα νέο ναρκωτικό ή να πιείτε αυτό το τελευταίο ‘μοιραίο’ ποτήρι ουίσκι προτού μπείτε στο αμάξι. Μάλιστα, ένας σύγχρονος όρος για τα διάφορα είδη εθισμών είναι «διαταραχές ελέγχου των παρορμήσεων».

Προσωπικά, θεωρώ πως τα εν λόγω επιστημονικά ‘ευρήματα’ ανήκουν στην κατηγορία ‘σιγά τα νέα!’. Δεν έχουν να μας πουν τίποτα παραπάνω από όσα ήδη ξέρουμε. Σχεδόν όλοι σήμερα πιστεύουμε πως ο εθισμός οφείλεται σε παράγοντες που έχουν να κάνουν με τα γονίδια και το περιβάλλον του εθισμένου. Με άλλα λόγια, ούτε σε αυτό τον τομέα της ανθρώπινης βιολογίας θα βρείτε ικανοποιητική απάντηση στο δίλημμα φύση ή ανατροφή. Επαναλαμβάνω: όλοι μας κινδυνεύουμε. Για αυτό και το θέμα αυτού του βιβλίου μας αφορά όλους: όχι μόνο τον κοκαϊνομανή γιάπη επενδυτή, τον βουλιμικό ρεσεψιονίστ ή τον πατέρα που έχει εγκαταλείψει την οικογένεια του γιατί απλά έχει βυθιστεί στο World of Warcraft.

Οι ψυχολόγοι μιλούν για ‘εξαρτήσεις’ χρησιμοποιώντας πάντα πληθυντικό αριθμό μιας και ξέρουν πολύ καλά πως υπάρχουν πολλές διαφορετικές παρορμήσεις που βάζουν τον άνθρωπο σε πειρασμό. Το κοινό γνώρισμα αυτών των συμπεριφορών είναι αντικατάσταση των ανθρώπων με αντικείμενα ή γεγονότα. Όλοι μας σε κάποιο βαθμό αναπτύσσουμε τέτοιες συμπεριφορές. Αυτοί που αποκαλούμε «εθισμένους» είναι εκείνοι που δεν μπορούν ή απλά δεν θέλουν να απαλλαγούν από τις εξαρτήσεις τους ακόμα και αν αυτό κάνει κακό τόσο στους ίδιους όσο και στους γύρω τους. Και πάλι, όμως, πρόκειται για έναν ουσιαστικά ασαφή ορισμό, γεμάτο αοριστίες. Αυτό όμως δεν πρέπει να μας απασχολεί και πολύ· ο εθισμός εξάλλου είναι περίπλοκο φαινόμενο για να το αναλύσεις

Αυτό δεν αναιρεί το γεγονός ότι η εθιστική συμπεριφορά έχει σημαντικές συνέπειες για τον ανθρώπινο εγκέφαλο. Κάθε άλλο. Και αυτό μπορεί εν μέρει να εξηγηθεί από την υπερδιέργερση του πολυδαίδαλου κυκλώματος επιβράβευσης του ανθρώπινου εγκεφάλου.

Διαφορετικά τμήματα του εγκεφάλου ελέγχουν αυτό που μερικοί επιστήμονες ονομάζουν «καταναλωτική διαταραχή» - η με άλλα λόγια τον εγγενή μηχανισμό που μας ωθεί ή μας αποτρέπει από το να αποκτήσουμε κάτι. Τα πιο πρωτόγονα μέρη του εγκεφάλου – μέρη που και άλλα ζώα διαθέτουν – μας υπαγορεύουν να καταναλώσουμε όσο το δυνατό περισσότερο για να αυξήσουμε τις πιθανότητες επιβίωσής μας. Μας λένε: πάρε. Οι πιο ανεπτυγμένες δομές του εγκεφάλου οι οποίες δεν συναντώνται στα υπόλοιπα ζώα, μας προτρέπουν να σταματήσουμε όποτε καταναλώνουμε κάτι σε μεγάλες ποσότητες προς όφελός μας. Μας λένε: σταμάτα. Ένας ‘κλασικός’ εθισμένος αγνοεί κατ’ εξακολούθηση την οδηγία ‘στοπ’, παρά το υψηλό τίμημα για τον ίδιο και για τους άλλους. Ο εξαρτημένος διψά για άμεση

ικανοποίηση, όποιες και αν είναι οι συνέπειες. Πράγματι, ένας εθισμένος συνήθως αρπάζει την όποια ευκαιρία να παραδοθεί στην εθιστική συμπεριφορά ακόμα και όταν δεν θα του επιφέρει πραγματική ικανοποίηση. Στη συνέχεια θα αναλύσουμε εκτενέστερα αυτό το αινιγματικά παράδοξο.

Η αναπαράσταση της αντίθεσης ανάμεσα στο ‘πάρε’ και ‘σταμάτα’ μας βοηθά να καταλάβουμε την όλο και μεγαλύτερη απήχηση των εθισμών. Η τεχνολογία συνεχώς προοδεύει με αποτέλεσμα ολοένα να αυξάνεται η ταχύτητα με την οποία εκπληρώνονται οι επιθυμίες. Το ίδιο ισχύει και για την ταχύτητα με την οποία αυξάνονται οι προσδοκίες μας. Ζούμε σε ένα κόσμο γεμάτο αντικείμενα και ουσίες που βελτιώνουν τη ζωή μας και υπόσχονται άμεση και αποτελεσματικότερη ικανοποίηση. Είναι λες και κάθε προϊόν που βγαίνει στην αγορά να έχει πάνω του τη σφραγίδα «Πάρε».

Ο πειρασμός καραδοκεί στα πιο παράξενα μέρη. Ποιος θα περίμενε, πριν από 40 χρόνια, ότι μια ηλεκτρονική συσκευή από τον εξοπλισμό του γραφείου, όπως ο ηλεκτρονικός υπολογιστής, θα μετατρεπόταν σε κάτι τόσο επιθυμητό που οι άνθρωποι θα θυσίαζαν ώρες ατέλειωτες από τον ελεύθερό τους χρόνο (και χρήμα) για να παίξουν μαζί του; Ή ότι οι τροποποιήσεις σε ένα τηλέφωνο θα προκαλούσαν παγκόσμια φρενίτιδα;

Οι αλλαγές στις προτιμήσεις μας δεν προκύπτουν τυχαία. Ο διευθυντής του Starbucks στην περιοχή σου δεν ξύπνησε μια μέρα και είπε: «Μμμ… ξέρω τι θα έφτιαχνε τα μεσημέρια των πελατών μου… ένας ice-blend cappuccino!» Όπως θα δούμε, ο cappuccino με θρύμματα πάγου, ή κοινώς Frappucino, φτιάχτηκε όταν τα Starbucks χρησιμοποίησαν την τεχνολογία τροφίμων προκειμένου να δώσουν λύση σε μια συγκεκριμένη επιχειρηματική πρόκληση. Το αποτέλεσμα ήταν εκατοντάδες χιλιάδες πελάτες τους (μέσα σε αυτούς και εγώ) να αναπτύξουν μια σχεδόν παθολογική σχέση με κάτι που μέχρι πρόσφατα δεν υπήρχε καν και ζούσαν ευτυχισμένοι χωρίς να το έχουν.

Ο ρυθμός με τον οποίο επέρχονται οι τεχνολογικές αλλαγές δείχνει πως πρέπει να επανεξετάσουμε τι τελικά είναι ο εθισμός. Η πολιτιστική μας ιστορία μας παρέχει εικόνες με στερεότυπα εθισμένων ατόμων, μερικά από τις οποίες χρονολογούνται αιώνες πίσω: όπως η γριά μέγαιρα που πετάει το μωρό της από τις σκάλες στο έργο του Hogarth *Gin Lane (Πάροδος Τζιν)* ή οι ινδιάνοι ιθαγενείς και η

μανία τους για το «νερό της φωτιάς». Ο Κινέζος ναύτης με το κενό βλέμμα που στηρίζεται στον τοίχο ενός τεκέ. Το πρεζάκι που τρέμει στο σοκάκι περικυκλωμένο από σύριγγες. Επίσης, όλοι όσοι ζουν σε πόλεις έχουν συνηθίσει να βλέπουν τελειωμένους αλκοολικούς και παθολογικά παχύσαρκους των οποίων οι εθισμοί βρίσκονται καταφανώς εκτός ελέγχου, σε τέτοιο βαθμό που προτιμάμε να αποστρέφουμε το βλέμμα μας όποτε τους συναντάμε.

Αυτές είναι δυνατές εικόνες. Ωστόσο, η υπερέκθεσή μας σε αυτές μπορεί να μας καταστήσει επικίνδυνα απαθείς. Παραβλέπουμε την ευκολία με την οποία πρόθυμα δεχόμαστε κάτι εθιστικό· αυτές οι αισθητηριακές εμπειρίες που ναι μεν προσωρινά μας ανεβάζουν τη διάθεση αλλά παράλληλα δίχως να το καταλαβαίνουμε μας απομακρύνουν από τις παραδοσιακές ανθρώπινες σχέσεις. Ο εθισμός μπορεί να πάρει πολλές και διαφορετικές μορφές. Είναι προφανές πως κάποιοι παίζουν με τη χημεία του ανθρώπινου εγκεφάλου.

