



# The concept of Homo Bibliophilus

Booklovers and Cultural Consumption in Greece

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## Statement of Originality

This document is written by Fotios Panagiotis Kyzakis who declares to take full responsibility for the contents of this document. I declare that the text and the work presented in this document is original and that no sources other than those mentioned in the text and its references have been used in creating it. The Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication is responsible solely for the supervision of the completion of the work, not for the contents.

## Foreword & Acknowledgment

The present thesis is the first thesis that I am doing in my academic career. The goal of a master's degree was a life purpose for me and for my generation. With the demands of the labour market constantly rising, obtaining a master's degree is more than imperative. But for me personally, the prospect of studying abroad was something I grew up with. As a child of the Greek economic crisis, I always remember my parents and my family presenting emigration abroad as a one-way ticket to salvation.

So, my whole life plan was built precisely with the prospect of completing my studies abroad. Finishing first in the Department of Political Science at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, my love for books and economics led me to the field of cultural economics and Erasmus University Rotterdam, a choice I will never regret.

I will never regret my choice to study cultural economics in Rotterdam for the enrichment of my knowledge in this field and for the exposure to a discipline of studies so interesting and innovative, which enables me to return to my country bringing something back with me.

I would therefore like to thank my professors, my thesis supervisor, Dr. Aldo Do Carmo, and my fellow students, who made my stay in the Netherlands a special experience. Finally, I would like to thank my interviewees, who, apart from expressing their love for books, were more than willing to help me.

## Abstract

A quick trip to the bookstores is enough to meet a kind of consumer that is quite different from what the neoclassical economics textbooks claim. It is a consumer who is not content with one book, but wants it all, who opens and smells the pages and ink, and who ultimately cares for nothing more than the enjoyment of a good book and a good story. This is Homo Bibliophilus.

The aim of this research is to prove that the neoclassical model of rational choice and the approach of the consumer as an experience machine is inadequate to explain the intensive consumption of cultural goods. Taking booklovers as an example, this research tried to answer the question whether the behavior of the book lover is compatible with the model of homo economicus and whether it is ultimately an irrational actor or just a different kind of consumer, a Homo Bibliophilus, who follows different valorization processes. To achieve this, fifteen semi-structured in-depth interviews with Greek intensive readers were conducted. Greece was chosen as a case study, as the Greek book lover is a typical neoclassical irrational actor, an actor of different valorization, with high percentage of book love and low share of household expenditure for books by the general population, which quite specifies this particular group of intensive cultural consumers.

The results showed that there is no question of objective rationality, extreme cost-benefit calculation, marginal utility and prioritization of needs. On the contrary, book lovers, intensive consumers do what they do because it is important to them, because they attach a much higher value to books than to other goods or services. For them, a book is a symbol of security, a part of their character and a door to another life.

KEYWORDS: Reading, Books, Value, Rationality, Irrationality

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## Introduction

### Problem Statement

On a December afternoon I decided to visit a big bookstore in the heart of Thessaloniki (Greece). As I was browsing for books in the shelves, I noticed a group of young friends laughing loudly in front of the Greek fiction genre. They were so noisy that even my headphones were not enough to silence them. I gazed them witnessing a curious and inspiring scene: a young lady opened a book, smelled the pages, and in ecstasy declared “my parents will kill me, but I cannot resist. I will buy it”. At once one of her friends replied “Are you crazy? You have already so many unread!”. Impassive, our muse, but she shrugged responded with a negative and scornful sneer, heading to the cashier.

George R.R. Martin (2011), the famous author of “The Song of Ice and Fire” book series, upon which is based the Game of Thrones TV series, wrote that “a reader lives a thousand lives before he dies. The man who never reads lives only one”. The meaning of attachment to books is a very interdisciplinary topic: it starts from psychology and literary studies and reaches the fringes of cultural studies and economics. However, this study is nothing new. In 2020, Thumala Olave did something similar, through a cultural sociology spectrum. She connected the reading and collecting books activity in United Kingdom with iconicity and materiality of the object. This spirituality of commodities was concerned Arjun Appadurai, who suggested that “commodities are things with a particular type of social potential (...) in certain respects and from a certain point of view” (Appadurai, 1986, p. 7).

This iconicity, this social life of those specific cultural products (books), shows something significantly interesting, because it is not only that the value of their materiality remains present even after the digitalization processes of supply and consumption, but, at the same time, infringes on the neoclassical rules of economics.

Getting a glimpse of the case of Greece, according to Eurostat World Book Day Survey<sup>1</sup> (Eurostat, 2018), it is noticeable that, in spite of the high 11.9% of “the population surveyed recorded reading books as one of the activities they spent time on, as main (leisure) activity”, in 2016, Greece was the country with the lowest share of household expenditure for books, newspapers and stationery (0.6%).

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<sup>1</sup> Finland is the first country with 16,8% of bookworms, followed by Poland (16.4%), Estonia (15.0%), and Luxembourg (11.9% with Greece). Regarding the households share, Slovakia devoted the largest expenditure level to book, newspapers and stationery with 2.1%, followed by Germany (1.6%) and Poland (1.4), while the Czech Republic, Spain and Malta (all 0.7%), and Bulgaria (with Greece, 0.6%) recorded the lowest shares.

In other words, the Greek booklover, henceforth Homo Bibliophilus, is an irrational consumer case, a case that works afoul of the rational choice economic status quo, due to the co-existence of the low percent of household expenditures with the high percent of bookworms. More specifically, there is a group of people that gives a different value to a good for which the general population does not spend so much money.

For this reason, the conceptualization of Homo Bibliophilus, as a new type of cultural consumer, is a theoretical one-way road and we need to examine the motives and the idealization of values in the case of an “another” value-based economy (Klamer, 2017).

## Research Objective and Research Question

So, if the “Homo Bibliophilii” give a different value to a cultural good, which the general population does not seem to spend so much, these players are behaving irrationally, different from the well-known Homo Economicus, the Homo Prudens, the “Mr. Maximum Utility, the monster of Prudence who has no place in his character for Love—or any passion beyond Prudence Only” (2006, p. 135), and deserve close and careful scrutiny. In this way, using Greece as a case study, the chief question I want to address with this thesis is

**“Why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?”**

## Societal and Scientific Relevance

This research makes a theoretical contribution to a field of knowledge that is underdeveloped for its importance in the field of cultural economics. The inadequacy of oversimplified neoclassical economics to explain anything but simple behavior, such as the intense consumption of high cultural capital goods like books, opens the field for new debates that go to the very core of theoretical conceptualization of economics. Difficulties are bound to arise. Besides, such an ambitious effort would be unfortunate to continue effortlessly, but we seek to overcome any potential obstacles and present a coherent approach to the phenomenon of book love and cultural consumption in Greece.

## Structure

The structure is as follows: in the first part, we are going to present the theoretical framework of what characterizes a rational and irrational behavior, who is Homo Bibliophilus, and the conceptual model. The second part discusses the methodological issues, the investigation, the results, and the analysis and finally we are going to conclude and summarize.



## PART 1 – THEORETICAL REVIEW

### Ch1 – Rational and Irrational Thinking

In this chapter we were going to analyse the concept of rationality. What does a rational actor mean? How does the neoclassical theory of economics understand rational action? Any behavior that does not conform to this strict rational rule is irrational, or does neoclassical rationality not correspond to reality? But in either case, are we talking about irrationality or different prioritization of utility?

This chapter is important, especially for the topic of this paper, as it puts a new lens on our attempt to interpret the behavior of our muse in the Introduction.

#### 1.1 The rational thinking and neoclassical theory

According to the traditional theory of rational choice, income, price and taste can explain sufficiently the consumer's behavior, which aim is the maximization of total utility (Michael & Becker, 1973) following a quite disciplinarian imitation logic of a positive science checkbook (Friedman, 1953).

Let's start from the beginning. The neoclassical economic theory argues that the individuals are cold and unsatisfied actors, who do whatever they want, and they want whatever they do (Varoufakis, 2007). Mainly, they are searching for utility, pleasure, and the greatest possible satisfaction of their needs. Although, above all else, the neoclassical type of man, homo economicus, is rational.

According to the rational choice theory (Kramer, 1999; McGill & Shavitt, 2000; Sethuraman, 2008; Simester & Salant, 2011; Solomon, 2017; Wilkie, 1994; Zarghamee, 2019), consumers can rate various goods and services according to their utility or level of pleasure after using them. They weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative and decide on the one that will be most useful given their financial limitations. Additionally, they consider costs and benefits while making judgments. They contrast the costs, which may include the purchase price, time, effort, and other related factors, with the perceived benefits (utility) of a certain good or service.

(Kramer, 1999; McGill & Shavitt, 2000; Sethuraman, 2008; Simester & Salant, 2011; Solomon, 2017; Wilkie, 1994; Zarghamee, 2019)

The most significant concepts, mentioned above, upon which we are going to carry out our juxtaposition of ideas, are “rationality” and “utility”.

On the one hand, the concept of “rationality” in neoclassical economic theory is based primarily on the “instrumental rationalism”. An individual is instrumentally rational when he uses effectively his sources in order to satisfy his preferences, under specific constraints (Varoufakis, 2007). In other words, rationality is an instrument to take what you may want. How does this instrument really work? The rational individual, homo economicus, follows a simple logic: stop acting when the total utility tends to equal the costs. Stated differently, individuals calculate the costs and benefits of an action and behave accordingly, making the choice that its utility is the greatest possible (Scott, 2000), under the various constraints. The implementation of this principle can drive the society, according to neoclassical economists, in a state of balance, because there will be no motives to change, exactly due to this relationship of costs and benefits.

Which are the constraints that affect the rational thinking in neoclassical economics? There are two constraints in particular: time and income, which can be incorporated into the concept of total income of the consumer (Michael & Becker, 1973), with time to be the most important (Becker G. , 1965), while the environment plays also a significant role, for instance the technology or the production, affecting the price and therefore the rational decision.

On the other hand, the main goal of the rational consumer, of the homo economicus or Max U, is the greatest possible maximization of utility (Michael & Becker, 1973). What is utility? A list of experiences or things we want in a preference order determined by the level of satisfaction they offer (Michael & Becker, 1973) (Varoufakis, 2007). The individuals try to move as high as possible to the top of this list and the higher they are in this list, the biggest is the utility, a conception that is very close to Jeremy Bentham. So, for instrumental rationalism, every individual tries to climb this list and stops exactly on the scene that the consumption of another unit of a product or experience can be surpassed by the negative utility, i.e., the costs.

According to Michel & Becker (1973), one weakness that can be identified even from the neoclassical economists themselves is that there is no useful theory for the taste formation. In other words, the traditional theory is unable to base its explanation of the human behavior, because it cannot explain or prevent the impact of differences in taste. For this reason, Gary Becker (1993), in his Nobel Lecture of the economic way of looking at the behavior, highlighted that an important step to expand the traditional analysis of individual rationality is to incorporate a wider variety of tastes, attributes and calculations.

For the matter of tastes, Stigler & Becker (1977) argued that tastes are not different, are identical. The thing that differentiated among individuals is the production ability of those

tastes. In this way they declared that “de gustibus non est disputandum”, i.e. it is impossible to resolve disputes arising from differences in tastes but rather than in fact no such disputes arise.

## 1.2 Irrationality or “Doing the right thing”?

In the above chapter, we talked about instrumental rationality, maximization of utility and homo economicus, i.e. the theoretical model of the neoclassical economics. But is this model adequate to explain the human behavior or is it far away from the real human nature?

Neoclassical economics, or standard economics (Klamer, 2017) or “Samuelsonian economics” (McCloskey, 2016) identify the goods as commodities (Michael & Becker, 1973) (Stigler & Becker, 1977). According to the “new consumer theory” of Michael & Becker (1973), the theory that Stigler & Becker (1977) used in their classic *De Gustibus* text, families are not just simple passive maximizers of utility from the markets, but they are contributing to the increase of a good’s utility function, producing “commodities” from the market goods, their personal time, skills, human capital and all the rest inputs.

