

If You Are Extreme, You Don't Matter

Interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art. - Susan Sontag, author and critic (1933-2004) (or, what I see is not what you painted) This applies as much to writing or any other art as it does to painting or sculpture. Sometimes it shocks me how a reader can find the least important part of something I have written, misinterpret it in such a way that it seems to mean the opposite of what I intended, then assail me for being such an idiot. Name-calling aside, it is nearly impossible to write something that someone with malicious intent can't misinterpret and use against the writer. It's like tearing off someone's leg, then beating him to death with it. When I write something of the length of this article, my overarching objective is to get readers to think about the topic and the overall effect the article has had on them. However, some people can't see big pictures. They can only see small pictures, like watching a movie by viewing only a few frames at a time. Recent research suggests that the brain changes as we age so that older people are able to see the big picture of some situation, whereas younger people are more inclined to only be able to see individual parts of it. These are generalities, not absolutes. But they are part of human nature. Some people can't ever see big pictures, so things like wars, the United Nations, the AIDS pandemic and global warming mystify them. If writing can be misinterpreted when every part of it should be laid out and clear, then individual actions and ill-considered words can easily be misinterpreted as well. A close friendship of many years might disappear when one friend does something the other doesn't understand, then misinterprets the motives of the first and makes the split. What is the overall message of this article? Ignore the extremes of what people do, say or write and examine the vast majority of words and acts that comprise the middle section of their behaviours. If all behaviours were put onto a bell curve, we could look at the high parts in the middle and ignore the extremes at either end that might not be valid or typical anyway. Each of us exhibits extreme behaviour once in a while. We deserve to be forgiven for it if we have been moderate most of the time. I will ignore the cranks who hate this piece as well as those who want me to contribute to a sperm bank because of it to save something so special. I'm just an average person trying to get you to think about the mysterious world of human nature. Bill Allin 'Turning It Around: Causes and Cures for Today's Epidemic Social Problems,' striving to make the mysteries of life a bit easier to understand. Learn more at <http://billallin.com>

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