Αυτός με το ‘στριφτό’ χαρτονόμισμα στη μύτη που ρουφάει πρέζα ξέρει πως αν ο προμηθευτής του δεν τον κοροϊδέψει, η ουσία αυτή μπορεί να του χαρίσει μια αίσθηση άνευ προηγουμένου. Το ίδιο ισχύει και για τον τύπο που αδειάζει γουλιά-γουλιά το μπουκάλι με το ουίσκι. Αντιθέτως, ο γεματούλης νεαρός που καταβροχθίζει ένα πακέτο μπισκότα με γέμιση σοκολάτα ενώ βλέπει το ματς στην τηλεόραση δεν υποπτεύεται καν ότι οι διατροφικές του συνήθειες ίσως έχουν καταστήσει τον εγκέφαλό του επικίνδυνα ευαίσθητο στη διέγερση που μπορεί να προκαλέσει η ζάχαρη· το μόνο που ξέρει είναι πως άπαξ και ανοίξει το πακέτο, τα μπισκότα θα εξαφανιστούν. Η συνήθεια του να μπουκώνεται με λευκή ζάχαρη και φυτικό λίπος δεν τον τοποθετεί πολύ ψηλά στο φάσμα των εθισμών, αλλά και πάλι ίσως είναι αρκετή για να τον στείλει στην εντατική μετά από μια καρδιακή προσβολή στα 50 του.

Οι πιο περίπλοκοι εθισμοί είναι εκείνοι που δεν έχουν να κάνουν με την κατανάλωση μιας ουσίας. Ο τζόγος είναι ένα χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα. Γνωρίζουμε εδώ και αιώνες ότι μπορεί να διαλύσει οικογένειες με την ίδια ευκολία όσο και ο αλκοολισμός. Στους κύκλους των επιστημόνων, αυτού του τύπου οι εθισμοί είναι γνωστοί και ως «διαδικαστικοί εθισμοί». Είναι πλέον ξεκάθαρο πως πράγματα τα οποία δεν τρως, δεν πίνεις, δεν καπνίζεις ή δεν εγχέεις με κάποιο τρόπο στο σώμα σου έχουν την δύναμη να προκαλέσουν λίγο-πολύ τις ίδιες διαταραχές στον εγκέφαλο με μια ναρκωτική ουσία. Και σε μια εποχή που τόσο μεγάλο μέρος

της ψηφιακής διασκέδασης – κυρίως τα βιντεοπαιχνίδια και το πορνογραφικό υλικό στο διαδίκτυο — έχουν σχεδιαστεί για να είναι όσο το δυνατό πιο εθιστικά, η δυνατότητα τους να το επιτύχουν αυξάνεται με ιλιγγιώδεις ρυθμούς.

Η παγκόσμια αγορά βρίθει από καταναλωτικές εμπειρίες που μπορεί να είναι ευχάριστες και συνάμα επικίνδυνες. Τροποποιεί συνεχώς προϊόντα και εμπειρίες που ποτέ πριν δεν θεωρούνταν ότι προκαλούν εθισμό – ή απλά δεν υπήρχαν μέχρι πρόσφατα.

Επίσης, όπως θα δούμε, οι εταιρείες βρίσκουν συνεχώς νέους τρόπους που ενισχύουν τις επιδράσεις παλιών καθιερωμένων ναρκωτικών ουσιών για όσους τις καταναλώνουν. Χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα των ημερών μας είναι το φαινόμενο της υπερβολικής κατανάλωσης αλκοόλ ως τρόπο διασκέδασης, και μάλιστα από γυναίκες. Οι άνθρωποι ανέκαθεν μεθούσαν και πάντοτε υπήρχαν εκείνοι οι λίγοι που γίνονταν λιώμα παρέα με φίλους. Ωστόσο, αυτό που κανένας δεν προέβλεψε ήταν η αναγωγή της υπερβολικής κατανάλωσης αλκοόλ σε καθημερινή συνήθεια. Άνθρωποι που απλά πίνουν και δεν έχουν αντιμετωπίσει κάποιο πρόβλημα με το αλκοόλ στο παρελθόν, τώρα προγραμματίζουν την απογευματινή τους έξοδο με στόχο να γίνουν λιώμα στο μεθύσι. Και αυτό θεωρείται κάτι το φυσιολογικό.

Θα ήταν ανόητο να προσποιηθούμε πως όλοι μας απειλούμαστε στον ίδιο βαθμό από τις συνεχείς μεταβολές στις καταναλωτικές συνήθειες. Αλλά και μόνο η προοπτική ότι ολόκληροι πληθυσμοί μαθαίνουν νέους τρόπους να πειραματίζονται με τη χρήση ουσιών που χαρίζουν ευχαρίστηση είναι κάτι που θα πρέπει να μας θορυβήσει.

Έχοντας αυτά στο νου, ας επανεξετάσουμε την περίπτωση του κέικ, του τηλεφώνου και του αναλγητικού.

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Το 1996 ένα μικρό συνοικιακό μαγαζί με την επωνυμία ο "Φούρνος της Μανόλια" (Magnolia Bakery) άνοιξε στο West Village του Manhattan. Τα παλιομοδίτικα κέικ και οι πίτες μέσα σε λίγο καιρό έγιναν ανάρπαστα γεμίζοντας με ενοχές τις φαντασιώσεις όλων εκείνων των γυναικών που τους άρεσε να προσποιούνται πως τίποτα πιο παχυντικό πέρα από καρπάτσιο τόνου δεν έχει μπει ποτέ στο στόμα τους. Αργότερα, το 2000, ο φούρνος εμφανίστηκε σε ένα επεισόδιο

της σειράς *Sex and the City*. Τότε ήταν και η στιγμή που ξέσπασε για τα καλά στην Αμερική η τρέλα για τα cupcake .

Στο επεισόδιο αυτό, η Κάρυ και η Μιράντα εμφανίζονται να κάθονται έξω από τον Φούρνο της Μανόλια. Η Sarah Jessica Parker, στο ρόλο της Κάρυ, λέει στη φίλη της πως μια νέα εμμονή έχει μπει στη ζωή της. Τελικά αποκαλύπτεται πως αυτή η εμμονή δεν είναι άλλη από τον νέο της φίλο, τον Έϊνταν – αλλά είναι απόλυτα δικαιολογημένο οι τηλεθεατές να νομίσουν ότι η Κάρυ εννοεί την άχνη ζάχαρη, κρίνοντας από τον τρόπο που σπρώχνει το χρωματιστό ροζ cupcake στο στόμα της. Αν το δούμε σε αργή κίνηση, πρόκειται για ένα κάπως αηδιαστικό θέαμα. Η αλήθεια είναι πως δεν υπάρχει κομψός τρόπος να φάει κανείς ένα cupcake από το φούρνο της Magnolia, και γι' αυτό οι πελάτες βάζουν τα γέλια με τα χάλια τους καθώς τα λαμπερά κομματάκια από ζαχαρόπαστα κατρακυλούν στο πιγούνι τους.

«Τη στιγμή που η Κάρυ δάγκωσε το cupcake, άφησε για πάντα το αποτύπωμα της οδοντοστοιχίας της στη γειτονιά μου» έγραψε η Emma Forest, μια δημοσιογράφος που ζει απέναντι από τον φούρνο. «Λίγο αφότου μεταδόθηκε το επεισόδιο, οι τουρίστες άρχισαν να καταφθάνουν και ο φούρνος ξεκίνησε να τους χρεώνει όποτε ζητούσαν να βγάλουν φωτογραφίες από το αγαπημένο στέκι της Κάρυ και της παρέας της. Μαζί με τον χαμό από τουρίστες κατέφθασαν σωρηδόν και οι αρουραίοι, καθώς μισοφαγωμένα cupcakes γέμιζαν τους ήδη υπερχειλισμένους κάδους έξω από το διαμέρισμα μου… Εκμεταλλευόμενος την αναπάντεχη τύχη του, ο Φούρνος της Magnolia άλλαξε το ωράριό του και πλέον τα καλοκαίρια έμενε ανοικτός έως και τα μεσάνυχτα. Εγώ έμενα ξύπνια όλο το βράδυ από τις φωνές και τα παράπονα που έκαναν οι επισκέπτες καθώς στέκονταν σε μια ουρά που έκανε το γύρο του τετραγώνου».

Το 2006 και το 2007 πέρασα κάμποσο καιρό στο West Village και επισκέφτηκα αρκετές φορές το φίλο μου Harry Mount που τότε ήταν ανταποκριτής της Daily Telegraph στη Νέα Υόρκη. Εκείνη την περίοδο, το *Sex and the City* δεν παιζόταν πλέον στην τηλεόραση αλλά η τρέλα με τα cupcakes είχε εξελιχθεί σε κυρίαρχη τάση: φούρνοι τύπου Magnolia άνοιγαν σε όλη την Αμερική. Ωστόσο, ακόμα και τα ψυχρά φθινοπωρινά βράδια, υπήρχε κόσμος που στεκόταν στην ουρά έξω από το αυθεντικό κατάστημα, και δεν επρόκειτο για τουρίστες. «Τα κοκαλιάρικα fashion victims της περιοχής μας δεν φαίνεται να χορταίνουν αυτά τα πράγματα» μου εξηγούσε ο Harry. Πώς όμως είναι δυνατόν να μη βάζουν γραμμάριο και να

παραμένουν πετσί και κόκαλο; Μήπως υπήρχε χώρος πάρκινγκ πίσω από το μαγαζί όπου πήγαιναν και τα ξέρναγαν;

Αυτό ήταν ένα κακόγουστο αστείο μεταξύ εμού και του Harry, αλλά γκουγκλάροντας πρόσφατα τις λέξεις ‘cupcakes’ και ‘βουλιμία’ ανακάλυψα ένα blog όπου μια βουλιμική μητέρα πόσταρε δύο φωτογραφίες με θέμα «Τρώγοντας cupcake στο πάρκινγκ». Οι εν λόγω αναρτήσεις όπως φαίνεται αργότερα διαγράφτηκαν, αλλά τα cupcakes κατέχουν εξέχουσα θέση σε πολλά blogs με θέμα τις διατροφικές διαταραχές. Μετά από ένα καυγά με το αγόρι της, ένα κορίτσι που αντιμετώπιζε προβλήματα βουλιμίας έψησε cupcakes και τα διακόσμησε με τη λέξη «Συγγνώμη». Κάτω από τη φωτογραφία πρόσθεσε με λύπη: «Και πού είναι τώρα αυτά τα cupcakes; Επιπλέουν μέσα σε κάποιον υπόνομο».