In the neoclassical point of view, that goods are transformed in commodities through exchange, Appadurai (1986) gives an alternate explanation. The exchange gives to the commodities an exchange value, but what really happens with their true value?

Appadurai (1986) re-examines the commodities and the cultural determination of their value. For him, commodities are neither value-free objects exchanged in a neutral market, nor just the sum of the labor needed to produce them. Commodities are powerful symbols than can express and define social relations influence the development of technology, determine the legitimacy of political systems and provide ways for people to understand the world (Appadurai, 1986). In other words, their value varies according to the subjective judgment of their worth in exchange.

The conflict between the economics of mathematic logic and “humanomics” (McCloskey, 2016), which highlight the ethics, is the core of the below theoretical discussion. Deindre McCloskey (Lipka, 2013) disagrees intensely with the decision of modern economists to follow the theoretical method of Paul Samuelson, instead of the classic Adam Smith’s. The Samuelsonian economists, as she pronounces the neoclassical school, believe, argue, and try to pursue that the science of economics is concerned with the individuals and their purpose of maximizing utility under constraints, following the P-logic (McCloskey, 2016).

Stated differently, for McCloskey, the attempt of Samuelsonian economics to put a lid on the dynamism of the economic science and to describe it into a line of simple rational planned steps, expecting to make the outputs more foreseeable, is wrong and eschew the human nature,

which is not only unpredictable, but also is strongly connected with ethics. On the contrary, the only virtue, the only idea, that the status quo theory accepts is the “P-logic” or *prudence*. Prudence is the pursuit of personal monetary interest. Although, for McCloskey, it is exactly the non-prudence values that distinguish the people from the other beings.

Max U is the type of human, that the neoclassical theory and the Samuelsonian economics are describing. He is the character fettered by the ends-mean logic of Prudence only (Lipka, 2013). He is a decision-making machine, an “*Experience Machine*” (McCloskey, 2006, p. 135) with instrumental rationality as its manual. Mr. Maximum Utility never faces moral quandaries, always picks means rather than aims, and adheres to a set of exact and correct norms. He is a figurative representation of an algorithm that modifies inputs and outputs.

However, to what extent this presentation of Max U, from McCloskey, is close to what Adam Smith had in mind about human nature? The prudent man of Smith must interpret and judge the decision he makes. He struggles to make decisions similar to his impartial spectator in order to achieve harmony with his sentiments, while Max U sees no beauty in standing in such a position (Lipka, 2013). This Smithian “impartial spectator” is driving us to our next topic: *phronesis* and Arjo Klamer. In a way the Smithian man of prudence is selfish. “But Max U is not necessarily selfish. Economists often put unselfish arguments into the utility function, and, when they do, it is still Max U” (Lipka, 2013, p. 11).

Before we talk about *phronesis*, as Arjo Klamer (2017) perceived it, it is necessary to present his alternative for instrumental rationality. Klamer (2017) in his book “*Doing the right thing: a value-based economy*” argues for an “another economy”, a different way of dealing with the economic phenomena. To be more specific, Klamer moves the conversation of economics beyond the clear monetary aspects and asks himself “what is important to us?”. Defining economics “as the discipline that studies the realization of values by people, organizations and nations” (Klamer, 2017, p. XIV), he calls us to perceive the economic value of goods, services and in general actions as important or not to us personally (and to the others). In other words, he proposes as an alternative to the instrumental rationalism of the traditional neoclassical theory, a logic of substantial reasoning, in order to “articulate what we – and the others – are doing, what qualities individuals, organizations and groups of people are pursuing” (Klamer, 2017, p. XIII). What is important to us, what is the right thing to do has value and our attempt to realize those values is the main purpose of economics and of a value-based approach of an “another economy”.

But what is the principle that make the values real and recognizable? For Klamer (2017) this principle is *phronesis*. *Phronesis*, precisely, is to act upon your values in pursuit of some good, service or experience and applying all available knowledge in doing so. It is connected with

what Adam Smith called “impartial spectator”, our inner self, who sees and judges our actions, the voice inside our head that advise us for the right or wrong of our actions. It is our conscience.

To be more specific about the value-based approach, while the established economic (neo-classical) thought tend to transform the good into a pecuniary amount, Klamer (2016, p. 368) argues for a “proposal to innovate in order to face the future”, to fill the gap of sense making processes in the dominant socioeconomic imaginary.

For him, money is only instrumental, and price is just the tool for the expression of economic value or of the ability be exchanged in the market. Adam Smith classified the notion of value in two types (value in use and value in exchange), while David Throsby (2000) made a more “cultural-economics-oriented” classification by speaking for an aesthetic, social, spiritual, symbolic, historical and authenticity value. Klamer distinguishes value in four domains (Personal values, Social values, Societal values and Transcendental or Cultural values.) and in two axes (regarding the distance of the individual from the value).

On the one hand, personal values are focused with the person, the individual, while the social values involve individual’s relationships with the community. On the other hand, unlike personal values, societal values are universally held, like altruism for instance. Finally, transcendental values are about the relations of the person with the abstract and the extracorporeal.

For instance, in case of books, in our case, a book may propose values like knowledge or uniqueness or even identity. At the same time, the social value of books may be expressed in the co-reading or the participation in a book club, where the readers can discuss and exchange opinions. Also, the different narratives that a novel may have or the information that a non-fiction book may give can encompass values like caring, altruism, charitableness, loyalism, or lawfulness. Although, for our research the most important quadrant is the one of transcendental values, which, as we saw previously (Thumala Olave, 2020), consider books as iconic.

In this way, our muse, in the Introduction, could not resist to her deepest desire to buy more books, because exactly she realized the value, that the books have for her personally, a value that it is beyond their monetary aspect and the number of unread books that she already had. She did the right thing!

So, what are the differences between phronesis and the neoclassical rationality?

On the one hand, rationality entails that the individuals calculate the best option, which is the one that maximizes the total utility. In this way, the economist isolates himself from the daily life and becomes a neutral -almost aloof- spectator.

On the other hand, howbeit, the value-based approach and the principle of phronesis suggests that “doing the right thing” is so complicated that the calculation of any kind will be unattainable, while at the same time, in an instrumental world the idea of the neoclassical rationality makes sense, in the real world plays a subordinate role. Also, for Varoufakis (2007, pp. 166-167) the “basic disadvantage of neoclassical economic theory of rational choice is its incapability to appreciate the wealth of human experience (...) it cannot handle complicated issues, which make knowledge worth it”.

Just as Deindre McCloskey (2016) said that the instruments have no ethics, Klamer (2017, p. 34) defining the “ideals” is arguing that the instruments have no “ideals. The hammer is an instrument to a carpenter uses to realize his ideal”. Ideals “are the goods and values that people and organizations want to realize” (Klamer, 2017, p. 33) and this is the greatest difference: neoclassical rationality cannot incorporate ideals.

From a behavioral point of view, the opinion that individuals think and reason in a given, specific and common way has no empirical evidence. On the contrary, empirical data reveal that there are several behavioral differences between social identity groups with shared nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender etc. (Coate & Hoffmann, 2022).

## Ch2 – For the love of books: fans and cultural attachment

In this chapter, the theoretical discussion will continue to the notion of specific attachment to the consumption of specific goods, i.e. cultural attachment. What are the characteristics of intensive consumption of goods and what exactly is the meaning of the “love” that some consumers may show for specific goods?

With this chapter, we essentially make a transition from the different prioritization of utility, “doing the right thing”, to more practical aspects. We move into the realm of cultural attachment and those things that are truly valuable to consumers.

### 2.1 How to become a fan?

What does it mean to be a fan or a product lover? To impute great value or to contribute to a specific cultural good or experience? As we saw above, and in the Introduction, our muse could not resist her inner need to buy the book. From the moment, she touched it she reclined in contemplation. She touched the pages and smelled them likewise the book was something sacred and iconic. So, how does a sentiment and behavior like this develop?

Benzecry (2009) tried to answer this question regarding the relationship between the opera audience and Theater Colon in Buenos Aires. Basically, he sought to “examine the creation of a particular type of devoted cultural consumer” (Benzecry, 2009, p. 133). Specifically, he pinpointed that there is a certain commonality in how opera is understood to be transmitted, learned, evaluated and reproduced, following the approach of Howard Becker (1953). Becker (1953, p. 242) investigating the use of marijuana noticed that “no one becomes a user without learning to smoke the drug in a way which will produce real effects, learning to recognize the effects and connect them with drug use (learning, in other words, to get high), and learning to enjoy the sensations he perceives”. In one way or another, this means that attachment and affiliated behavior must be studied developmentally, an opinion that was followed also by Benzecry (2009, p. 134) by arguing that “the passionate fans learn to enjoy opera in foro interno, responding internally to parts of the music that are supposed to demand an emotional reaction and in foro externo, reacting publicly in an appropriate way”.

Nevertheless, he identified that, on the contrary with Becker’s model (1953), fans not only show interest in it but also participate in a cycle of enchantment that starts with a visceral connection to the music or an interest in opera and continues after they are socialized into the activity.

But, when we are talking about fandom and emotions, it is inevitable not to use psychoanalytic terms. Sandvoss (2005, p. 8) defines fandom as “the regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text in the form of books, TV shows etc.”. So, fans are

associated with a particular form of emotional intensity, which can be clearly indicated by the specific consumption patterns that the fan is following. Stated differently, the amount of spending time, the purchasing of relevant objects with the fandom and the repeated consumption.

Returning to our topic, books, Thumala Olave (2020) tried to answer the question “why do people in the UK read and collect books when there are so many other sources of information and forms of story-telling available?” and “what are the material and experiential bases of book love?” and she highlighted that people are attached to books because they are iconic.

An icon is a “material object that enables the objective manifestation and subjective experience of sacred socially valued goods” (Thumala Olave, 2020, p. 3). On the one side, books are iconic in three ways:

- a) It is simple and obvious to recognize the idea of a book as a codex—a durable, independent thing that can be possessed and passed along.
- b) The book makes it possible to realize a very valuable cultural benefit. To put it another way, books are revered and iconic as forms of communal goods and as symbols of their realization for each reader.
- c) Through immersion into them as aesthetic objects, books become iconic.

For Thumala Olave (2020) the aesthetic immersion is a process of subjectification and objectification. On the one hand, subjectification occurs when readers internalize a book's message and make it their own (readers remember stories, book collectors store, etc.). On the other hand, objectification happens when readers get absorbed in the text as they read it and succumb to its topic to its formal and physical attributes.

For the book love in United Kingdom, Thumala Olave concludes that “materiality matters”. Book love “manifests in the desire to be surrounded by print books, the feelings of pain at having to discard books and the enjoyment of the experience of voluntary self-loss that reading affords” (Thumala Olave, 2020, p. 10), while book is a type of good that concentrates social values – like self-cultivation, imagination, knowledge etc. – and subjective aesthetic experiences.

In another text, studying again the case of UK, Thumala Olave (2018) tries to introduce a cultural sociology of reading in order to identify the main drivers of reading (especially fiction). On the one hand, she thought that pleasure is strongly associated with the desire to read, with an enchantment as an experience of being transported somewhere else, and it is concretized in the indulge in reading at times that are not usually leisure time. On the other hand, as pleasure has the power to open a space of meaning and understanding, a better understanding of our selves. Finally, Olave finds that fiction has also ethical impacts, because it presents models of



the good life and gives readers the chance to consider their relationships with people and their responsibilities to them, and it frequently modifies or strengthens those relationships. In this way, she recognizes three types of intensive readers, based on the above main drivers.

Firstly, it is the reader that is refiguring her/himself through the construction of a meaningful biographical narrative via fiction. For this type of intensive reader (book lover) reading is not just an instrument for social mobility and acceptability, like language, but it is a tool of shaping experiences. For the second type of intensive reader, books are equipment for living, they are ethical reflections in a safe imagined place, where the reader can escape from dealing with the everyday life. Finally, the third type of book lover is the reader that is dealing books as life companions, a tool to make sense and to fuel our imagination and desire to get out, to open our minds.

So, in Klammer's question, what is important, Olave (2020) answers that books are important, in terms of book love, because they are iconic. And, it is worth, in fact, to dwell on the second way of iconicity, the realization of a very highly valued good because books are sacred and iconic as types of collective goods.

