

ethnographic parenthesis B }

Relativity of “Too Much”

Occasionally the daughters of the household would ask me if they could use my smartphone, to listen to and watch a favorite song on YouTube or to research some information for their homework on the internet. One day, they had a different objective. “What is it, you want to do?” I asked the older one. “I just want to have a look at something”, she replied. A bit curious, I handed over my phone and looked over their shoulders. Then it became clear that today they had set their minds to doing research on fashion. Inspired by one of the leading actresses of their most favorite TV show, a soap opera that was aired around prime time, they were eager to find pictures of similar dresses and shoes. They were stunned by the variety of cocktail dresses and high-heeled shoes and sandals they could find. Clothes and accessories, I hasten to add here, which cannot be bought at the weekly Suq in the valley. Hence, they looked at me in some disbelief when I said that in some places there were even shops where you could order such fashion items directly via the internet and which would then be shipped and delivered to your doorstep.

Once their mother noticed what her daughters were doing and looking at, she laughed and shook her head in disapproval. Then she fixed me with her eyes and said insistently: “They always want more and more. More of such unnecessary things. But already they have far too much stuff...”