Τέτοιου είδους περιστατικά δεν είναι πρωτόγνωρα. Η Abigail Natenshon, μια ψυχοθεραπεύτρια που ειδικεύεται στις διατροφικές διαταραχές, μας διηγείται μια ακόμη ανατριχιαστική ιστορία σχετικά με τα cupcake: «Μια νεαρή γυναίκα που έπασχε από βουλιμία, σε περίοδο μεγάλου στρες, ένιωθε την ανάγκη να πηγαίνει στο κοντινότερο μίνι-μάρκετ και να αγοράζει τρία cupcakes. Μετά τα καταβρόχθιζε με μανία μέσα σε λίγα λεπτά σε ένα σκοτεινό και έρημο δρομάκι πίσω από το μαγαζί. Όλα γίνονταν χωρίς να έχει πλήρη συναίσθηση των πράξεών της καθώς βρισκόταν σε κατάσταση συναισθηματικής έξαρσης. Η λαιμαργία της ξεκινούσε κάθε φορά τη στιγμή που έφτανε με το αυτοκίνητο μπροστά από το μαγαζί και δεν τελείωνε παρά μόνο αφότου έκανε εμετό τα cupcakes».

Η επικίνδυνη υποκουλτούρα των ιστότοπων που εξειδικεύονται σε θέματα ανορεξίας – τα γνωστά και ως pro-ana websites – στην πραγματικότητα ενθαρρύνουν τα κορίτσια να λιμοκτονούν ή να εφαρμόζουν τη μέθοδο «μπουκώσου και ξέρνα». Ένα ερώτημα που εμφανίζεται ξανά και ξανά σε αυτές τις ιστοσελίδες είναι το εξής: είναι εύκολο να κάνεις εμετό τα cupcakes; Ιδού και η απάντηση: όχι τόσο εύκολο όσο το παγωτό, αλλά αν τα φας μαζί με σόδα διαίτης σίγουρα γίνεται ευκολότερο.

«Δεν με εκπλήσσει που τα cupcakes είναι τα αγαπημένα των βουλιμικών» μου εξομολογείται η Xanthe Clay, συγγραφέας και ερευνήτρια σε θέματα διατροφής. «Συνιστούν την απόλυτη οπτική απόλαυση, καθώς είναι προσεκτικά στολισμένα και στυλιζαρισμένα σαν νεαροί pop stars· η απόλυτη διατροφική ενσάρκωση των φαντασιώσεων κάθε κοριτσιού.»

Στον κόσμο των κουτσομπολίστικων φυλλάδων, όπου το shopping είναι ο μόνος αντάξιος αντίπαλος των celebrities, τα cupcakes τραβούν την προσοχή των καταναλωτών σε τέτοιο βαθμό που σίγουρα το απλό παντεσπάνι θα ωχριούσε. Εάν το να πάσχεις από μια διατροφική διαταραχή έχει να κάνει με την απέλπιδα προσπάθεια να αποκτήσεις πλήρη έλεγχο, τότε η κατανάλωση αυτών των τεχνητών εξωπραγματικών δημιουργιών πρέπει να είναι ιδιαίτερα ικανοποιητική. Το πιθανότερο είναι η τεράστια δόση ζάχαρης να ικανοποιεί την έντονη επιθυμία και να προκαλεί μια απότομη υπογλυκαιμική τρεμούλα. Η υφή του – απαλή, αφράτη, λιπαρή – σαν εκείνη του παγωτού, το κάνει ιδιαίτερα εύκολο να το βγάλεις από το στομάχι σου.

«Και μπορεί απλά να αποτελεί δική μου προκατάληψη, αλλά ίσως η απόλυτα μηδενική θρεπτική αξία των cupcake, αυτών των άχρηστων θερμίδων που ποτέ δεν σου προσφέρουν τη γευστική απόλαυση που υπόσχεται η εμφάνισή τους, να λειτουργεί ως μια μεταφορά για την απελπισία που βιώνει η γυναίκα ή ο άνδρας που πάσχει από βουλιμία.»

Παρόλο που ένα μεγάλο ποσοστό των βουμιλικών αντιμετωπίζει ‘θέματα΄ με τα cupcakes, είναι προφανές πως η συντριπτική πλειονότητα των ανθρώπων που τα τρώνε δεν τα κάνουν εμετό. Ωστόσο, είναι επίσης φανερό πως υπάρχουν άνθρωποι που έχουν αναπτύξει εμμονή με αυτά. Μια αλυσίδα με την ονομασία CRUMBS πουλάει 1.5 εκατομμύρια cupcakes κάθε μήνα σε 35 καταστήματα στις ΗΠΑ. Τον Ιούνιο του 2011, εμφανίστηκε και στο χρηματιστήριο NASDAQ, με αρχική εκτίμηση τα 59 εκατομμύρια δολάρια. Επιπλέον οι αναλυτές προβλέπουν δυναμική ανάπτυξη της Crumbs αν επεκταθεί σε αναπτυσσόμενες αγορές όπως η Κίνα.

Η ομάδα για τα Sprinkles Cupcakes στο Facebook είχε την περίοδο εκείνη περισσότερους από 325.000 φίλους και διέδιδε το χαρμόσυνο μήνυμα των cupcakes με σχεδόν υστερικό ενθουσιασμό. Για την Ημέρα του Αγίου Βαλεντίνου:
«Επέστρεψε! Οι πενήντα πρώτοι που θα ψιθυρίσουν «έρωτας με την πρώτη μπουκιά» σε ένα μαγαζί Sprinkles κερδίζουν δωρεάν ένα σοκολατένιο κεκάκι με μούρα!». Για την Κυριακή του Super Ball: «Είτε υποστηρίζεις φανατικά τους New York Giants είτε τους New England Patriots, είτε απλά σ’ αρέσουν οι διαφημίσεις, τα ειδικά πακέτα των Sprinkles για τη σημερινή μέρα δίνουν πόντους σε κάθε παρέα που μας βλέπει. Κάθε κουτί περιέχει 6 Red Velvet και 6 cupcakes βανίλια, διακοσμημένα με ζαχαρόπαστα σε ποδοσφαιρικά σχέδια και το όνομα της αγαπημένης σου ομάδας.

Προσέξε μόνο να μην σου βάλουν τρικλοποδιά στην προσπάθειά σου να αρπάξεις το τελευταίο!». Υπήρχαν ακόμα και διαφημίσεις που παρουσίαζαν τα cupcake να εισβάλλουν στο στρατιωτικό και βιομηχανικό συγκρότημα της χώρας: «Τα Sprinkles έχουν τη χαρά να φέρνουν φρεσκοψημένα cupcake στο Πεντάγωνο! Οι υπάλληλοι του Πενταγώνου μπορούν να μας βρουν στη κεντρική αίθουσα…».

Πρόκειται για μια τρέλα που αντέχει στο χρόνο, όπως δήλωσε η Dana Cowin, αρχισυντάκτρια του περιοδικού *Food & Wine*, στο Reuters το 2011. «Έχω επανειλημμένα προβλέψει την πτώση των cupcakes και πάντοτε στο τέλος χάνω. Οπότε πλέον τάσσομαι με την αντίθετη πλευρά και δηλώνω πως η μόδα αυτή δεν πρόκειται να κοπάσει». Όταν η Ουάσιγκτον χτυπήθηκε από έναν σεισμό στις 23 Αυγούστου του 2011, κάποιος έγραψε στο twitter ότι μπορούσες να το καταλάβεις από το γεγονός ότι ξαφνικά δεν υπήρχε ουρά έξω από τα Georgetown Cupcakes.

Θα μπορούσε αυτή η 'μηδενική διατροφική αξία' των cupcakes για την οποία μιλά η Xanthe Clay να είναι μέρος της επιτυχίας τους; Η ακαταμάχητη γεύση της ζάχαρης γεμίζει τον καταναλωτή με αυτό που οι διατροφολόγοι ονομάζουν 'κενές θερμίδες', επειδή δεν έχουν καμία διατροφική αξία. Αλλά αυτό δεν σημαίνει πως παύουν να έχουν τη δυνατότητα να σου αλλάξουν τη διάθεση. Η ζάχαρη προκαλεί την παραγωγή των φυσικών οπιοειδών του εγκεφάλου, σύμφωνα με τον Bart Hobel, νευρο-επιστήμονα στο πανεπιστήμιο του Princeton, ο οποίος διεξήγαγε μια έρευνα για την εξάρτηση που προκαλεί η ζάχαρη. Ανακάλυψε ότι οι αρουραίοι που κατανάλωναν μεγάλες ποσότητες ζάχαρης παρουσίαζαν σύνδρομο στέρησης όποτε σταματούσε η παροχή ζάχαρης. «Πιστεύουμε πως το εν λόγω εύρημα αποτελεί κλειδί για την διαδικασία του εθισμού», υποστηρίζει ο Hobel. «Ο εγκέφαλος εθίζεται στα δικά του οπιοειδή, όπως θα έκανε στη μορφίνη και στην ηρωίνη. Τα ναρκωτικά έχουν μεγαλύτερη επίδραση, αλλά η διαδικασία είναι ουσιαστικά η ίδια.»

Τα οπιοειδή επίσης έχουν σχέση με τη βουλιμία, είτε υπάρχει είτε δεν υπάρχει ζάχαρη. Έχετε ποτέ νιώσει αυτή την υπέροχη αίσθηση ανακούφισης μετά από έναν εμετό; Δεν νιώθεις καλά μόνο επειδή απαλλάχθηκες από το φαγητό. Αυτή η φυσική αγαλλίαση που νιώθεις προέρχεται από χημικές ουσίες του εγκεφάλου. Τους βουλιμικούς, για να το θέσω ωμά, ο εμετός τους συναρπάζει.