However, at the same time, the question that we can say concerns both Olave and Klammer, essentially, is what constitutes our consumption. In this question, both of them gave almost the same answer. What constitutes our happiness is what contributes more to our happiness and our moral character, what we love, what is important to us.

## 2.2 Who is Homo Bibliophilus?

Who is Homo Bibliophilus? Which is this specific category of booklover that we distinguish with this peculiar name? And which are the characteristics of his attachment to books?

Our muse, the young lady we saw in the Introduction and we have mentioned so many times as yet, makes for a good example of Homo Bibliophilus. She is emotionally attached to the materiality of books, and to its special features, like the smell of pages. She cannot resist to her need to buy a new book, despite the fact that she has already too many unread books, and she does not give a hoot for her friend's comments or the anger of her parents, precisely because the purchase of that book is an action of higher utility.

But what does characterize a fan?

We can say that a fan is characterized by the specific emotional significance and careful consideration that (s)he imputes to objects or persons (Sandvoss, 2005). In our terms, as we saw above, fandom is a devoted, diligent and persistent consumption.

So, Homo Bibliophilus is a devoted cultural consumer, a book lover, who wants to be surrounded by books, who gives great value to materiality and content, and who feels, in a way, reading and the book itself as part of his identity. Homo Bibliophilus is a consumer who is willing to pay as much as needed for the pleasure of books.

### Ch3 – Conceptual model: From Homo Economicus to Homo Bibliophilus

The comparison of the neoclassical consumption model with Homo Bibliophilus is the conceptual framework of this thesis. To our main research question “why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?” we analyzed the way that “rationality” is perceived by the mainstream economic theory and juxtapositioned this way of thinking with a substantial reasoning.

So, the problem is not that Homo Bibliophilus behaves irrationally, but the fact that the utility function, as the devoted consumer perceives it, is different and more complicated from the neoclassical model. For Rodrik (2015) models are the source of pride for economists. Different settings call for different models, and this is where the problems lie since a model concentrate on certain reasons and tries to show how they flow through the system. Economists try to make universal models, many times against their connection to reality. Economists like Friedman (1953) argue that what matters is the predictability of a model, not the realism of its assumptions, but again a realism filter is needed (Rodrik, 2015).

Stated differently, indeed the behavior of Homo Bibliophilus is irrational according to the neoclassical theory of rational choice and instrumental rationality, because, in spite of the significance of price and income as constraints in the human behavior explanation, this theory cannot explain the Homo Bibliophilus behavior. Although, book lover is not an irrational actor, on the contrary he exposes the simplicity of the neoclassical claims and interpretation of human behavior. When we reach the factors of devotion, attachment and love, homo economicus is nothing more than a utopian homo prudens, a Mr. Maximum Utility.

But why is this happening?

As we said above, it is a different utility function, a different context. Following Klamer’s approach (2017) of a value-based economy, we are asking ourselves what is important for Homo Bibliophilus? Which is the right thing for him to do?

For book lovers “books are iconic in a way that enable the realization of a very highly valued cultural good” (Thumala Olave, 2020, p. 3). So, in order to answer our main question “why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?”, we have to answer also “why books are a very highly valued cultural good for Homo Bibliophilus?”, and “what’s the meaning of this value for the consumption behavior of Homo Bibliophilus?”.

Is this an exception? In other words, is this distinct behavior of this specific category of devoted consumers for a very particular good, like books, just an exception to the neoclassical canon? Perhaps. However, at the same time, proves that human behavior is too complicated and barely restricted to a nutshell of mathematical calculations and machine manual like models of the traditional mainstream theory.

As we can see in Figure 1.1, in the graphical representation of the conceptual model, the intensive reader, Homo Bibliophilus, is confronted with two different expressions of the same phenomenon. On the one hand, as neoclassical theory and rational choice theory dictate, the consumer (and any actor in general) follows the logic of instrumental rationality with purely computational movements of a manual machine type, with two constraints as the main shapers of his behavior: time and money. On the other hand, it is the impartial spectator who answers the question “what is important to us?”, a theory that views economic phenomena with a different value-based rationale. In this way, we can say that the answer to the question “why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?” lies in different valorization.

So, this thesis is going to investigate exactly why and what does it mean the fact that books are realized as very highly valued by a specific kind of consumers, in order to, finally, answer our theoretical question of “why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?”.

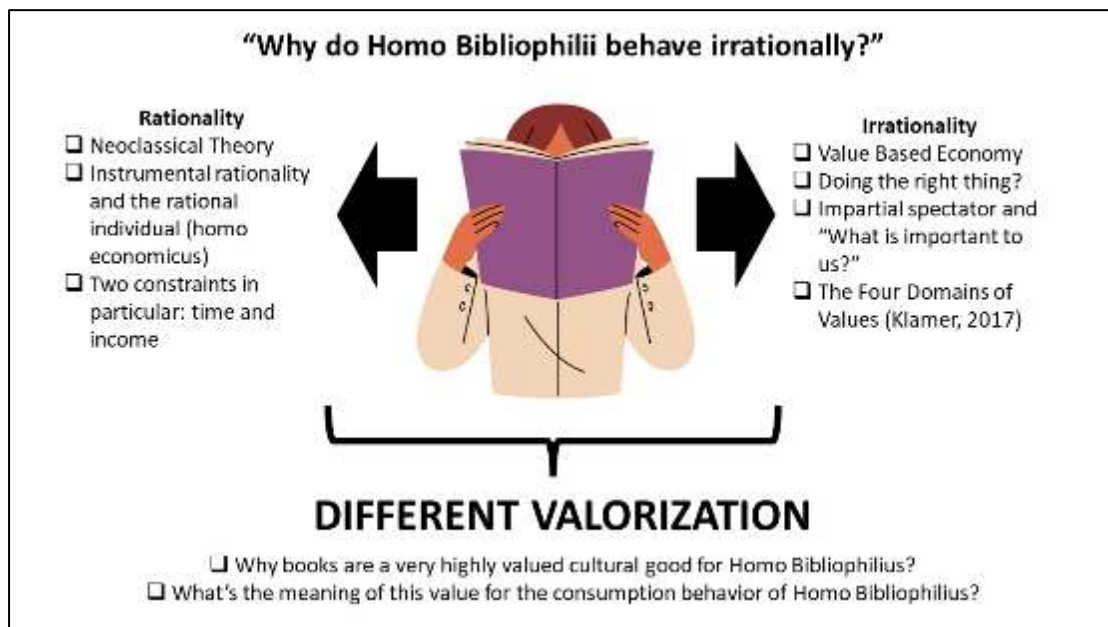


Figure 1.1 – Conceptual Model (by the author)

## PART 2 – INVESTIGATION

### Ch4 – The case of Greece

In this study, we use the case of Greece, mostly because, as we saw in the Eurostat World Book Day Survey (Eurostat, 2018), the Greek bookworm is a typical neoclassical irrational player. But how is the reading behavior articulated in the Greek case?

In recent research, among the few in the topic, by the Greek Collecting Society for Literary Work (OSDEL, 2022) (Panagiotopoulos, 2022) about the Greek readers and reading behavior was observed a trisection of the Greek reading audience (see Figure 2.1): 35% of the population surveyed answered that have never read a book in any form (nonreaders). 19% answered that reads 1-2 books per year, and 15% reads 3-4 books per year (non-intensive readers). Also, 14% answered that reads 5-9 books and 17% reads more than 10 books per year (intensive readers). So, 35% of the sample are nonreaders, 34% non-intensive readers and 31% intensive readers.

For Panagiotopoulos (2022), in the case of Greece, the strong cultural capital (level of education, family environment, etc.) possessed by the respondent and the antiquity of this capital seem to determine the intensity, form and manifestations of his reading behavior.

In another book, Panagiotopoulos & Vidali (2019) investigated that if we want to think about the space of culture, we must include in our thinking the conditions of production of cultural demand, tastes and cultural productions, i.e. the narrative of the cultural field, the cultural offer, the conditions, in other words, by which cultural capital is developed. In this way, Bourdieu (1986)'s concept of cultural capital refers mainly to the skills, preferences, attitudes and perceptions that one has as a result of one's social class and level of education. Cultural capital can be expressed in three ways: on the one hand, it is embodied cultural capital, which refers to the perceptions and meanings with which one “dresses” objects, objectified state of cultural capital. On the other hand, the institutionalized form refers to the credentials and qualifications, the conceptualizations and perceptions of cultural capital. In our case, the embodied cultural capital of books is precisely the well-cultivated taste and mood, as a derivative of the reader's environment, while the objectified state is the book itself, and the investments that readers make in that object.

In other words, for Panagiotopoulos (2022) the more educated the family from which one comes and the more long-lasting one's studies, the greater the chances of reading, with school playing a leading role as a multiplier of the cultural hierarchy in terms of reading.

Below we can see two tables (from Panagiotopoulos' book) on the trisection of the reading audience and buying habits regarding books, which give us a clear picture of the case of Greece

and are a good introduction for the effort to see more of the intensive readers and the valorization of books.

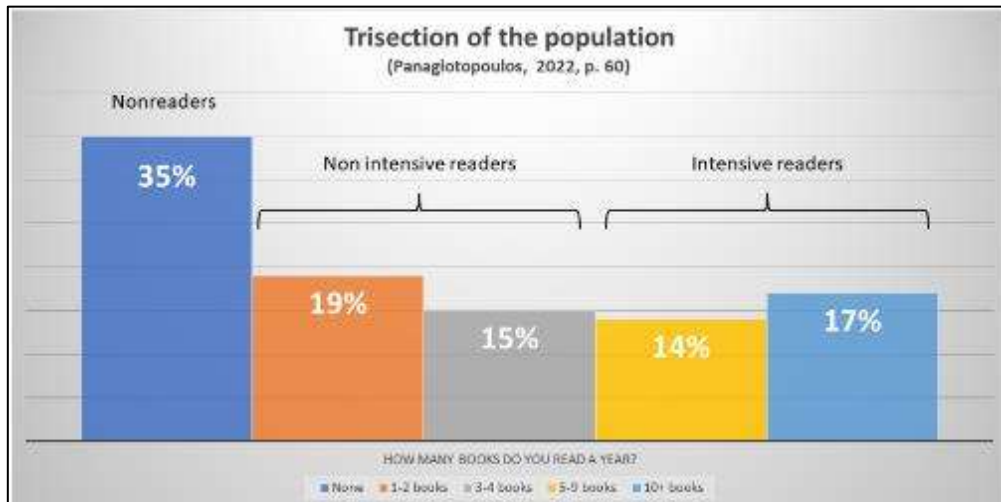


Figure 2.1 – Trisection of the population (illustrated by the author)



Figure 2.2 – Purchasing Habits (illustrated by the author)

The difference between the percentages of nonreaders, non-intensive readers and intensive readers in terms of reading and buying books is interesting: while non-readers amount to 35% of the population when it comes to reading, they drop to 21% when it comes to buying. This can be explained in buying books as gifts or buying books for children.

In terms of non-intensive and intensive buyers, the former amount to 16% who buy 1-2 books per year and 18% who buy 3-4 books per year, while the latter, intensive buyers, amount to 23% who buy 5-9 books per year and 23% similarly who buy more than 10 books per year.

In the same survey, in terms of what prevents people to read, to consume books, lack of time is the dominant reason (51% of the sample) for not reading books (Panagiotopoulos, 2022).

## Ch5 – Methodology

### 5.1 Research Resign

Social research falls within the scope of social disciplines such as sociology, anthropogeography, social policy, politics and criminology, and draws concepts and theories from the social sciences (Bryman, 2016). “Qualitative social research is that social research that focuses on the experiences and perspectives of research participants from the perspective of the people being studied” (Bryman's definition, as cited by Tziolis, 2014, p. 25).

In this way, qualitative social research considers social life as a continuous process, and focuses on the concepts of meaning, experience, interaction, cognition, and interpretation. Nevertheless, it has as a common core of fundamental assumptions, the view of social reality as a complex symbolic construction, the recognition of people's ability to produce meaning and to participate in the process of constructing their social reality through their everyday interactions, as well as the need to approach phenomena by reconstructing the conceptual frameworks and systems of reference of the subjects involved in the social fields (Tziolis, 2014).

