



# Camille Paglia

Cultural critic known for bold ideas and complex writing style.

Rank #5

Elite 10

#	Word	Definition / Example
1	<b>chthonian</b>	relating to the underworld or the earth "The chthonian undertow she locates beneath every surface of Western art — in Botticelli's Venus, in Elvis's pelvis, in the Medusa's petrifying gaze — is nature asserting its dominion over every civilisation arrogant enough to forget it."
1	<b>chthonic</b>	relating to the underworld or the earth "Art that ignores the chthonic forces of nature and sexuality produces nothing but sanitized decorative objects."
2	<b>apollonian</b>	adj. of; like; or having to do with Apollo wellordered; rational; and serene "The apollonian impulse to impose order upon chaos is civilization's greatest achievement and deepest illusion."
3	<b>iconoclastic</b>	adj. 1 characterized by attack on established beliefs or institutions; 2 destructive of images used in religious worship "Her iconoclastic readings of canonical art history shattered assumptions that had calcified over decades of consensus."
4	<b>Dionysian</b>	adj. 1 of pertaining to or honoring Dionysus or Bacchus; 2 recklessly uninhibited; unrestrained; undisciplined; frenzied; orgiastic "Dionysian energy erupts through every great rock performance, reminding us that art descends from ritual frenzy."
5	<b>paganism</b>	the belief in and worship of many gods and goddesses "Beneath Western civilization's Christian veneer, paganism endures — pulsing through art, eroticism, and myth."
7	<b>mercurial</b>	adj. 1 volatile in temper; changeable; fickle 2 of or relating to the element mercury "Her mercurial intellect leaps from Michelangelo to Madonna without pausing to apologize for the exhilarating distance."
8	<b>polymathic</b>	adj. a person of great learning in several fields of study; polyhistor. "Her polymathic range — spanning antiquity, pop culture, and feminist theory — defies every academic boundary."
9	<b>daemonic</b>	relating to a powerful and often chaotic force "The daemonic dimension of genius cannot be rationalized away by tidy psychological or sociological frameworks."
10	<b>provocateur</b>	a person who causes excitement or controversy "As an intellectual provocateur, she considers complacency a greater danger to culture than any controversy she stirs."
11	<b>primordial</b>	adj. fundamental or original; being earliest; existing from the beginning "Strip away modernity's comforts and you find primordial instincts that no progressive ideology has ever dissolved."
12	<b>idiosyncratic</b>	adj. an odd or peculiar habit "Her idiosyncratic methodology borrows from art history, anthropology, and psychoanalysis with sovereign disregard for boundaries."
13	<b>heterodox</b>	adj. 1 unorthodox or unconventional; 2 holding unorthodox opinions or doctrines "Heterodox and proud of it, she has never allowed institutional approval to soften an argument she believed true."
14	<b>mythopoeic</b>	having to do with creating myths or stories that express deep truths "The mythopoeic imagination — that urge to remake reality into symbol — is what separates art from mere illustration."
15	<b>iconoclast</b>	n. one who attacks established beliefs or customs or institutions; an individual who is contrarian in thought and rebellious in spirit and opposition "As an iconoclast, I challenge the prevailing norms of contemporary culture with fervor and insight."