Η Abigail Natenshon εξηγεί: «Κατά τον βουλιμικό κύκλο απελευθερώνονται ενδορφίνες, [οπιοειδείς] χημικές ουσίες του εγκεφάλου, οι οποίες προκαλούν στο

άτομο μια αίσθηση μουδιάσματος ή ευφορίας. Ωστόσο, προς απογοήτευση του πάσχοντα, η αίσθηση ανακούφισης διαρκεί για λίγο και τη θέση της παίρνουν το άγχος και η ενοχή για τη βουλιμική συμπεριφορά.». Για μια ακόμα φορά, επιβάλλεται να τονίσουμε το γνωστό σε όλους γεγονός πως δεν κάνουν εμετό όλοι οι άνθρωποι το φαγητό τους. Αλλά το είδος του φαγητού που σχετίζεται με την ανάγκη για εμετό είναι το φαγητό εκείνο στο οποίο πολλοί από εμάς δεν μπορούμε να αντισταθούμε, επειδή η τεράστια συγκέντρωση ζάχαρης, αλατιού ή λίπους μεγιστοποιούν την αίσθηση ευφορίας και την εξάρτηση μας από αυτό.

Είναι εύκολο για τους σοφιστικέ Νεοϋορκέζους αστούς να κοροϊδεύουν τους Αμερικάνους ‘βλαχαρέους’ ή τους Βρετανούς ‘αλητάμπουρες’ που μπουκώνονται στα fast food, και το ίδιο εύκολο να τους χαρακτηρίζουν δέσμιους κάποιου εθισμού. Απλά ρίξε μια ματιά στην περίμετρο της μέσης τους. Αλλά και η υπεύθυνη του Τμήματος Μάρκετινγκ που παραγγέλνει κεκάκι με κράνμπερι για πρωινό μαζί με τον καφέ της πρέπει να αναρωτηθεί «Γιατί τρώω κέικ για πρωινό;».

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Κι όσο για το iPhone, δεν είναι κάπως υπερβολικό να ονομάσουμε το δεσμό μας με αυτό το αστραφτερό γκατζετάκι ‘εθισμό’; Οι ερευνητές στο Πανεπιστήμιο του Stanford δεν είναι και τόσο σίγουροι. Σε μια έρευνα όπου έλαβαν μέρος 200 φοιτητές, το 44% των συμμετεχόντων δήλωσε ότι είναι είτε πολύ είτε απόλυτα εθισμένοι στο smartphone τους. Το 9% παραδέχτηκε πως ‘χαϊδεύει’ το iPhone του. Ένα 8% παραδέχτηκε πως κάποια στιγμή του πέρασε από το μυαλό πως το iPod μπορεί να ζηλεύει το iPhone. Παράξενο να το ακούς από τους φοιτητές ενός από τα κορυφαία πανεπιστήμια της Αμερικής, έστω και για πλάκα. Αυτό αποδεικνύει επίσης το πόσο πολύ το iPhone έχει γίνει κομμάτι της ταυτότητας αυτών των φοιτητών καθώς και του κοινωνικού τους πλαισίου. Δεν πρόκειται απλά για εργαλεία που μας επιτρέπουν να συνδεόμαστε άμεσα και με πολλαπλούς τρόπους με τους ανθρώπους γύρω μας. Αποκτούν και αυτά τη δική τους ταυτότητα – μέσα από τη φροντίδα, την προστασία και τη στοργή που τους δείχνουμε.

Ίσως αυτό έχει να κάνει με τον τρόπο που κατασκευάζονται αυτές οι μηχανές. Στην ουσία σε αναγκάζουν να επαναλάβεις ‘τελετουργίες’ που σχετίζονται με ψυχαναγκαστικές συμπεριφορές όπως να ανοίγεις το iPhone σου κάθε πρωί, να ‘συντονίζεις’ τα μηνύματά σου κάθε βδομάδα, να το φορτίζεις κάθε βράδυ. Η σχέση

σου με το iPhone σε αφορά άμεσα και έχει φτιαχτεί για να σε εμπλέκει μαζί του. Και επειδή η ζωή της μπαταρίας ενός iPhone δεν είναι αρκετά μεγάλη για να αντέξει τη χρήση μιας ολόκληρης μέρας – και σίγουρα όχι αρκετή για να ανταπεξέλθει σε ατελείωτες ώρες ενασχόλησης και παιχνιδιού – τα 'σημεία φόρτισης' – γνωστά και ως pit stops – έχουν γίνει αναπόσπαστο μέρος της καθημερινότητάς σου. Όλοι έχουμε δει ανθρώπους με iPhones να ψάχνουν για μια πρίζα να φορτίσουν το κινητό τους σε καφετέριες, έτσι ώστε ενώ εκείνοι παίρνουν την δική τους 'δόση' καφεΐνης να μπορούν παράλληλα να 'γεμίζουν μπαταρία' και τα αγαπημένα τους τηλέφωνα.

«Οι χρήστες των iPhones ζουν συνεχώς με την αγωνία πως η μπαταρία τους τελειώνει» δηλώνει ο Μίλο Γιαννόπουλος, εκδότης του *The Kernel*, ενός διαδικτυακού πολιτισμικού περιοδικού. «Ως ένα βαθμό, το τηλέφωνο καταλήγει να διαμορφώνει την ημέρα τους». Για παράδειγμα, συνήθως προγραμματίζουν να μην λείπουν από το γραφείο τους πάνω από έξι ώρες, ώστε να μην ξεμείνουν από μπαταρία και να πρέπει να αρχίσουν να χτυπούν πόρτες, με το καλώδιο USB στο χέρι, και να παρακαλάνε για μερικά λεπτά φόρτισης προκειμένου να βγάλουν το απόγευμα».

Λέγαμε για την αντικατάσταση των ανθρώπων με πράγματα… Η έκδοση 4S του iPhone που κυκλοφόρησε τον Οκτώβριο του 2011 εμπεριέχει μια εικονική βοηθό που ονομάζεται Siri η οποία ανταποκρίνεται σε προφορικές οδηγίες και απαντά στον χρήστη. Αν και βρίσκεται ακόμα σε πρώιμο στάδιο, η τεχνολογία αυτή είναι ήδη τόσο ανεπτυγμένη που σου επιτρέπει να πιάσεις ολόκληρες συζητήσεις με τη Siri. Εκτελεί επίσης διαταγές, και σε μερικές περιπτώσεις μπορεί ακόμα και να σου δώσει συγκεκριμένα δεδομένα από το διαδίκτυο. «Ο εξατομικευμένος ηλεκτρονικός έξυπνος βοηθός έχει γίνει της μόδας», λέει ο Γιαννόπουλος. «Ποτέ άλλοτε στην ιστορία της μαζικής αγοράς ηλεκτρονικών συσκευών δεν έχει υπάρξει τέτοια σύγχυση ως προς το διαχωρισμό μεταξύ ανθρώπου και μηχανής.»

Αξίζει να σημειώσουμε πως ένας στους τέσσερις από τους ερωτηθέντες της παραπάνω έρευνας δήλωσε πως βρίσκει το iPhone του «επικίνδυνα ελκυστικό». Μα έτσι έχουν σχεδιαστεί να είναι. Τίποτα απολύτως δεν αφήνεται στην τύχη. Εάν οι πελάτες της Apple έχουν την περίεργη τάση να αποδίδουν ανθρωπόμορφα χαρακτηριστικά στις συσκευές τους, αυτό συμβαίνει επειδή η Apple έχει διερευνήσει σε βάθος τις δυνατότητες του ανθρώπινου μυαλού και σώματος σε σύγκριση με τους ανταγωνιστές της.

Για παράδειγμα, ένα από τα πιο ελκυστικά χαρακτηριστικά της σειράς laptop της MacBook είναι το φωτάκι που αναβοσβήνει απαλά όταν ο υπολογιστής 'κοιμάται'. Οι πρώτοι κριτικοί εξύμνησαν την αίσθηση ηρεμίας που δημιουργούσε το φωτάκι, λέγοντας πως θα μπορούσαν να το χαζεύουν για ώρες, αλλά αδυνατούσαν να προσδιορίσουν τι είναι αυτό που τους έκανε να νιώθουν τόσο όμορφα κοιτάζοντάς το. Αργότερα, αποκαλύφθηκε ότι η Apple είχε κάνει αίτηση να πατεντάρει τον 'δείκτη αναστολής λειτουργίας' – ή αλλιώς sleep-mode indicator – ο οποίος «μιμείται το ρυθμό της ανθρώπινης αναπνοής» και ως εκ τούτου είναι πιο «ελκυστικός για τον ψυχισμό του χρήστη». Όπως επισήμανε η tech blogger, Jesse Young, ενώ το φωτάκι ένδειξης sleep-mode της Apple μιμείται τον ρυθμό της ανθρώπινης αναπνοής κατά τη διάρκεια του ύπνου, ο δείκτης της Dell μιμείται τον ρυθμό της αναπνοής κατά τη διάρκεια έντονης άσκησης. «Έχει ενδιαφέρον το γεγονός ότι πολλές εταιρείες προσπαθούν να μιμηθούν την Apple αλλά ποτέ δεν φαίνεται να το πετυχαίνουν. Αυτό είναι ένα ακόμα παράδειγμα της εμμονής της Apple στην λεπτομέρεια», σημειώνει η ειδικός σε θέματα τεχνολογίας.