The core concept of the qualitative social research is the notion of *double hermeneutic*. People define their social situations and co-construct their social reality, which means that the social researcher enters into a social world pre-interpreted and symbolically betrayed by the actors. This double dimension, the fundamental axiom of social research, was described by Antony Giddens as double hermeneutic (Giddens, 1987). In other words, the researcher has a primary sub-subjective understanding of his social world, interpreting the meaning of his action and social reality in a subjective way.

The main research question of this thesis is “why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?”. This research tried to address this question by looking at the conceptual model as well, putting booklovers in front of the dilemma of rationality and emotional attachment to books. In other words, we considered that Homo Bibliophilus struggles between two opposing forces, two economic rationalities: On the one hand, rational choice, according to which, the consumer operates on the principle of instrumental rationality and the calculation of costs and benefits in each transaction, and on the other hand, the differential preconception of the value and utility that the book lover receives from buying and consuming books compared to some other product, based on Klamer's four domains of value and the impartial spectator.

The research was conducted through fifteen in-depth semi-structured interviews with book lovers, in order to gain a qualitative perception and insight into how the different or non-valorization of books is articulated. Participants can speak freely and frankly during interviews, which can produce insightful data that may not be available through a simple structured questionnaire.



## 5.2 Sampling

A number of criteria were used to select the fifteen people who participated in the interviews. The booklovers who participated in the survey had to meet the 31% of intensive readers, i.e. those who read more than 5 books per year, identified by Panagiotopoulos (2022). An attempt was made to prefer the 17% who read more than 10 books per year for better data collection purposes. In order to identify these book lovers, a call was conducted to Greek book clubs such as The Book's Coven and “Reading”, where the majority of members met the fundamental characteristics of intensive readers. A list of respondents' profiles can be found in Appendix C.

## 5.3 Operationalization

The list of subjects for the interviews and the operationalization was developed using the domains specified in the conceptual model (Rationality, Irrationality and Different Valorization).

The interview guide (see Appendix D) contained four parts. The first part contained some warmup questions about the favorite book and the favorite genre of the respondent, while the second part was focused on interviewees' bibliophilia and consumption behavior, borrowing, materiality, and personal relationship with books. The third part investigated the relationship between bibliophilia and rationality, with the main aim of answering the main research question of whether Homo Bibliophilus' behaviour is irrational., by asking directly “whether they consider it rational that while they have unreadable books, they cannot help themselves and buy more”. Finally, in the fourth part, the interviews were concluded with the interviewees' personal value-added investment in the books.

## 5.4 Data Collection

The interviews were conducted over a period of one month, from 10 May to 3 June, using the ZOOM platform or mobile phone recordings, in case the interviews were conducted in book lovers' libraries. The most interviews were conducted online, which provided a number of benefits, such as reduced scheduling time and clear recordings that could be immediately transcribed from the platforms (Bryman, 2016). For the transcription, the online platform Transkriptor was used. On average, the interviews lasted approximately 40 to 45 minutes (see Appendix B).

After a check of the interview guide during the first two interviews, some minor changes were made and points of repetition of specific meanings and repeated questions and answers were identified, resulting in some questions being dropped and the discussion being left free to flow. Before each interview, the respondents signed the concept form (see Appendix A), the interviews were conducted in Greek and due to the topic several times, especially at the beginning and at the end, there were moments of small talk and dialogue between interviewer and interviewee about book topics, such as favourite authors, favourite books, comments and opinions on common readings.

## 5.5 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was chosen as the method for data analysis and the Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis program, known as CATMA 6.5, was used to analyze the transcripts.

Thematic analysis was chosen as the method of data analysis to carry out the identification of central thematic patterns and coding of complex meanings and huge amount of diverse data (Bryman, 2016). Coding is precisely that process that slices, names, classifies, conceptualizes and integrates data into theoretical schemas (Tziolis, 2014).

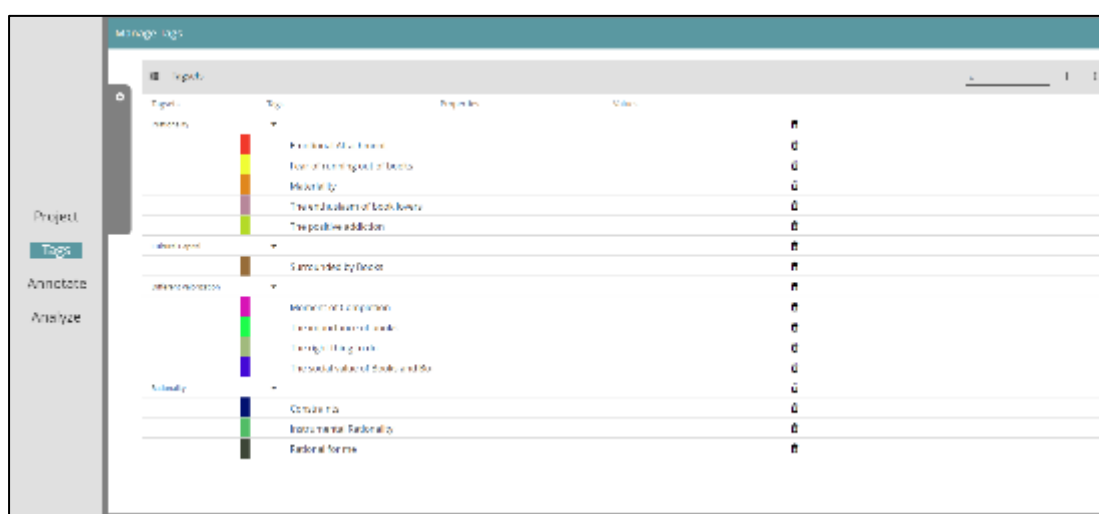


Figure 2.3 – CATMA Tags and Tagsets

The Computer Assisted Text Markup and Analysis program, known as CATMA 6.5, was used to put the aforementioned methods into practice and assess it. CATMA “supports explorative, non-deterministic practices of text annotation: a discursive, debate-oriented approach to text annotation based on research practices of hermeneutic disciplines is the underlying conceptual model (...) What sets CATMA apart from other digital annotation methods is its 'undogmatic' approach: the system does neither prescribe defined annotation schemata or rules,

nor does it force the user to apply rigid yes/no, right/wrong taxonomies to texts (even though it allows for more prescriptive schemata as well)” (Horstmann, 2019).

The CATMA cockpit is simple. Digitally marking the text with different colors allows users to build, expand, and change codes and thematic patterns (referred to as tags and tagsets, respectively).

The coding process involved three stages, as presented by Tziolis (2014) and as captured in Appendix E (Table 2.1).

In the first stage, during the opening of the theoretical negotiation, the open coding, the identification of the thirteen main codes was carried out. Due to the specialization of the sample, the data "spoke" very clearly without generating an uncontrolled volume of codes common to all respondents.

Then, in the second stage, the axial coding, the thirteen concepts generated were enriched, after a second contact with the material, and organized into eight main theoretical axes.

Finally, during the third stage of coding, selective coding, after the main codes and sub-codes were identified, the three themes emerged, which after naming them, revealed a clear picture of the results of the research.

## 5.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity in qualitative research are a way of measuring the quality and potential of a social research study. In contrast to quantitative research, where the ability to capture findings in numbers makes the researcher's job easier, different tools are imposed in qualitative research. In this thesis, since there is no more than one observer, we can only check reliability and validity externally (Bryman, 2016). On the one hand, according to LeCompte & Goetz, as cited by Bryman (2016, pp. 418-419), external reliability constitutes the extent to which a study can be replicated, although this is quite difficult as it is impossible to “freeze” social reality. On the other hand, external validity refers to the degree of generalizability of the findings to different social contexts, and this represents a viable concern since qualitative research uses relatively small samples.

In this study, we used an interview guide (Appendix C), which was followed somewhat closely. All questions were covered, and the interviewees demonstrated a coherent knowledge and understanding of the topic.

In addition, the interviewee validation method (Key Concept 17.3 in Bryman, 2016, pp. 420) was also used to provide the research subjects with a description of the research questions in

order to confirm our assessment and identify any discrepancies. In fact, due care was taken to ensure that the validation of the interviewee did not provoke defensive reactions from the interviewee's side.

## 5.7 Ethical considerations

### 5.5.1. *Informed consent procedures*

Before the interviews, all participants signed the consent form (see Appendix A) and were made aware of all their rights. The interviewees' information is anonymous (with no gender references) and will be used for academic purposes only. If this information will be publicly reported, new consent forms will be provided. At the same time, it was made known to the participants that they can stop at any time and leave the interview. Additionally, if they change their minds in the future, their interviews will be removed, as also indicated on the form.

### 5.5.2. *Confidentiality and anonymity*

Verbal consent was gained from the interview subjects in advance of their participation in order to establish an ethically acceptable interviewing method for this study. Additionally, verbal consent was sought before releasing the interviews' anonymised results. Since every interviewee was an adult who was older than 18, parental or guardian approval was not necessary. All throughout the investigation, data security and confidentiality were given top priority. The researcher kept the recordings of the interviews, and as of May 2023, the interview material is now preserved on the researcher's computer in a secure setting. To allow for any potential changes to the research, the data will be kept for a period of six months until the end of November 2023. It is not expected that the data would be required after this time period because this study is being conducted for educational reasons. To protect the identity of the interviewees it is vital to mention that the results of the interviews were rendered anonymous, to guarantee that interviewees felt at ease speaking openly. This is crucial in fostering an atmosphere where interviewees feel free to express their ideas and experiences, enabling a deeper and more informative discussion.

### 5.5.3. *Limitations and delimitations*

There are several restrictions and limits to this research that must be noted. First of all, the size of the sample, as fifteen intensive readers may not be able to represent the total number of book lovers in Greece. Second, almost all of them (14 out of 15) when referring to reading books, mean literature, which despite the fact that it is the dominant choice of the reading public

(60% for Greek literature and 47% for foreign literature according to Panagiotopoulos, 2022), limits the sample. Third, is the presence of men, limited to only four interviewees.

Regarding, delimitations, this research focuses more on the valorization and the prevalence of the benefit of a specific category of readers, intensive readers, booklovers in the case of Greece, as mentioned in Chapter 4, and not on the general consumption or demand of books in Greece. So that is why, moreover, another economy is mentioned.

## Ch6 – Results and Analysis

Below we can see the results of the analysis of the fifteen interviews. Following the structure of the conceptual model (see Figure 1.1), this chapter is divided into three parts. In the first (6.1) we examine the concept of “rationality” and how booklovers perceive it. In the second part (6.2) we examine the claim of irrationality, emotional investment and the importance of materiality, to finally arrive at the third part (6.3) to examine the different valorization that books have as a commodity for booklovers and why, after all, they are so important for this type of consumer.

### 6.1 Rationality

The aim of this chapter is to deepen knowledge about the way rationality is perceived by booklovers. More specifically, by defining instrumental rationality as the balance between the desire to buy new books and the various constraints, rational thinking for Homo Bibliophilus will be explored below.

#### 6.1.1. Instrumental Rationality and Constraints

Book lovers were asked in a direct way whether they consider the habit of buying more books when they know they will be on the unread list to be reasonable (see Interview Guide in Appendix D).

Taking the term from the literature, instrumental rationality was captured as linking the purchase of books to price, offers or even resale. For Respondent 6, the fact of offering e-books, particularly through Amazon's Kindle platform, is very important. Another example is the neighborhood bookstores, second-hand or even antique shops. Respondent 3 stated that:

*The offer certainly plays a role. I mean, to give you an example, in Athens there is the old bookstore for the homeless, I don't know if you've heard of it. From time to time, they put out a type of offer that let's say you can get 20 books for 20 €, so if I was in the place in that offer I was indeed enticed to buy 20 books.*

Another form of instrumental rationality, a rational approach to the intensive consumption of books, is borrowing. Several respondents, especially those who are members of reading clubs, find buying a book, suggested by the group, difficult because they don't know if they will like it in the end. In other words, a calculation is made in their minds that the benefit of buying a book at random is less than the risk of not like that book. In this way, as Respondent 5 put it, they find the solution to borrowing.

