


## As if someone has distorted your settings

Esme 

*What is your definition of normality?*


It's hard to define "normal". The definition may lead to many different things if we keep talking about it or experiencing it. The first thing that comes to my mind about normality is . It changes from person to person. It's a very ambiguous term. The concept of normality floats in the air; you cannot classify or create a stereotype out of it. For me, normality is open to broader meanings and definitions. However, I consider anyone who is aware of themselves and the people around them to be normal.

Abnormal is easier to define. I relate abnormality to anything that I consider unhealthy. For example, when I realise that I am not healthy or thinking straight, that's abnormal. Or whenever I overthink something specific and still can't make sense of it, despite the time spent on thinking and thinking all over again. The moment I start to think otherwise instead of over-thinking is the moment that everything turns normal to me. It is quite complicated.

I think abnormality emerges when you stop listening to the sounds in your soul in your body and to the animals inside you. What arises when you stop listening to the voices in your mind is what is not normal. When you move away from your needs and the needs of the system of your body, that's when abnormality occurs, as if someone has distorted your settings.

Since I would like to avoid generalising or categorising almost everything, I can't make any assumption about my own normal or abnormal personality traits. I am not quite sure how to define myself in the context of normality. I do not have the kind of mentality which categorises what is normal or what is abnormal. In a nutshell, I generally try to avoid comparison of something with something else.

*How have your childhood and family impacted your later life?*

That's a complicated issue. Kafka wrote in a letter to his father, "For children, the only thing that a parent must do is to embrace the children with all their heart". While growing up, everyone searches for love. In that sense, it doesn't matter whether you grow up in an intellectual environment or not. All that matters is good communication between each other. My family has never been the kind of family to . We have always had good communication, for which I consider myself lucky, but in a broader sense, the concept of family is hard to deal with. If you go into the happiest-looking family, you will find that every family has its own issues. To sum up, my family has always set me free, which then allowed me to find my world.

*Do you think being an actress changed your views on normality?*

Becoming an actress has changed everything in my life. I wouldn't be me if I weren't an actress. Probably it's the same for anyone who does his/her job passionately. I don't know if it's because of the nature of acting but when you become an actor/actress you become a more curious person, curious about almost everything. All the characters that I have played so far occupy different places in me. For example, the last character that I played was a girl named Serap in Emine Emel Balci's 2014 film *Nefesim Kesilene Kadar*. After we finished shooting I was really sad that I wouldn't get to be her anymore. I worked on playing this character for a long time, and sometimes you develop a strange bond, even with a fictional character. Normally I wouldn't make the choices that she makes, but at the same time I was thinking that she was absolutely right in her choices. Because I was playing her, in a way I was experiencing what it's like to be her.

*Have you been in a film that makes a comment on society and its normative culture?*

I believe Seren Yüce's 2010 film *Majority* reflects the realities of Turkey. It represents the stereotypical patriarchal and nationalist family structure with an underdeveloped consciousness about who lives in this country. The boy in the movie, a young middle-class boy, falls in love with the character I play, Gül, a Kurdish girl, but she can't be with him because of his family's oppressive attitude towards Kurdish people. There are so many examples like that in Turkey, and not only in Turkey. The world is full of families who raise their children with a twisted point of view. I think in Turkey there are many examples of passive boys who are condemned to become just like their fathers. It isn't hard to guess what these children will become in the future.