Πρώην διευθυντικά στελέχη της Apple – τα οποία συχνά παρέχουν πληροφορίες ανεπίσημα σε Αμερικανικά tech blog σχετικά με την πολιτική και το κλίμα που επικρατεί στα κεντρικά γραφεία της Apple στο Cupertino της Καλιφόρνια – περιγράφουν μέχρι πού μπορεί να φτάσει η εταιρεία προκειμένου να δημιουργήσει προϊόντα που θα γίνουν αμέσως αγαπητά. Ο σχεδιασμός βρίσκεται στην κορυφή της πυραμίδας, γεγονός που συνεπάγεται τη σιωπηλή ευλάβεια που επικρατεί κάθε φορά που ο Jonathan Ive, πρώτος αντιπρόεδρος του βιομηχανικού σχεδιασμού, μπαίνει στην αίθουσα του Διοικητικού Συμβουλίου. «Η Apple δεν διαχωρίζει το marketing από το σχεδιασμό αλλά τα θεωρεί ένα πράγμα» λέει ο Γιαννόπουλος. «Τα πάντα, από την στρατηγική προϊόντος έως την έρευνα και την ανάπτυξη, επιβάλλουν τη δημιουργία προϊόντων που θα είναι όμορφα και ακαταμάχητα ελκυστικά που σημαίνει, όσο το δυνατόν πιο εθιστικά.

Και αυτό πράγματι πιάνει. Ένα ακραίο παράδειγμα είναι η περίπτωση ενός αγοριού από την Ταϊβάν το οποίο διαγνώσθηκε πως πάσχει από εθισμό στα iPhones. Σύμφωνα με τον Δρ. Tsung-tsai Yang του νοσοκομείου Cardianal Tien, τα μάτια του παιδιού ήταν κολλημένα στην οθόνη όλη μέρα και όλη νύχτα. Τελικά, «το αγόρι έπρεπε να νοσηλευθεί σε ψυχιατρική κλινική αφού η καθημερινότητά του είχε αποδιοργανωθεί εντελώς από τον εθισμό του στο iPhone».

Επισκέφθηκα το νέο κατάστημα της Apple στο Covent Garden, δύο μέρες αφότου άνοιξε το 2010. Ένα ανακαινισμένο, νεοκλασικό κτήριο Παλλαδιανού ρυθμού, με εντυπωσιακό γυάλινο σκέπαστρο στην αυλή. Το μεθυστικό άρωμα του εθισμού πλημμύριζε τον χώρο. Το ίδιο έντονη ήταν και η κούραση όσων περίμεναν στην ουρά για το Genius Bar, το σημείο όπου διαγιγνώσκονται οι βλάβες των χαλασμένων κομπιούτερ. Το όλο θέαμα ήταν οδυνηρό. Πόδια να τρέμουν, βλέφαρα να ανοιγοκλείνουν κάθε φορά που ο υπάλληλος-Genius φώναζε ένα όνομα για να του γνωστοποιήσει τα αποτελέσματα. Δεν μπορούσα να μη δω αυτούς τους ανθρώπους σαν τοξικομανείς που περιμένουν την ημερήσια δόση μεθαδόνης.

Ήθελα να ρωτήσω έναν Genius πώς είναι να έχουν να κάνουν με ανθρώπους οι οποίοι δεν ρωτάνε απλά τι βλάβη έχει το laptop τους αλλά στην πραγματικότητα ικετεύουν για τη δόση τους. Αλλά το να βρω κάποιον να μου μιλήσει ήταν πολύ πιο δύσκολο απ' όσο αρχικά φανταζόμουν.

Πρώτα σκέφτηκα να ρωτήσω έναν διευθυντή καταστήματος της Apple, βασικά, τον φίλο ενός φίλου μου, εάν θα μπορούσαμε να είχαμε μια φιλική κουβέντα για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο η εταιρεία φαίνεται να ενθαρρύνει τον εθισμό στα προϊόντα της, ή έστω να με φέρει σε επαφή με κάποιον που θα μπορούσε να μου μιλήσει. Αν και η πρώτη του αντίδραση ήταν ενθαρρυντική, αργότερα άλλαξε γνώμη. Υπήρχε κίνδυνος να μπει σε μεγάλους μπελάδες αν τα αφεντικά του υποψιάζονταν πως εκείνος με έφερε σε επαφή με κάποιον αδιάκριτο πρώην εργαζόμενο. Θα τον απέλυαν αμέσως εάν τον έπιαναν να μου τα λέει ο ίδιος.

Αποφάσισα, λοιπόν, να βρω έναν άλλο τρόπο. Απευθύνθηκα σε έναν φίλο μου, γενικό διευθυντή μιας νεοφυούς επιχείρησης, και εκείνος ανέβασε ένα μήνυμα σε ένα από τα δίκτυά του. Μετά από λίγο καιρό, ένας νεαρός με το όνομα Ben Jackson, επιχειρηματίας στο χώρο των κοινωνικών δικτύων, μου έστειλε μέσω e-mail πρόσκληση να τα πούμε σε ένα καφέ στο Soho του Λονδίνου, λίγο πιο κάτω από ένα μαγαζί της Apple όπου δούλευε για δύο χρόνια ως Genius. Ο Ben, όπως πολλοί άλλοι πρώην εργαζόμενοι της Apple, ήταν ο τύπος του απόλυτα κουλ κομπιουτεράκια, με τα γυαλιά και το γυμνασμένο κορμί. Δεν χρειάστηκε να κάνω κάτι για να μου μιλήσει σχετικά με τον εθισμό στην τεχνολογία: το γεγονός ότι ζούσε καθημερινά τον εθισμό – μιας και αυτό ήταν που επεδίωκε να δημιουργήσει και να εκμεταλλευτεί η εταιρεία – ήταν ένας από τους λόγους που αποφάσισε να φύγει από το κατάστημα.

«Είδα κάθε είδους εθιστικές συμπεριφορές. Αυτός είναι και ο λόγος που ένα κατάστημα Apple αποτελεί έναν τόσο σουρεαλιστικό χώρο εργασίας. Από τη μια πλευρά έχει τους απόλυτα εθισμένους στην Apple οι οποίοι παρουσιάζουν ένα είδος σχεδόν θρησκευτικού φανατισμού που η εταιρεία δεν κάνει τίποτα για να τον αποθαρρύνει – αντιθέτως, τον ενθαρρύνει κιόλας. Μιλάμε για ανθρώπους οι οποίοι κλείνουν θέση για να παρακολουθήσουν ξανά και ξανά το ίδιο σεμινάριο, για να τους δείξουμε να κάνουν πράγματα που στην πραγματικότητα τα ξέρουν ήδη».

«Όταν κυκλοφορεί ένα καινούργιο προϊόν, βλέπεις κάθε φορά τα ίδια πρόσωπα να βρίσκονται πρώτα στην ουρά. Συμπεριφέρονται στο προσωπικό λες και απευθύνονται σε celebrities με τους οποίους προσπαθούν να έρθουν πιο κοντά. Στο Genius Bar θα σου δείξουν μια σειρά από παλαιότερα προϊόντα της Apple, και 'σύ πρέπει να προσποιηθείς πως δεν τα χεις δει ποτέ ξανά, επειδή αρέσει στον υπάλληλο να το παίζει έξυπνος και να φουσκώνει το 'εγώ' του. Όλο αυτό μοιάζει κάπως θλιβερό. Ή, καλύτερα, *είναι* θλιβερό.»

Αλλά δεν υπάρχουν μόνο οι απόλυτα κολλημένοι οι οποίοι έχουν κατά κάποιο τρόπο εθιστεί, σύμφωνα με τον Ben. «Επικρατεί γενικά η άποψη ότι η Apple είναι εκπληκτική και υπερτερεί όλων των άλλων εταιρειών – μια άποψη που δεν συνάδει με τον τρόπο που η ίδια η εταιρεία λειτουργεί παρασκηνιακά. Ακόμα και τα προϊόντα της θεωρούνται απίστευτα, γεγονός που εξηγεί γιατί ακόμα και φυσιολογικοί πελάτες εξαγριώνονται αν τυχόν κάτι δεν δουλεύει σωστά. Αυτός είναι ένας ακόμα λόγος που πολλοί νιώθουν άβολα εάν οι άλλοι θεωρήσουν ότι έχουν μείνει πίσω επειδή η συσκευή τους πλέον είναι εκτός μόδας. Αλλά το θέμα είναι πως δεν μπορείς συνεχώς να συμβαδίζεις με τις εξελίξεις χωρίς να ξοδεύεις ένα κάρο χρήματα για πράγματα που στην ουσία δεν χρειάζεσαι και που σε λίγο καιρό θα θεωρούνται και πάλι παλιά αφού κυκλοφορούν συνεχώς νέα.

Έχω δει ανθρώπους να βάζουν τα κλάματα γιατί η πιστωτική τους δεν τους άφησε να αποκτήσουν την πιο πρόσφατη αναβάθμιση. Τότε ήταν που άρχισα να σκέφτομαι πως πρέπει γρήγορα να την κάνω από 'δώ».

Ομολογουμένως, υπάρχουν αρκετοί ψυχίατροι οι οποίοι δεν θεωρούν τον 'εθισμό στο διαδίκτυο' ασθένεια, πόσο μάλλον τον εθισμό σε μια συγκεκριμένη συσκευή. Υποστηρίζουν πως οι εθισμένοι χρήστες δεν τρώνε κόλλημα με το διαδίκτυο αλλά με την πληθώρα των εμπειριών που αυτό προσφέρει, όπως είναι το

διαδικτυακό πορνό και τα βιντεοπαιχνίδια. Αλλά είναι λίγοι οι ειδικοί που θα αρνιόνταν πως συσκευές όπως τα iPhones μπορούν να προκαλέσουν συμπεριφορές που μπορεί να χαρακτηριστούν εθιστικές. Και γίνεται όλο και πιο ξεκάθαρο ότι η ικανότητα των κατασκευαστών να γεννούν αυτές τις συμπεριφορές εξελίσσεται πολύ πιο γρήγορα απ' ότι η ικανότητά μας να αντιμετωπίζουμε τα ψυχολογικά και κοινωνικά προβλήματα που απορρέουν από αυτές.