*For the club let's say it's not my book of choice, and I don't know if I'm going to like what we're going to read, because a lot of times you go with someone else's taste, you know, I'm going to rent it from the library and if I like it then I'm going to buy it for my collection (...) And I feel that (borrowing) is a very nice way to possibly choose and read books that you wouldn't choose to invest in and buy.*

In addition, the resale of books that may not fit in the library or that the book lover does not like anymore, is also an indication of an instrumental rationality that approaches reading and books as a simple form of consumption with market characteristics of negotiation and good price. Respondent 3, when asked whether buying books is a simple consumption habit or a moment of completion replied:

*Consumption habit, certainly based on everything I've already told you about offers, bargains, and investment in a sense, because books and comics which are not I like or know I won't read again, I tend to sell them on second-hand sites.*

But there were also a number of respondents who said that this intense and unthinking or limitless buying of books is not reasonable. Respondent 14 stated that, as he/she sees it, in his/her own rational thinking, neither the attachment to the story nor to the material justifies this excess, especially when there are financial difficulties.

*For me it is not. Not for any other reason, but for economic reasons. If you're not going to read them anytime soon, why are you buying them? I can actually understand it, but I still wouldn't. Well, I'm not Vardinoyannis (a very rich Greek)...*

***Do you find this emotional attachment to the book reasonable?***

*Okay. I'd say excessive. It's too much. If anything, it's a book. But if you could tell me that you're attached to the story, there are movies. I know what answers the other side will give, but it doesn't make sense to me. At least as I consider logic. When you're financially strapped, you're careful to have.*

Both Respondent 3 and Respondent 9 insist on the same position, finding bags of 10 - 12 books, which would not fit in the house, extreme.

***Is this behavior rational?***

*No, judging by the spaces occupied by the unread books in my house or rather in the places where I live because consider that I'm from Athens and I've been living here for the last few months, but I have two houses practically and I have the same habit in both houses so, no, it doesn't exactly make sense. – R3.*

*(...) but to see at that moment that you're at a book bazaar like in Thessaloniki, a book festival that's going on. From your mania of liking all books, you end up with a bag full of 10, 12 books. I think it's an exaggeration. – R9.*

Furthermore, Respondent 3 attributes a rationale to this type of consumption, arguing that the same applies to any good, be it clothes, a gadget or a mobile phone, which will be mentioned and analysed below.

In terms of constraints, according to the neoclassical theory of economics and as presented in the theoretical framework, there are two main constraints that affect rational thinking: time and income (Becker G. , 1965; Michael & Becker, 1973). The issue of lack of time, in terms of reading was also formulated by Panagiotopoulos (2022) and was also observed by the interviews.

More specifically, on the one hand, Respondent 15 stated that the issue of money and disposable income plays a crucial role.

*I don't have the money. That plays a very big role, don't underestimate it. If I had twice the salary I have now, I'd get twice the books and I might have 30 and 40 unread books. If I could, I would buy all the books in the world.*

On the other hand, Respondents 6 and 8 presented time as the dominant reason for not reading many books.

*There is no time. – R8.*

*I would have liked to, but I didn't have the time and secondly I hadn't found anything like that, at least where I am, or anything that was consistent online. – R6.*

### *6.1.2. "Rational for me": substantial reasoning and the concept of being rational for Homo Bibliophilii*

But there is a different rationality, beyond the instrumental computational and mechanical objectivity that neoclassical theory seeks to project, and that is substantial reasoning (Klamer, 2017). To the same question as above, several book lovers respondents answered with intensity: 'it makes sense to me'.

This personal rationality of book lovers can be very accurately attributed to Respondent 10's answer:

*For example, one might say that it's reasonable not to buy new books, which of course have a cost, if you haven't read the ones already on your shelf first... But that doesn't*



*make sense to me. Let me explain my thinking. I get a treat just by looking at the books on my library shelf. How can I put it... I want them to be there. Around me. It drives me crazy to be away from them. They're important to me and I don't care how much they cost...*

***Do you find this emotional attachment to the book reasonable?***

*If it made sense, we wouldn't do it. We chase the irrational. That's what are literature and books in general. Here's what else the book means to me. The irrational.*

Respondents 1 and 2 also emphatically put this different rationality, stating that “each one of us gives money to where (s)he is drawn to where (s)he loves where (s)he wants to” (Respondent 1), both citing clothes as an example. In other words, just as some people spend money on clothes or travel, book lovers do so on books, and this is rational.

*Others go out every weekend. Well, some spend too much money in the boudoir, others spend too much money on booze. Others spend too much money on women, that is, everyone spends on what they are passionate about and what they like. We are on the books – R1.*

*Because it's not possible, let's say... like with clothes we say that I know I know “don't get too many clothes because I know you already have” and so on, I think that, yes, it's a completely different subject, but I think that's also true with books, that is it would be good to read what you have and then, let's say, buy more or at least not have so many unread books. – R2.*

Some respondents, in fact, while slightly acknowledging an irrationality, did not want to discuss it further, did not want to look into it either because they wanted to “keep the magic” (Respondent 11), or because they “never thought about it in terms of rational or irrational. I don't care if it's rational. It makes me feel good” (Respondent 12), or because simply they never cared about it (Respondent 13).

Interestingly, Respondent 5's response is also interesting, stating that from a purely materialistic point of view, it may just be a consumer fad, but (s)he does not see the book as a mere commodity. For Respondent 5, then, it makes sense that this is the case because “the book moves you forward”. The rationality of buying or not buying is therefore based on the way one views the product itself and the value one assigns to it, as Klamer (2017) argues.

*That is, in all the other things that I have, because I'm not a very material person. I always think, do I need it? Do I need it? But I'll take it. But maybe because I see the book as an investment, meaning I know it's going to stay with me, I know I'm going to*

*read it at some point. I know that if I don't read it, my partner will read it, my children will read it, someone will read it anyway, it won't be left unread and uncomplained, at some point it will be read. – R5.*

Sometimes, in fact, a book is much more than just an object to buy. As Respondent 9 stated:

*You can identify with a character in the book, so whether you want to or not you're emotionally connected to the book. And not only do you identify with the hero, but you can be moved by a situation in general – R9.*

In any case, however, the way in which the rationality chapter can be closed in order to start the confrontation of the findings on irrationality is the position of Respondent 13:

*A book is a feeling. Let's leave rationality to the mathematicians and emotion to the book lovers. Let me put it another way. To me, it's the most rational thing in the world.  
- R13*

## 6.2 Irrationality

This chapter will analyze the concept of irrationality, the behaviors of book lovers, i.e. the behaviors that are counted by neoclassical thought as irrational or as simply unaccountable in economic thought. The chapter is divided into two parts. On the one hand, a brief reference will be made to the concept of positive addiction, which was used in the informant interviews (Respondent 1) and corresponds to the literature (Becker H., 1953; Stigler & Becker, 1977). On the other hand, the findings of the interviews on emotional attachment to books will be presented subsequently.

### 6.2.1. *The positive addiction and cultural capital*

According to Respondent 1, reading books is like a positive addiction, an addiction with a positive connotation, a positive passion, not “like the negative passions that are sung in songs”.

As Marshall (1923) put it, the taste for “good music” is the result of beneficial addiction, as opposed to harmful addiction to drugs or cigarettes. What Marshall is essentially saying is what Becker (1953) said about marijuana use, that no one becomes a user overnight, but learns, constantly engaging with the qualities and manifestations of a situation. Of course, the characterization of good and bad addiction is up to the value and positives that contact with culture and high culture brings to a person, as opposed to harmful drugs. This is why Stigler and Becker (1977) distinguish Marshall's concept of beneficial addiction from consumption capital.

In the case of the present investigation, the interviews showed that to a large extent the interviewees' exposure to books from their family environment and childhood played an important role in their later emotional attachment and intense book consumption, confirming Panagiotopoulos (2022). More specifically, Respondent 3 was “always surrounded by books”, while for Respondent 15, it was the father who “got him/her into the game”.

*He read too much. He had a small bookstore - an antique shop in the center of town. So, I grew up there. Among the books and I learned to respect them in a special way. Patiently. To read them and look forward to the next one. Thanks to him I have this wonderful relationship with books (...) – R15*

The general presence of books in domestic spaces was something that also influenced Respondent 5, who remembers “always his/her mother holding a book in her hands”, influencing him/her subsequently. Respondent 13 described his/her mother as a “bookworm”, “who taught them that way of thinking and functioning”, resulting in “being a bookworm ever since he/she can remember”. In many cases even the intellectual achievements of the parents influence the children and future booklovers, as in the example of Respondent 9.

*My father pushed me into it, because he himself had won competitions on books, had written some short poems and had won various competitions and generally pushed me into this beautiful spiritual world. With very nice books we had already started reading, 'A child, counting the stars', 'Little Prince'. "The Nightingale and the Red Rose" by Oscar Wilde. Then I started reading books on my own. William Shakespeare. - R9*

### 6.2.2. *Materiality and Emotional Attachment*

The most important aspect in the whole question of irrationality is emotional attachment. Through the interviews it was observed that there are two forms of emotional attachment, one to the material and the other to the story itself. Attachment to the material constitutes an indication of a strong identification with the book beyond the story, with its pages, special and rare editions, hardbacks, while attachment to the story told by the book constitutes an identification with its content, which can be consumed in many ways (ebooks, audiobooks etc.) beyond the traditional book form. And this, in turn, largely judges the attitude of book lovers towards lending and borrowing.

For example, Respondent 12 is quite attached to books and considers them “his/her and only his/her”, while Respondent 2 wants to see the books in his/her library, just like Respondent 8, who is “afraid that the books will come back crumpled or dirty and he/she will not be able to find the same edition to put in his/her library”. Of course, the strongest response was that of

Respondent 13, who doesn't want “anything to do with lending, since the books are mine, I love the material, I want to smell and feel them”. In short, the above findings additionally confirm Thumala Olave's (2020) findings on book iconicity.

The emotional attachment to the material in the book is complemented by the emotional attachment to the story and content, characters, and plot. Respondent 4 “puts a lot of emphasis on the story part, which is why he/she likes to borrow and lend books”. What is essentially left, for the book lover, is the thinking, the calculation, the identification with the characters and the story. This, of course, does not mean that there is no attachment to the object as such, as stated by Respondent 15:

*Just as you attach yourself to objects that have specific symbolism, so too with books. And one more reason for books is that they are not just objects ... They contain stories literally. Emotions. Thoughts. So, it's not a matter of logic. - R15*

Book lovers like to read stories because they become part of them, they see themselves in situations and, according to Respondent 15, that is why they buy a lot of books, “because they give themselves the opportunity to see other versions of life” (as George R.R. Martin said).

*I like to put myself in the place of the protagonists and live their experiences (...) If I were to say it in one word, I would use this: another life (...) To read them once and then there they are, waiting for me to come back. – R15.*

The specificity of this situation is also presented by Respondent 1, who, characterizing the book as freedom, stated that:

*You read a book and bond with paper heroes. They are heroes who are paper ones, they are not real, you won't meet them on the street. You won't talk like you talk with Helen, Kostas, Nikos, Thanasis. They are people, creatures you will never see. And yet you become attached to them. You can cry, you can laugh, you can get angry. So, it's freedom. – R1.*

However, the emotional value of the book depends on many factors and is quite limited to the individual booklover. In other words, Respondent 1 approached the book as “freedom”, while many approach the connection with the book for purely psychological reasons, such as Respondents 5 and 8:

*I consider books to be a hobby. It is something you are emotionally attached to and love. It's something you see it as a tool to move forward, to learn, to imagine, to go to other worlds. Possibly they are also inextricably linked to your psychology (...) I'm a very emotional person, which means that my last two purchases, while I have too many*

*books and I know I have too many books, were because one day I was boo-hooed and I wanted to somehow take my mind off things. So, the act of going to browse books and ultimately buying was a very psychological thing. It was a kind of psychotherapy to me.*  
- R5.

*(...) have a lot of fun with a book, I travel with a book, which means that a book relaxes me. I find it's number one, let's say, for my Psychology to get me up, let's say, regardless of the genre. – R8.*

But in any case, it is not always the same for everyone. Not all booklovers see the consumption of books (whether as hedonistic material or as history) as anything beyond a mere consumption habit, which simply provides pleasure.

*I would say more of a consumer habit than an investment. Very difficult, there are some books that are indeed investments. There are very few of them (...) And the difficult thing is that you don't know which book from the beginning is an investment so, usually you have to read it. – R7.*

What can be said at this point, then, is that the rationality or irrationality of book consumption in the terms presented above is left to the individual and to a process of different valorization.

### 6.3 Different Valorization

In this chapter, will conclude the analysis of the findings by discussing the different valorization, the different prioritization of utility that book lovers make when it comes to books and why books are so important to them. In other words, it will be a discussion about values.

#### 6.3.1. *Simple habit or a moment of completion?*

The first stage of this finding depends on whether reading books is for book lovers a mere consumption habit because of consumption capital (Stigler & Becker, 1977) or a moment of completion. Respondents largely rejected the idea of a simple compulsive habit, i.e. that they read simply because they are used to it, and identified more – each in their own way – with the idea of books as completion. Respondent 15 stated that “books are a part of me”, Respondent 13 claimed that reading books is “a part of my character”, while Respondent 9 stated that the process of reading is for her/his own “personal fulfillment”.

In addition, Respondent 2 emphasized the role played by the book itself, stating that:

*It really plays a big part in all of what the book is or how much it will draw you in, because sometimes you might not care, you might not even know about it (the book) and you might start the book and it might surprise you in the end, but sometimes it's a matter of routine really, let's say it's a bit compulsive and I'll read, every day for a while. – R2*

At the same time, Respondent 1 described the relationship of simple habit or moment of completion as something unremarkable, since:

*Because the book is a moment of completion. Each chapter completes you or leaves you in the aftermath and then you have to keep going and you go until 4 o'clock in the morning. So you see, it's a completion. - R1*

### *6.3.2. The social value of Books and Bookclubs*

For booklovers, the value of books often goes beyond the personal element, personal pleasure and personal fulfillment and often goes as far as having a social value for themselves. As commodities define and express social relations (Appadurai, 1986), the social value of the book is manifested additionally in the various reading clubs or book clubs, where booklovers meet either online or in person and discuss, exchange views and possibly perceive the book itself differently.

For example, Respondent 11 identified a “sense of belonging” in book clubs and stated that “quite a few people identify themselves as booklovers and belong to a group. Quite a few people, a minority in the general total, and that of course gives us a specialty!”. A different perspective - although on the same wavelength - was expressed by Respondent 5.

*So, I think it has a lot to do with a lot of factors that for me are different, because the book is also something that you share. I mean you can read it and bring it into a conversation, you can read it and it informs your work, your thoughts, your relationships, you can read it and be in a club and discuss it and connect with some people through the book. (...) I think you learn a lot of things from the discussion and I feel that sometimes I read a book and I have this need to discuss it with someone. I don't consider why I liked it, but what the book left me with. - R5*

This view is shared by Respondent 4:

*(...) it stops being so personal and intrinsic. When you read something without being associated with a reading club, it's somehow you and your thoughts about the thing you read. Unless you sit down to look for reviews, analyses, whatever on the internet.*

*Whereas in a club it's much more social, meaning you'll exchange opinions, you'll laugh together in a scene, you'll get excited together about something, or you'll get upset together about something, or you'll hate something together. So, there will be a lot of exchange of opinions. - R4*

For Respondent 7, the contact with reading clubs and with limited time frames pushes the book lover to read more, to learn things about the book and its history, to discuss, to argue, which he/she would not do if he/she read alone. This situation, in fact, for Respondent 8 is “funny”, as it is essentially an interaction around “the exact same thing from a completely different perspective”.

For some book lovers, of course, what matters is the book itself, not the context in which it is read. Obviously, it could also be a social product in some ways, but that's not where its real value lies.

*No, the book itself will increase me to read it more than anything. The only thing that will increase what I like will be afterwards discussing it with the people who read it together. I won't like it more because someone else liked it. - R1*

*It's a bit social. You network, but for me that's not what plays the most important role...  
- R13*

### *6.3.3. The right thing to do*

It is evident, so far, that the conflict of rationality and irrationality within the book lover, reaches the point of creating the conditions for different valorization. In other words, as will become evident below, the issue is not the rationality or irrationality of buying books, but the different value attached to the book, its material and content. To put it differently, book lovers buy and read books to such an excessive degree because this is the right thing to do for them, as Klamer (2017) has written.

So, respondents were asked, “what does the book mean to them?”, “why is it so important?” and their answers clearly articulated this different valorization. According to Respondent 12, “the book is something that calms you down, helps you escape (...) the book is my whole being”. This statement is close to Thumala Olave’s (2018) second type of booklover.

Respondent 15 described the book as “a lifelong relationship” or “a painkiller”, “giving you a little time to relax”, while Respondent 14 described the book as “a constant friend” and enjoys “sitting at home in the evenings and reading books”. Respondent 10 expressed exactly the same view, that “books define me. They are part of me. Without them I would not be who I am”.

Books, therefore, are very important for book lovers, because they are an integral part of their lives, “they are the only thing I deal with” (Respondent 13), “they shape my character” (Respondent 6) and they cannot imagine their lives without them. Respondent 11 also made this very clear:

*It's an integral part of my life, it's part of who I am. Generally speaking, whether we look at it as a quest for knowledge, as entertainment, or as leisure. It's part of my life, I mean it's not a discrete part, it's sort of organically integrated into my life... - R11*

For Respondent 5, books have multiple value, they connect people, “take you on a journey”, something that Respondent 3 agrees with.

*(...) I think I will continue to say that books are something that teaches you, connects you to people, takes you on a journey. I see that their value is multiple and not just one. (...) It connects us to people through our shared love of books. And they teach us things. - R5*

*They've always been in my life so much that I've forgotten why. I'll tell you the first thing I can think of right now. It's important to travel, whether physically or spiritually, and the fact that I have a window into spiritual travel and so easily is pretty important. The financial value of a book to me does not increase or decrease its importance (...). - R3*

In an ever-changing world, books are a symbol of security and a constant companion in life, as the third type of Thumala Olave’s (2018) book lover. Even the heroes of books themselves, in moments of instability, come alive and make a book lover's life different. In this, Respondent 3 highlights that “a book is an opening to another world. It's a company. I'm talking about the characters in the book, that you enter and become part of. (...) you enter another daily life”, while Respondent 2 pointed out that:

*Look, it's a companion. Books are tranquility. In the meantime, because I change places too often. Every September when I go to a new place, books are a constant in my life. That is, let's say, when I pack a suitcase of things to take with me, I will pack my books first and then my clothes. And I don't know, I think it plays a lot like a companion to me, I mean I feel like I'm going to take the books along and they're going to keep me company. It's definitely a relaxation too. It's also a way of entertaining all of that, but I think because you told me what part of my life it covers, I think it's more of a companionship. That's where I'm coming from. And even the heroes I mean it's companionship, you know book heroes. Also, every time I read a book, it's like entertainment in my mind, you know it's what we make pictures a little bit like watching a movie, but*



*you're reading a book, I mean you're imagining it, so it's entertainment at the same time. - R2*

For Respondent 1, of course, the book means “freedom” and “a starting point”. On the one hand, the notion of freedom is that you are lost in another world and allowed to identify with anything and anyone you want.

*Yes, first of all you become one with the book. You become the hero of the book. You become the man of power, the beautiful princess, you become the villain who wants to destroy them all. In the book, you have the freedom to transform yourself in the book into any character you want without having to apologize to anyone without having to explain to anyone why you like it and if someone turns around and says, “well did you like that hero?”, “yeah, that hero clicked for me”. - R1*

On the other hand, for Respondent 1 the book is a beginning, in the sense that something is created from scratch: a world, different characters, a story, adventures and experiences. The whole business of creating imaginary worlds has also fascinated Respondent 4.

*Because books are the ones that start to create, to open your mind. Books are the ones that start producing images for you. They create questions for you, they create ideas, they start conversations (...) They are the beginning of something. - R1*

Both Respondent 1 and Respondent 4 are close to Thumala Olave’s (2018) first type of book lover. Respondent 4 is fascinated by the story itself and not so much by the material. In other words, what matters in a book is the story itself and this is why Respondent 4 stressed that:

*Story. I don't know... Living an experience. To feel emotions, to experience things I would never experience. To know character, psyches and see psychological or even normal situations that you wouldn't encounter in everyday life. It's a little bit of the book itself as an object, with the pages, the letters, the words. I don't know how to put the beauty of the writing in there. - R4*

Of course, the same is not true for all book lovers. For some, the material plays the same role, has similar value, with the story itself.

*For me at least, the meaning of the book is everything. The cover. The quality of the paper. The binding. The fonts. Did you know that they used to put colognes in the ink so it would smell good too. Unbelievable. A book isn't just about the story. It's much more than that. - R13*

This is because for book lovers, books and everything connected with them are their moments. It is synonymous with leisure and time spent on themselves.

*But in general, I have connected the book with me. It's my moment. Let's say because I'm very busy, a little bit with family, then work and so on and so forth, I don't have many moments to myself, so for me the book equals a moment of relaxation for myself.*

- R7

In any case, this different valorization is expressed precisely in the fact that, unlike other goods or services, the book is for book lovers a vital part of them, gives them joy and is important, whether they buy a lot of books (Respondent 15) or “a few and targeted” (Respondent 4).

#### 6.4 Final Words

In this chapter, guided by the conceptual model (see Figure 1.1), were analyzed the findings of the 15 interviews. Not many unexpected findings were particularly observed, and all flowed according to the research design.

The chapter was divided into three parts, just like the conceptual model. First, instrumental rationality and the concept of rationality for booklovers was mainly expressed in the context of a relationship between disposable income and leisure time, which does not conflict with neo-classical economic theory. What does clash, however, with consumer behavior hypotheses is what exactly happens when the investigation goes beyond these narrow contexts, i.e. when it comes to what exactly the book means to book lovers. In other words, income – time constraints may remain in the debate, but whether or not intense book consumption is ultimately rational or not is a matter of how one perceives rationality. So, for book lovers it is rational to buy 50 books a year, precisely because they attach a different value to what they do. It's important to them.

Issues that for neoclassical theory are irrational, such as positive addiction or the emphasis on materiality or even emotional attachment to a good, in the end what became apparent from the fifteen interviews and discussion with book lovers is that they are not a matter of rationality. They do not care if what they are doing is rational or not, because they just attach another value to it and that is exactly what is rational for them. The book is not a mere commodity, but symbolizes “freedom”, “security”, “a moment of completion”, “a part of their character”.

## Ch7 – Conclusion

### 7.1 Summary

In this thesis, was made an attempt to investigate the content of different valorization, i.e. the emphasis of value beyond the purely monetary one, the true value of books. In contrast to neoclassical economic theory, which strongly presents the barriers and the marginal principle, the marginal utility (“stop acting when the total utility tends to equal the costs”), it became evident, from the fifteen interviews, that book lovers, Homo Bibliophilii, assign a different value to books compared to the general population. Thus, issues that rational choice theory does not include in its analysis, such as materiality or emotional attachment, appeared from the interviews to be important factors in the consumption behavior of a specific group of intensive consumers, book lovers. In other words, Homo Bibliophilii, book lovers do not care about the rationality or otherwise of their decisions. They do not even think about it, precisely because for them it is the rational thing to do.

Our muse, from the Introduction, on that December afternoon, who shrugged in response and scowled as she approached the cashier, is not some an irrational consumer immersed in the fantasies and madness of bibliophilia. On the contrary, she is an intensive consumer, who operates according to her own rationality, who gives another meaning and value to consumption and reading books. A meaning, very different from other products and at the same time identical to the simplest consumption, for book lovers.