Η επιστήμη της ευχαρίστησης παίζει όλο και μεγαλύτερο ρόλο στην πολιτική μάρκετινγκ που ακολουθούν όλου του τύπου οι εταιρείες: οι άνθρωποι που φέρνουν τη μυρωδιά των φρεσκοψημένων ντόνατς στο εμπορικό κέντρο για να τα αγοράσεις έχουν επεξεργαστεί τις συνταγές στο εργαστήριο, όχι στην κουζίνα. Η Apple, βέβαια, αποτελεί ειδική κατηγορία από μόνη της. Καμία άλλη εταιρεία δεν έχει καταφέρει να φτιάξει ένα τόσο όμορφα ισορροπημένο κοκτέιλ απόλαυσης στο οποίο η σκληρή γεύση του καταναγκασμού καταφέρνει να καμουφλάρεται τόσο άψογα από μια απολαυστικά μινιμαλιστική αισθητική.

«Δεν υπάρχει άλλο προϊόν πέρα από το iPhone που να έχει ενθαρρύνει σε τέτοιο μεγάλο βαθμό την βιομηχανία της τεχνολογίας να επικεντρωθεί στο πώς να καταφέρει να κάνει τους ανθρώπους να εθίζονται σε πράγματα» λέει ο Γιαννόπουλος. «Η ιδιοφυία του μάρκετινγκ της Apple και η απίστευτη προσοχή που δίνει και στην παραμικρή λεπτομέρεια ως προς τον σχεδιασμό των προϊόντων της αγγίζει κάθε τι που έχει να κάνει με το λογισμικό οικοσύστημα των iPhones.»

Ο Γιαννόπουλος δίνει το παράδειγμα των Angry Birds, ενός ηλεκτρονικού παιχνιδιού που το έχουν κατεβάσει από το Μάιο του 2011 πάνω από 200 εκατομμύρια φορές. Η όλη ιδέα των Angry Birds είναι απλή: οι παίκτες εκτοξεύουν πουλιά κατά μήκος της οθόνης με μια σφεντόνα, υπολογίζοντας τη τροχιά της πτήσης και μεταβάλλοντας τη δύναμη και την αρχική κατεύθυνση αναλόγως. Όλο αυτό δεν ακούγεται κακό. Αλλά αν γκουγκλάρεις «εθισμός στα Angry Birds» θα βρεις 3.24 εκατομμύρια αποτελέσματα. Είναι τόσο πολλοί οι άνθρωποι που παραπονιούνται πως έχουν εθιστεί στο παιχνίδι αυτό που παντού στο διαδίκτυο βρίσκεις σελίδες που προσφέρουν συμβουλευτική στήριξη στους χρήστες. Σε μερικές από αυτές τις σελίδες τίθεται το ερώτημα εάν ο εθισμός στα Angry Birds προκαλεί αλλαγές στον ανθρώπινο εγκέφαλο. Άνθρωποι οι οποίοι δηλώνουν εθισμένοι λένε πως δεν μπορούν να αφήσουν το παιχνίδι από τα χέρια τους, και λένε πως νιώθουν να τους καταβάλλει ακουσίως η ανάγκη να κινούν τα δάχτυλά τους πάνω στο τραπέζι σαν να επρόκειτο

να εκσφενδονίσουν το επόμενο πουλί όπως συμβαίνει στο παιχνίδι. Ενέργειες που ακούγονται σαν εκείνες ενός αλκοολικού ή κάποιου εθισμένου στα ναρκωτικά.

Και πάλι ίσως απαιτείται κάποιος σκεπτικισμός από την πλευρά μας: μπορεί απλά να είναι θέμα χρόνου μέχρι κάποιοι καιροσκόποι να αρχίσουν να μιλούν για κάποια διαταραχή ή εθισμό στα Angry Birds (το οποίο μπορεί να αποτελέσει κάποιο παρακλάδι του εθισμού στα iPhones μιας και σε αυτά παίζεται κυρίως το εν λόγω παιχνίδι). Δεν υπάρχει αμφιβολία πως η τρέλα των Angry Birds κάποια στιγμή θα καταλαγιάσει, όπως συνήθως συμβαίνει σε αυτές τις περιπτώσεις. Αλλά μπορεί να αφήσει πίσω της ένα κατάλοιπο, με τη μορφή του καταναγκαστικού ενστίκτου να επαναλαμβάνουμε συγκεκριμένες πράξεις.

Δεν γινόμαστε συνωμοσιολόγοι εάν υποθέσουμε πως ο πρώτιστος στόχος εκείνων που ανέδειξαν το iPhone είναι να ανακαλύψουν τους τρόπους με τους οποίους μπορούν να χειριστούν το σύστημα ανταμοιβών του ανθρώπινου εγκεφάλου. Μάλιστα δεν έχουν κανένα πρόβλημα να το αποδεχτούν ανοικτά. Στη Σύσκεψη Κορυφής Τεχνολογικών Αγαθών που έγινε στο Λονδίνο το 2010, ο Peter Vesterbacka, ο βασικός σχεδιαστής της Rovio, της εταιρείας που βρίσκεται πίσω από τα Angry Birds, περιέγραψε τον τρόπο με τον οποίο καταφέρνουν να κάνουν το παιχνίδι τόσο εθιστικό: «Χρησιμοποιούμε την απλή μέθοδο ελέγχου A/B για να βρούμε τι είναι αυτό που κάνει τόσους ανθρώπους να θέλουν να παίξουν ξανά και ξανά» είπε χαρακτηριστικά. «Δεν χρειάζεται πλέον να μαντεύσουμε. Με τόσους πολλούς χρήστες μπορούμε απλά να ανατρέξουμε στους αριθμούς».

Μπορούμε απλά να ανατρέξουμε στους αριθμούς. Θυμηθείτε αυτές τις λέξεις. Ενώ παλαιότερα η διαφήμιση και το μάρκετινγκ ήταν δημιουργικές επιστήμες με έντονο το στοιχείο του ρίσκου, μια νέα γενιά κατασκευαστών δεν χρειάζεται καν να μαντέψει τί θα μας κάνει να αποζητούμε τη ‘δόση’ μας: το ξέρει ήδη.

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Οι τηλεθεατές της σειράς House, του πιο διάσημου ιατρικού σήριαλ στην Αμερική που σε κάποια φάση έφτασε να έχει τους περισσότερους τηλεθεατές στον κόσμο, είχαν συνηθίσει την εικόνα του σέξι και ειρωνικού ανάπηρου αντι-ήρωα που με μια κίνηση άνοιγε το στόμα και κατάπινε κανά δυο χαπάκια Vicodin. Χαρακτηριστική του κίνηση ήταν το κόλπο με το οποίο πετούσε ένα χαπάκι στον αέρα και το κατάπινε σα να ήταν φώκια που έκανε επίδειξη. Οι σεναριογράφοι

κάνουν ό,τι μπορούν για να παρουσιάσουν τον Χάους ως εθισμένο: τον βλέπουμε αρκετά συχνά να τρέμει και να ιδρώνει όποτε προσπαθεί να κόψει το φάρμακο. Αλλά, πάντοτε στο τέλος, το Vicodin συνιστά αναπόσπαστο κομμάτι τόσο της γοητείας του όσο και του εκκεντρικού χιούμορ του. Είναι σαν το ένα να τροφοδοτεί το άλλο.

Ο Δρ. Χάους, τον οποίο υποδύεται εξαιρετικά ο Hugh Laurie, παίρνει το φάρμακο για να μειώσει τον πόνο από ένα τραυματισμό στο πόδι αλλά και για να ξεφύγει από την πλήξη. Επίσης η χρήση του συγκεκριμένου φαρμάκου του προκαλεί μια εγκεφαλική υπερδιέγερση που τον βοηθά στο να διαγιγνώσκει σπάνιες ασθένειες. Είναι καταφανές πως εδώ επιδιώκεται μια ομοιότητα με τον κοκαϊνομανή Σέρλοκ Χόλμς. Αλλά μόνο οι πρώτες ιστορίες του Σέρλοκ Χολμς ουσιαστικά μιλούν για την εξάρτηση του πρωταγωνιστή: ο Άρθουρ Κόναν Ντόιλ θορυβημένος από το γεγονός ότι μπορεί μέσα από τις ιστορίες του να ενθαρρύνει παρόμοιες συμπεριφορές, έκανε γρήγορα τον ήρωά του να εγκαταλείψει αυτό το κακό. Το ίδιο δεν ισχύει για τους δημιουργούς του Χάους, οι οποίοι διατήρησαν το μοτίβο της εξάρτησης του πρωταγωνιστή παρά την έντονη κριτική που τους ασκήθηκε από μερίδα ειδικών (και, σύμφωνα με αναφορές, από τον Οργανισμό για την Καταπολέμηση των Ναρκωτικών).

«Από το πρώτο κιόλας επεισόδιο με προβλημάτισε το μήνυμα της σειράς και έχω επανειλημμένα προσπαθήσει να ενημερώσω τους συγγραφείς και τους παραγωγούς σχετικά με τους κινδύνους του Vicodin», έγραψε ένας γιατρός, ο οποίος μάλιστα έτυχε να λέγεται Δρ. John House και να ειδικεύεται σε θέματα απώλειας ακοής, μια από τις καταστροφικές παρενέργειες του Vicodin. Μάλιστα άσκησε μεγάλη πίεση και για καιρό έως ότου να καταφέρει το σύμπτωμα αυτό να προβληθεί στη σειρά για να το δει ο κόσμος. Πράγμα το οποίο και έγινε αν και με τρόπο ανάλαφρο. (Βέβαια, τώρα η σειρά φτάνει στο τέλος της, και μια από τις παρενέργειες τις οποίες δεν έχουμε δει ποτέ, αν θυμάμαι καλά, είναι η απίστευτη δυσκοιλιότητα που μπορεί να επιφέρει το φάρμακο: ένα αλήθεια ρεαλιστικό σενάριο θα ανάγκαζε τον αγαπημένο μας γιατρό να ‘σφίγγεται’ για ώρες στην τουαλέτα.) Ο τηλεοπτικός Χάους καταφέρνει να απεξαρτηθεί από το Vicodin μετά από περίεργες φαντασιώσεις, που σύμφωνα με το σενάριο του δημιουργούσε το φάρμακο, και αφού πέρασε μια περίοδο αποκατάστασης. Ωστόσο, δύο κύκλους αργότερα τον βλέπουμε να ξανακυλά.