So, returning to the research question

#### **“Why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?”**

it is obvious, now that the data has been analyzed, that there is no question of rationality or irrationality in such narrow terms. Rationality is something quite subjective for book lovers and mainly responds to Respondent 13's statement that "Bibliophilia is a feeling and for me it is the most rational thing in the world". Book lovers, Homo Bibliophilii, refuse to see book reading in terms of rationality, hardly acknowledge these rhetoric, and if they finally do, they simply do not care. Instead, the meaning they attach to this act, the fact that for them it is the right thing to do, rests on the fact that the book is a symbol of freedom, security, personal fulfilment and a sense of belonging. It is part of their character and ultimately their very life. They “cannot imagine their life without reading” (Respondent 11).

So the answer to the research question "Why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrational-ally?" is that they do the right thing for them. In their own value code, closely derived from their family environment, the dictates of their internal spectator are to behave in this way, to buy lots of books, to stack them in their libraries, to feel good about their presence in their space.

Klamer's (2008; 2016; 2017; 2019; 2020; 2021) attempt, then, to move the discussion of values beyond monetary, into the context of another economy, in the case of book lovers, is paying off.

However, in the end, the question that remains in the mind of the researcher is: "are we talking about a new kind of consumer?". Is Homo Bibliophilus, a new consumer? Homo Bibliophilus is an idealized actor, in conflict with homo economicus. It is a concept that assumes this different valorization, that responds to this kind of co-consumption and presents a different behavior from that of the established and standard economic model.

## 7.2 Contributions

Research on book reading in Greece is particularly incomplete. The absence of a National Book Centre in the last ten years has made the implementation of research and book policies in Greece difficult. Apart from Panagiotopoulos' book (2022) and the various quantitative (mainly) studies published in recent years by the Greek Collecting Society for Literary Work (OSDEL, 2022), there is no qualitative research concerning the Greek book lover.

Therefore, the project of the present thesis is specifically important, since at least for the Greek data there is no previous research on the field. So, the gaps, at least as far as the case is concerned, are many.

The advantages of the present investigation include, apart from the freedom and spontaneity of the data, the qualitative approach of the approach. For the first time, purely qualitative research was conducted, targeted with fifteen book lovers, many of them in their local area and others via ZOOM, rather than small street interviews with random citizens outside bookstores, as Panagiotopoulos (2022) and OSDEL (2022) did. In other words, a key advantage of the thesis is that it focused specifically and qualitatively on a particular category of readers, the 31% who read more than 10 books a year, the book lovers, the intensive cultural consumers.

## 7.3 Limitations

The main limitation of this thesis is the limited time of the research, imposed by the academic semester, and the impossibility of returning to the interviewees for confirmation and further exploration of the topic and its aspects, without this meaning that theoretical saturation has not occurred.

Several issues still remain to be researched in the field of book love and cultural consumption, such as for example the quantification of the above qualitative conclusions, the research

on willingness to pay, the answer to the question “how is it possible to maintain the intensity and further develop this different valorization even in non-intensive readers” that will push the research into a deeper discussion of cultural capital, which is admittedly absent from this thesis.

In terms of methodology, the concept of Homo Bibliophilus needs to receive further attention, possibly using more advanced methodology such as Grounded Theory, but this will also take more time to develop.

#### 7.4 Recommendations

In case there were no time constraints, as required by a postgraduate investigation, this research could have been extended. More specifically, from the interviews and the analysis of the material it became apparent that emotional attachment to stories, as a means of attracting readers to books, is quite related to whether a book lover is at the same time an author. In other words, in case there was more time, after analyzing the above interviews, I would have returned to the respondents who stated that they were involved in writing and repeated the interviews investigating “to what extent being involved in writing changes the valorization of books by intensive readers”.

#### 7.5. Lessons

As far as the personal knowledge gained from the research is concerned, I can say that, due to the fact that this topic is very deep in my interests, being a book lover and a novelist myself, it broadened my horizons on an issue that is part of my everyday life.

At the same time, the deep theoretical discussion about neoclassical economics, the core of economic thought and the rationality – irrationality debate in consumer behavior excited me, prompting me to seek and explore issues that have always - since my undergraduate years - kept coming back to my mind, tweaking my research acumen.

In any case, the above exploration concludes for me a two-year long research quest and constant reflection and dialogues with myself on the phenomenon of intensive cultural consumption, which apart from pushing me towards the academic discipline of cultural economics, guided me throughout my postgraduate studies.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A – Consent Form

#### **CONSENT REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH**

#### **FOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY, CONTACT:**

Fotios Panagiotis Kyzakis, 635076fk@eur.nl, +30 6981880718

#### **DESCRIPTION**

You are invited to participate in research about Book love and cultural consumption in Greece. The purpose of the study is to understand why and what does it mean the fact that books are realized as very highly valued by a specific kind of consumers, in order to, finally, answer the main research question of “why do Homo Bibliophilii behave irrationally?”. At least 10 book lovers will be interviewed, and each interview will last for about 30 – 45 minutes. If asked for, the full research can be shared.

Your acceptance to participate in this study means you accept being interviewed. In general terms:

- The interview questions are about the interviewees' personal views on books and reading.
- The questions focus on the meanings, feelings and value that the interviewees attribute to books.
- My observations will focus mainly on the relationship between rationality and non-rationality of co-emotional attachment to the book and ultimately on the value of the book itself.
- You are always free not to answer any particular question and stop participating at any point.



## **RISKS AND BENEFITS**

As far as I can tell, no risks are associated with participating in this research. Yet, you are free to decide whether I should or should not use your name or other identifying information. If you prefer, I will make sure that you cannot be identified, by using a general identification (such as respondent x).

I will use the material from the interviews and my observation exclusively for academic work, such as further research, educational meetings, and publications.

## **TIME INVOLVEMENT**

Your participation in this study will take about 30 - 45 minutes. You may interrupt your participation at any time.

## **PARTICIPANTS' RIGHTS**

If you have decided to accept participation in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. You have the right to refuse to answer particular questions. If you prefer, your identity will be made known in all written data resulting from the study. Otherwise, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

## **CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS**

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact –anonymously, if you wish Dr. Aldo Do Carmo Junior (docarmo@eshcc.eur.nl)

## **SIGNING THE CONSENT FORM**

If you sign this consent form, your signature will be the only documentation of your identity. Thus, you DO NOT NEED to sign this form. In order to minimize risks and protect your identity, you may prefer to consent orally. Your oral consent is sufficient.

I give consent to be audiotaped during this study:

Name -

Signature -

Date -

I prefer my identity to be revealed in all written data resulting from this study

Name -

Signature -

Date –

### Appendix B – List of Interviewees

Number of inter-views	Interviewees	When	Duration
1	R1	10/05/2023	45:43
2	R2	12/05/2023	42:07
3	R3	16/05/2023	39:26
4	R4	18/05/2023	45:21
5	R5	20/05/2023	46:54
6	R6	28/05/2023	37:09
7	R7	29/05/2023	45:34
8	R8	29/05/2023	32:13
9	R9	01/06/2023	44:08
10	R10	01/06/2023	42:29
11	R11	02/06/2023	45:42
12	R12	02/06/2023	41:55
13	R13	03/06/2023	35:40
14	R14	03/06/2023	40:02
15	R15	03/06/2023	42:07

### Appendix C – Interviewees' Profiles

**R1** – (S)he buys almost 50 books a year and considers them an investment because she is saving them for her daughters. Apart from that, (s)he believes that books open horizons and create conversations and are also synonymous with freedom, which makes you lose yourself in another world. (S)he is also a writer. (S)he does not lend. S(h)e does not borrow.

**R2** – (S)he buys almost 30 books a year and considers books an investment, since you gain things from them, without excluding the simple consumer habit, but (s)he considers reading to

be quite psychotherapeutic. It seems absurd to him/her that we buy books when we do not read them, but (s)he continues to do so.

**R3** – (S)he buys an average of about 30 books a year and is always on the hunt for deals and discounts. Many times, (s)he may buy books (s)he does not need just to sweeten the deal, and books are primarily a consumer habit, but an investment in the sense of resale.

**R4** – (S)he buys 10 - 12 books a year and always makes sure to buy targeted books, and for her what matters most is the story and the characters and not so much the material, which is why (s)he borrows a lot of books and reads e-books.

**R5** – (S)he buys almost 100 books a year, in any format, has quite an emotional connection to books, something that has been developed in her/his family environment, and beyond a process of psychotherapy, it is a journey and the purchase is based on inner motivations.

**R6** – For this person, a book is just a way of entertainment, a window into another world, but this does not mean that there is an emotional connection with the book or that buying it is an investment. The book is a simple consumption habit that brings pleasure.

**R7** – (S)he buys about 20 books a year and considers books a mere consumer habit, as he invests little in them. (S)he likes borrowing and feels guilty when (s)he has enough unread books and buys more books and enjoys reading books with her/his children.

**R8** – This person buys between 10 and 20 books a year, depending on their financial situation. Books fill him/her with emotions, and (s)he finds it very amusing to see different perspectives and opinions about a book in a reading group.

**R9** – (S)he buys about 20 books a year, mostly of her/his science, but also reads literature in the summer. (S)he considers them a very good friend, who on one hand you identify with and on the other hand opens your intellectual horizons.

**R10** – (S)he buys about 40 books a year, and he/she does not like to think of books by genre because it limits the search. The book itself is a need and a fulfillment, and (s)he cannot imagine life without reading.

**R11** – (S)he buys about 30 books a year and his/her relationship with books is a lifelong relationship, where you talk to them, you open a dialogue, and they are always there.

**R12** – (S)he buys about 10 to 15 books a year. He/she is happy to buy books but prefers to have a few good ones. (S)he does not lend them because he/she is attached to them.

**R13** – (S)he buys 40 to 50 books a year and books are the only thing (s)he does. (S)he loves their material, (s)he wants to smell them and feel them. The book is connected to his/her whole daily life.

**R14** – (S)he does not have a fixed number of books (s)he buys per year, as it depends on the pace of his reading. (S)he is the model of the rational consumer, who does not buy books until (s)he has finished what (s)he has already unread and keeps a list of books for future purchases.

**R15** – (S)he buys about 20 books a year but tries to keep her book buying rate in line with her income. (S)he understands those who buy a lot of books who do not read them soon, and (s)he would do so if it weren't for the financial barriers.

## Appendix D – Interview Guide

### Part 1 – Warm up Questions

1. Can you tell me your full name?
2. What is your favourite genre and what is your favourite book?

### Part 2 – Bibliophilia and consumer behaviour

1. How many books do you buy per month?
  - a. What part of your income do you put into buying books?

- b. Do you consider it an investment? Or just a consumption habit (**Is the book iconic?**)
  - c. What does a book mean to you?
- 2. Borrowing? Do you borrow books? (**materiality**)
- 3. Do you have unread books? Tell me some.

### Part 3 – Bibliophilia and Rationality

- 1. Do you find this habit rational? That is, that you have so many unread books and yet you buy more?
  - a. When you buy another book that will go on the long list of unread books, what are your thoughts?
- 2. Do you find this emotional attachment to the book rational?