Το Vicodin είχε ήδη αναχθεί σε δημοφιλές ναρκωτικό διασκέδασης όταν το σόου κυκλοφόρησε για πρώτη φορά το 2004. Το σέρβιραν σε όλα τα πάρτυ του Manhattan μετά το φαγητό. Το 2001, το περιοδικό USA Today ανακήρυξε το Vicodin «το νέο ναρκωτικό που προτιμούν οι celebrities». Ο Matthew Perry, από τα *Φιλαράκια*, έχει μπει σε πρόγραμμα απεξάρτησης από το Vicodin – και μάλιστα όχι μια, αλλά δύο φορές. Ο Eminem έκανε ένα τατουάζ του Vicodin στο χέρι του. Ο David Spade δεν δίστασε να κάνει αστειάκια για το Vicodin στις Χρυσές Σφαίρες.
«Μα καλά, ποιος δεν το παίρνει;» ρώτησε ανοιχτά η Courtney Love.

«Όποιος κάνει επιτυχία αρχίζει να τα παίρνει». Όλοι, celebrities και μη, το προτιμούν για τον ίδιο ακριβώς λόγο: γιατί ήταν (και συνεχίζει να είναι) σχετικά εύκολο να πείσεις ένα γιατρό να στο γράψει. Στις ΗΠΑ, το Vicodin ανήκει στην Κατηγορία 3, που σημαίνει ότι είναι λιγότερο ελεγχόμενο από ό,τι άλλα οπιώδη αναλγητικά όπως το Oxycontin, που ανήκει στη Κατηγορία 2. Μπορείς απλά να καλέσεις ένα φαρμακείο και να σου δώσει μια συνταγή: για το Oxycontin πρέπει να δώσεις εσύ μια έγγραφη συνταγή.

Όταν, λοιπόν, το 2003 ξεκίνησε να γράφεται το σενάριο της σειράς, το Vicodin ήταν ήδη γνωστό για την 'ανεβαστική' έξαψη που προκαλεί όσο και για τη δράση του ως αναλγητικό. Όταν η σειρά έγινε επιτυχία, ο αρθρογράφος της Associated Press, Frazier Moore, απέδωσε το γεγονός στον τρόπο με τον οποίο το συγκεκριμένο φάρμακο «μετατρέπει τον πόνο σε φετίχ». Με άλλα λόγια, εκατομμύρια Αμερικανών που παίρνουν αναλγητικά θα μπορούσαν να ταυτιστούν με τον πόνο του Δρ. Χάους. Αυτό μπορεί να ισχύει αλλά δεν παύει να αποτελεί μόνο ένα μέρος της ιστορίας. Στα επεισόδια βλέπουμε συχνά τον Δρ. Χάους να υποφέρει από πόνους που οφείλονται στην αφαίρεση μυών του ποδιού του μετά από ανεύρισμα στον μηρό. Αλλά ορισμένα από τα πιο έξυπνα αστεία της σειράς αφορούν τις 'σκανδαλιές' του Δρ. Χάους προκειμένου να αποκτήσει περισσότερα φάρμακα από αυτά που του συνταγογραφούν. Το φετίχ δεν είναι πλέον ο πόνος αλλά το Vicodin. Μια σειρά από μπλουζάκια που το 2011 κυκλοφορούσαν ακόμα στην αγορά είχαν τυπωμένο το logo: «Ξύπνα και μύρισε το Vicodin». Το ίδιο logo είναι διαθέσιμο και σε wallpaper για τον υπολογιστή με τον πρωταγωνιστή Hugh Laurie να κοιτά με βλέμμα αχανές σαν να βρίσκεται υπό την επήρεια ουσιών.

Εν τω μεταξύ, η καθιέρωση του ναρκωτικού στην ευρύτερη λαϊκή κουλτούρα συνεχίζεται με γοργούς ρυθμούς.

Το ‘Τραγούδι για το Vicodin’ (The Vicodin Song) της τραγουδίστριας και τραγουδοποιού Terra Naomi έχει πάνω από μισό εκατομμύριο views στο YouTube. Πρόκειται για μια μπαλάντα που σε νανουρίζει όπως και το φάρμακο και ξεκινά με το: *Έχω και Vicodin, θέλεις να περάσεις;* Το πιο δημοφιλές από τα σχόλια είναι το «όταν ακούω αυτό το τραγούδι σκέφτομαι τον Δρ.Χάους. Πολύ πρώτο τραγούδι.» Πολλά όμως από περισσότερα από 2000 σχόλια δεν αφορούν το τραγούδι ή τη σειρά, αλλά το πόσο Vicodin μπορείς να πάρεις και να τη βρεις χωρίς να βλάψεις το συκώτι σου. Και ακολουθούν έντονοι διάλογοι:

> FreeWhoopin1390: Λοιπόν το vicodin (γνωστό και ως υδροκωδόνη) σε ‘φτιάχνει’ με τρόπο ήπιο και ωραίο. Για να είμαι ειλικρινής είναι ένα φοβερό ‘ανεβαστικό’. Τώρα μπορεί κάποιοι να δοκιμάσουν και να σου πουν ότι 20-25mg σε ‘φτιάχνουν’, αλλά να ξέρεις πως είναι ηλίθιοι. 20-25mg θα σου προκαλέσουν μια μικρή χαλαρωτική έξαψη την πρώτη φορά. Αλλά αν θέλεις πραγματικά αποτελέσματα που διαρκούν, πάρε 35-40mg. Εγώ θα σου ‘λεγα 40 για αρχή αλλά κρίνω με βάση τον εαυτό μου. Μόνο να σε προειδοποιήσω να μην ξεπεράσεις τα 4000mg Tylenol (παρακεταμόλης) μέσα στο 24ωρο που εμπεριέχει το Vicodin.
>
> Thebluefus: Εάν καταναλώσεις 40mg υδροκωδόνης παίρνοντας vicodin έχεις φτάσει το maximum σε Tylenol. Δεν χρειάζεσαι τόσο μεγάλη δόση για να ‘φτιαχτείς’, ειδικά αν το κάνεις για πρώτη φορά. Δύο χαπάκια vicodin είναι αρκετά για να ‘φτιαχτείς’. Μην είσαι χαζός.
>
> FreeWhoopin1390: Είσαι τελείως μ@λ@κ@ς. Η μέγιστη δόση Tylenol είναι 4000mg ημερησίως. Εγώ παίρνω 50mg υδροκωδόνης με τη μία (που είναι 10/500). Που σημαίνει πως έχουν 10mg υδροκωδόνης και 500mg tylenol. Που σημαίνει πως παίρνω 2500mg Tylenol. Δηλαδή δεν πλησιάζω καν τη μέγιστη ημερήσια δόση. Σε ευχαριστώ πάντως που μοιράστηκες κάτι που δεν ξέρεις.

Ακόμα δεν λείπουν οι κοκορομαχίες σχετικά με τα πλεονεκτήματα του Vicodin και του Oxycotin αντιστοίχως καθώς και οι συζητήσεις για τις κατά τόπους διαφορές στις τιμές λιανικής. Πότε πότε κάποιος πετάγεται για να πει πως παίρνει Vicodin γιατί υποφέρει πραγματικά από πόνους και πως όλα αυτά τα πρεζόνια θα έπρεπε να ντρέπονται για τα μούτρα τους. Αλλά υπάρχουν και εκείνοι που σχολιάζουν και λένε

πως το φάρμακο τους συνταγογραφήθηκε με νόμιμο τρόπο και τώρα έχουν γίνει πρεζόνια οι ίδιοι. Μπορεί να σιχαίνονται την εξάρτησή τους από το Vicodin ή να απολαμβάνουν την έξαψη που τους προκαλεί. Ίσως να βιώνουν κάτι και από τα δύο. Γιατί τι άλλο θα μπορούσε να φανταστεί κανείς διαβάζοντας ένα σχόλιο σαν και αυτό;

> 1awareness: Να καυχιέται κανείς γιατί παίρνει χάπια είναι θλιβερό. Εγώ τα παίρνω για να ελαφρύνω τους πόνους της ιστομυαλγίας. Υποφέρω και από κρίσεις οι οποίες μου προκαλούν οξύς πόνους. Μου αρέσει το Vicodin.

Υπάρχουν και άτομα που αυτοχαρακτηρίζονται users/abusers, ή με άλλα λόγια, χρήστες/καταχραστές, ένας όρος που αποτυπώνει ξεκάθαρα την ασάφεια γύρω από το θέμα της κατάχρησης συνταγογραφούμενων ναρκωτικών. Η κατάχρηση είναι κάτι που μπορεί να αφορά κάθε είδους ουσία που επηρεάζει τη διάθεση σου, από το σκωτσέζικο ουίσκι έως το κρακ κοκαΐνης: όποιο και αν διαλέξεις μπορείς να βλάψεις τον εαυτό σου αν το καταναλώσεις σε υπερβολικές ποσότητες. Ωστόσο στη συντριπτική πλειονότητά τους οι ουσίες αυτές υποτίθεται πως σου προκαλούν μέθη, ακόμη και αν καταναλώνονται σε 'ασφαλείς' ποσότητες. Οι χρήστες του Vicodin, από την άλλη πλευρά, αναπτύσσουν σχέσεις εξάρτησης με ένα φάρμακο του οποίου οι κατασκευαστές δηλώνουν ρητά ότι δεν έχει σχεδιαστεί για να προκαλεί μεταβολές στη διάθεση. Το πράγμα γίνεται ακόμα πιο περίπλοκο σε περίπτωση που ο χρήστης υποφέρει πραγματικά από πόνους, οπότε και είναι δύσκολο να διακρίνεις εάν στ' αλήθεια κάνει κατάχρηση ή απολαμβάνει μια επιπλέον δόση ευφορίας μαζί με την ανακούφιση από τον πόνο. Στον Δρ. Χάους άρεσε να κάνει τους συναδέλφους του να αναρωτιούνται ως προς αυτό. Αλλά η σύγχυση που δημιουργείται δεν καθιστά την εξάρτηση από το Vicodin περισσότερο διαχειρίσιμη. Απλά σημαίνει πως, όπως τόσοι άλλοι εθισμοί του 21^{ου} αιώνα, είναι δύσκολο να κατηγοριοποιηθεί και ως εκ τούτου εξίσου δύσκολο να θεραπευτεί.

Σαν να μην έφταναν αυτά τα προβλήματα, το 2012 αποκαλύφθηκε πως αρκετές φαρμακοβιομηχανίες δοκίμαζαν χάπια υδροκωδόνης που ήταν δέκα φορές πιο δραστικά από το Vicodin. Τα νέα φάρμακα θα ήταν πιο 'ασφαλή' από το Vicodin, σύμφωνα με τον Roger Hawley, γενικό διευθυντή της Zogenix, επειδή δεν θα περιείχαν την παρακεταμόλη που βλάπτει το συκώτι. Μπορεί αυτό να ισχύει· αλλά η χρονοδιασπώμενη φόρμουλα της Zogenix, που επιτρέπει στην ουσία να απελευθερώνεται στον οργανισμό σταδιακά μετά την κατανάλωση, μπορεί να

οδηγήσει τους ‘κακούς’ χρήστες να τα καταπίνουν σαν καραμελίτσες προκειμένου να νιώσουν την απόλυτη έξαψη. Το Zohydro, όπως η Zogenix σχεδιάζει να το αποκαλέσει το νέο φάρμακο, πρόκειται να κυκλοφορήσει στην αγορά εντός του 2013.

Αυτό είναι απλά μια υπόθεση, αλλά δεν θα μου προκαλούσε την παραμικρή έκπληξη εάν σε ολόκληρη την Αμερική, εθισμένοι χρήστες του Vicodin ήδη λένε στο γιατρό τους πως ο πόνος τους χειροτερεύει και ίσως πρέπει να τους γράψει κάτι πιο δυνατό…

•

Οι εθιστικές ιδιότητες των cupcake, του iPhone και του Vicodin δεν είναι άμεσα ορατές. Κάποιος που βλέπει για πρώτη φορά ένα cupcake μετά από χρόνια δεν σκέφτεται: πω πω, καλύτερα να προσέξω για να μην αναπτύξω εθισμό στη ζάχαρη και πάθω καμιά διατροφική διαταραχή και καταλήξω να ξεπλένω τους εμετούς από τα μαλλιά μου. Παρομοίως και εκείνοι που αγοράζουν για πρώτη φορά ένα smartphone δεν ανησυχούν μήπως αναπτύξουν εμμονή με κάποιο ηλεκτρονικό παιχνίδι, ενώ μέχρι πρόσφατα κανείς δεν είχε ακουστά για την έξαψη που προκαλεί η χρήση αναλγητικών. Με άλλα λόγια, όντας αδαείς καταναλωτές μπαίνουμε συνεχώς στον πειρασμό να δοκιμάσουμε προϊόντα για την επίδραση των οποίων στον εγκέφαλό μας δεν γνωρίζουμε κυριολεκτικά τίποτα. Μπορεί να μην αντιλαμβανόμαστε ούτε καν την απολαυστική έξαψη που μας προκαλούν – τουλάχιστον, έως ότου καταλάβουμε ότι δεν μπορούμε να ζήσουμε χωρίς αυτά.

Η χρήση ουσιών και ο χειρισμός καταστάσεων για να φτιάξεις τη διάθεσή σου δεν είναι κάτι καινούργιο. Είναι ο ρυθμός, το εύρος και η κλίμακα αυτής της προσπάθειας να ‘ανέβεις’ που ξεπερνά κάθε προηγούμενο, ανεξαρτήτως από το εάν αυτό στο προσφέρουν τα ναρκωτικά, το αλκοόλ, το φαγητό ή το σεξ.

Για να το θέσω απλά, τόσο η ανάγκη μας όσο και η ικανότητά μας να κοντρολάρουμε τα αισθήματά μας μεγαλώνουν. Ψάχνουμε συνεχώς νέους τρόπους για να αλλάξουμε το πώς νιώθουμε, γιατί όπως είναι προφανές, δεν νιώθουμε καλά με τον εαυτό μας. Αυτό βέβαια είναι μια γενική δήλωση, οπότε επιτρέψτε μου να γίνω πιο σαφής. Οι πρόγονοί μας ήταν αδύνατο να απαλλαγούν από τον τρόμο και την απόγνωση με τον τρόπο που εμείς προσπαθούμε: συγκεκριμένες μορφές δυστυχίας, όπως η θλίψη για τον θάνατο του παιδιού σου, ήταν πιο οικείες σε αυτούς απ’ ό,τι είναι σε μας σήμερα. Και ούτε είχαν τόσες εναλλακτικές για να απαλύνουν τον πόνο

τους – και, όπως και να χει, δεν είναι εύκολο να ανακουφιστείς από βιώματα ανάλογης έντασης, ακόμα και βραχυπρόθεσμα. Εμείς, από την άλλη πλευρά, παλεύουμε με μικρές αλλά συνεχείς πιέσεις που κατακλύζουν την καθημερινότητά μας. Αυτές δημιουργούν ένα γενικευμένο άγχος το οποίο μας κάνει επιρρεπείς σε βραχυπρόθεσμες εξαρτήσεις.

Ο τεχνολογικά προηγμένος κόσμος που προκαλεί την κλιμάκωση της πίεσης που μας καταβάλλει, παράλληλα προωθεί επιστημονικές ανακαλύψεις που ενισχύουν την ροή της απόλαυσης ή τις εγκεφαλικές μας επιδόσεις μέσω της χρήσης χημικών. Πράγματι, παραγωγοί και καταναλωτές συνεργούν δυναμικά σε όλη τη διαδικασία, που μας βοηθά να τα 'βγάλουμε περά' με υποχρεώσεις που βρίσκονται έξω από τον έλεγχό μας. (Πρόσεξε, όλως τυχαίως, πως η ρηματική έκφραση 'τα βγάζω πέρα' έχει κυριολεκτικά εισβάλει σε τόσες πολλές πτυχές της ανθρώπινης ζωής: νομίζεις πως χρειάζεσαι μια καλή στρατηγική για να 'τα βγάλεις πέρα' ακόμα και για τα πιο απλά πράγματα, όπως το να πας στο μπάνιο). Υπάρχει λόγος, εξάλλου, που η για πολλούς αστεία έννοια του 'shopping therapy' (αγοροθεραπεία) έχει μπει για τα καλά στο λεξιλόγιό μας. Εμείς, ως καταναλωτές, γνωρίζουμε πως η ικανοποίηση που μας προσφέρει προς στιγμήν μια αγορά είναι κάτι παραπάνω από την απλή ευχαρίστηση που νιώθεις όταν αποκτάς κάτι νέο – μπορεί να αλλάξει τον τρόπο που νιώθεις για τα πάντα, έστω και για λίγο. Οι κατασκευαστές το γνωρίζουν πολύ καλά αυτό. Ξέρουν πως μας τροφοδοτούν με 'φιξάκια' και πως τη στιγμή που η πέρασή τους πέφτει είναι και η στιγμή που χάνουν το μερίδιό τους στην αγορά.

Το πρόβλημα είναι πως οι αυξανόμενα περίπλοκες αλληλεπιδράσεις μεταξύ παραγωγών και καταναλωτών είναι επίσης αυξανόμενα απρόβλεπτες, ειδικότερα όσον αφορά τις επιδράσεις τους στο ανθρώπινο σώμα. Δεν είναι δυνατό να προβλέψει κανείς με ακρίβεια το είδος της σχέσης που θα αναπτύξουν τα άτομα με τις ουσίες ή τις εμπειρίες που τους προωθούνται. Οι νευροεπιστήμονες μαθαίνουν συνεχώς νέα πράγματα για τον τρόπο με τον οποίο δουλεύει το σύστημα ανταμοιβών, αλλά όπως παραδέχονται σε ιδιωτικές συζητήσεις οι απόπειρές τους να τρέψουν τις ανακαλύψεις αυτές σε φάρμακα που επιδρούν σε συγκεκριμένες εγκεφαλικές διαταραχές έχουν σε εκπληκτικό βαθμό αποτύχει. Εν τω μεταξύ, οι υπόλοιποι γνωρίζουμε μόνο ένα πράγμα σχετικά με αυτά τα συστήματα επιβράβευσης: πώς να τα διεγείρουμε.

Με άλλα λόγια, βρισκόμαστε μπροστά στο χειριστήριο ενός μηχανήματος του οποίου ο τρόπος λειτουργίας αποτελεί ουσιαστικά ένα μυστήριο για εμάς, και κάποιος μας έχει μόλις παραδώσει τα κλειδιά για να το βάλουμε μπρος.

Δηλώνω υπεύθυνα ότι η διπλωματική εργασία είναι εξ ολοκλήρου δικό μου έργο και κανένα μέρος της δεν είναι αντιγραμμένο από έντυπες ή ηλεκτρονικές πηγές, μετάφραση από ξενόγλωσσες πηγές και αναπαραγωγή από εργασίες άλλων ερευνητών ή φοιτητών. Όπου έχω βασιστεί σε ιδέες ή κείμενα άλλων, έχω προσπαθήσει με όλες μου τις δυνάμεις να το προσδιορίσω σαφώς μέσα από την καλή χρήση αναφορών ακολουθώντας την ακαδημαϊκή δεοντολογία.

Υπογραφή