### Part 4 – Bibliophilia and Values

- 1. How would you describe your relationship with books? What part of your life do they cover?
- 2. How often do you read books?
  - a. And how do you feel about it?
  - b. Is it a simple habit or a moment of accomplishment? (R2)
- 3. How long do you consider yourself a bibliophile?
  - a. Since when do you remember yourself among books?
  - b. And to what extent do you identify with this concept?
- 4. Are you a member of a reading or book club?
  - a. Does the process of reading change when done in these contexts? Exchange of views, etc.?
  - b. Do you enjoy it more or less? Does the desire to read increase (pleasure is strongly associated with the desire to read)?
- 5. Why are books so valuable to you? (R1)

## Appendix E – Codebook

Open Coding (First Step - Codes)		Axis Coding (Second Step - Subtheme)		Selective Coding (Themes)
<b>Emotional Attachment</b>	(...) I'm generally very attached to the subject so it's very difficult for me to read a book that I get very emotionally attached to and at the end of the month I have to return it and I don't know its fate at all - R10	<b>Emotional Attachment</b>	All the pieces of my life. I cannot imagine my life without reading - R11	<b>Irrationality</b>
<b>The enthusiasm of books lovers</b>	That's where you get excited and buy it, or you might buy something with the understanding that you'll read it much later in the first place. For me with many of my books this happens. - R4			
<b>The positive addiction</b>	It is an addiction, simply because it is an addiction that is positive, it leaves a positive mark. It leaves you with a positive connotation. It doesn't count with the negative passions that are sung and in the songs, but it's actually a passion. – R1			
<b>Materiality</b>	Far from me. The books are mine. I love their material. I want to see them. Smell them. Feel them. What's the point if I take it for a while and then give it back? None. – R13	<b>Materiality</b>	I am attached to books. They are mine and mine alone. – R12	
<b>Fear of Running out of Books</b>	I've always wanted to have a cavalcade of books with the view that just in case something happens, and I don't have money to be able to buy. I try to never run out of books. Oh well, books are thousands of millions basically. So as soon as I found a book that I liked or learned about some books by authors that I didn't know, then I started getting all their books if I liked one. Always in fear of running out			

	of books or whatever. - R1			
<b>Surrounded by books</b>	In general, I grew up in a house where people read, especially my mom, especially when I was growing up I always remember her always keeping a book on the beach, on the couch. It's something I had exposure to very large. And my dad in my early childhood. My dad has stopped, he read more newspapers and stuff but, my mom always had a book, so I think from a psychological point of view I also had that exposure to the book from a very young age. Beyond that, I remember our mum read us a lot of books like Eugene Trevisas, The Cabin of Barba Thomas. I know all that Anna Frank stuff and so on. My mom read them to us every night. And when I was at a better age, I remember my first book was Pirates of the Caribbean and Harry Potter. And The Tramp. I don't remember what age I was when I was 8? 9? I started a little bit and I was reading on my own. But always up to the third grade, I was taking finals and reading books. It's not something I ever gave up. - R5	<b>Cultural Capital</b>	Honestly my first memories are book memories. I've been reading since I learned to write, since kindergarten, so I can't... Since I learned to write I identify myself as a bibliophile because I read all the time... - R10	
<b>Moment of Completion</b>	It is a process that I want and do for my own personal fulfillment. - R9	<b>Moment of Completion</b>	I'm completing. It's part of my character. - R13	
<b>The importance of books</b>	for me it's a vital part (...) I don't know what to say to that. I think I want, I mean for me it is, important, but I don't know why it might be important. It's not that it's something that keeps me in life, for example, but it's something that gives me joy. It's	<b>The right thing to do</b>	Each one of us gives money where we are drawn to where we love where we want to (...) It helps you a lot because it opens your horizons, it eliminates racism in the sense that when you read	

## Different Valorization

	something that gives me joy, I'll stay here. - R8		many things, many heroes, many subjects, you see other views and other things. - R1	
<b>The right thing to do</b>	For me at least, the meaning of the book is everything. The cover. The quality of the paper. The binding. The fonts. Did you know that they used to put colognes in the ink so it would smell good too. Unbelievable. A book isn't just about the story. It's much more than that. - R13			
<b>The social value of books and book clubs</b>	(...) it ceases to be both personal and yours and intrinsic. When you read something without being associated with a reading club, it's somehow you and your thoughts about the thing you read. Unless you sit down to look for reviews, analyses, whatever on the internet. Whereas in a club it's much more social, meaning you'll exchange opinions, you'll laugh together in a scene, you'll get excited about something together, or you'll get upset about something together, or you'll hate something together. So there will be a great exchange of opinions – R4	<b>Sense of belonging</b>	It is also a sense of belonging. A lot of people identify themselves as bibliophiles and belong to a group. Quite a few people, a minority, of course, in the general group and that of course gives it a special character!- R11	
<b>Rational for me</b>	Don't bring up rationality... please... It's not about rationality. Who cares about it? I like it and I do it! – R13.	<b>Rational for me</b>	The book is a feeling. Let's leave logic to the mathematicians and emotion to the book lovers. Let me put it another way. To me, it's the most rational thing in the world. - R13	
<b>Constraints</b>	I don't have the money. That plays a very big role, don't underestimate it. If I had twice the salary I have now, I'd get twice the books and I might have 30 and 40 unread books. If I could and I would buy all the	<b>Instrumental Rationality</b>	I try to keep a balance between "I want all the books in the world" and my income, which is meager" (...) "Okay, I'm trying to keep my reading rate at two a month, so you	

## Rationality



	books in the world – R15		know, everything I take I read. Like a machine thing. Haha... – R15	
<b>Instrumental Rationality</b>	To be honest, I have a lot of books and the truth is that after too many book disappointments, I would see books that I would say oh what a nice cover or what a nice theme and that I was afraid of – R1			

Table 2.1. Coding Tree and Examples

Appendix F – Figures

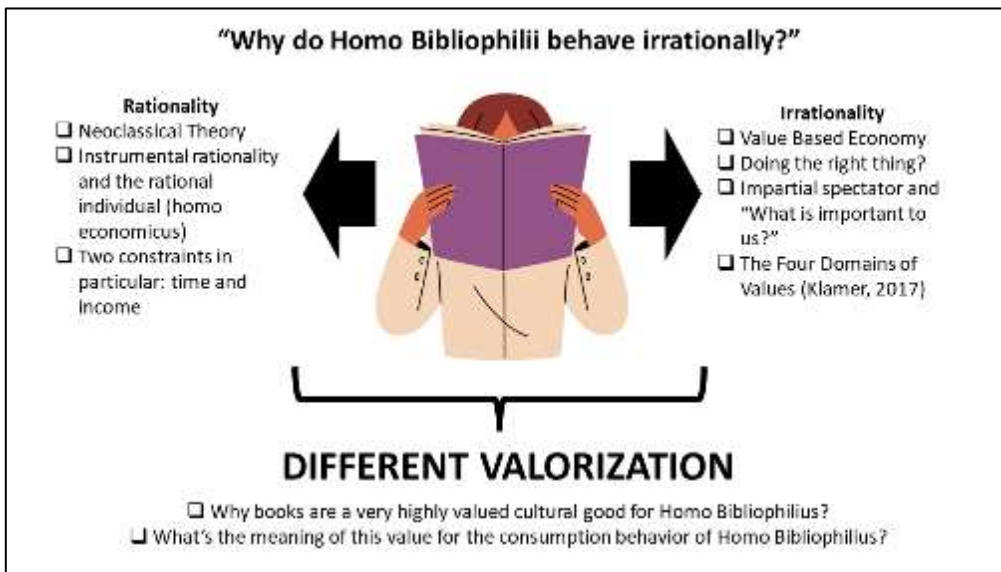


Figure 1.1 – Conceptual Model (by the author)

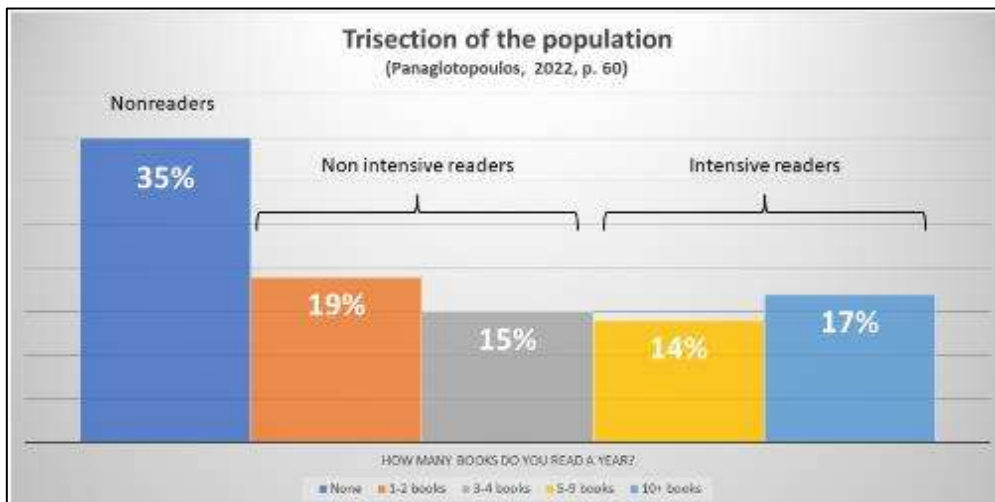


Figure 2.1 – Trisection of the population (illustrated by the author)

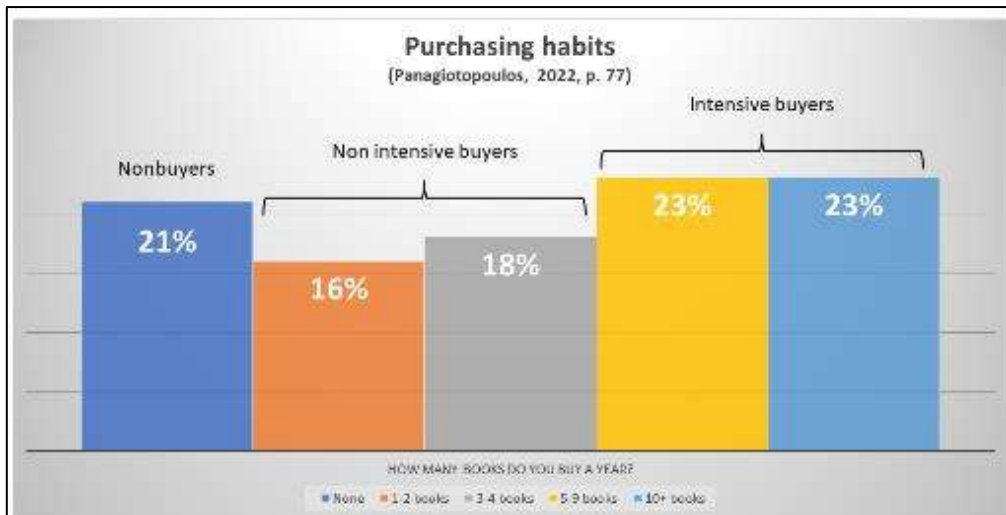


Figure 2.2 – Purchasing Habits (illustrated by the author)

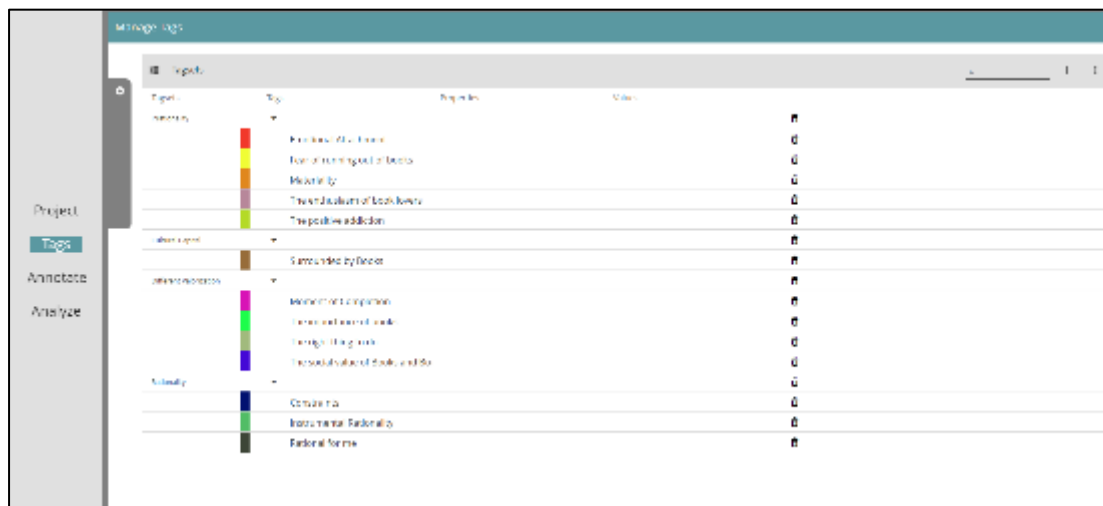


Figure 2.3 – CATMA Tags and Tagsets