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Quotes by Paglia, Camille

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A serious problem in America is the gap between academe and the mass media, which is our culture. Professors of humanities, with all their leftist fantasies, have little direct knowledge of American life and no impact whatever on public policy.

- Paglia, Camille

Education has become a prisoner of contemporaneity. It is the past, not the dizzy present, that is the best door to the future.

- Paglia, Camille

The trauma of the Sixties persuaded me that my generation's egalitarianism was a sentimental error. I now see the hierarchical as both beautiful and necessary. Efficiency liberates; egalitarianism tangles, delays, blocks, deadens.

- Paglia, Camille

Modern bodybuilding is ritual, religion, sport, art, and science, awash in Western chemistry and mathematics. Defying nature, it surpasses it.

- Paglia, Camille

We need a new kind of feminism, one that stresses personal responsibility and is open to art and sex in all their dark, unconsoling mysteries. The feminist of the fin de siècle will be bawdy, streetwise, and on-the-spot confrontational, in the prankish Sixties way.

- Paglia, Camille

In the theory of gender I began from zero. There is no masculine power or privilege I did not covet. But slowly, step by step, decade by decade, I was forced to acknowledge that even a woman of abnormal will cannot escape her hormonal identity.

- Paglia, Camille

It is capitalist America that produced the modern independent woman. Never in history have women had more freedom of choice in regard to dress, behavior, career, and sexual orientation.

- Paglia, Camille

My thinking tends to be libertarian. That is, I oppose intrusions of the state into the private realm -- as in abortion, sodomy, prostitution, pornography, drug use, or suicide, all of which I would strongly defend as matters of free choice in a representative democracy.

- Paglia, Camille

The visual is sorely undervalued in modern scholarship. Art history has attained only a fraction of the conceptual sophistication of literary criticism. Drunk with self-love, criticism has hugely overestimated the centrality of language to western culture. It has failed to see the electrifying sign language of images.

- Paglia, Camille

Jesus was a brilliant Jewish stand-up comedian, a phenomenal improviser. His parables are great one-liners.

- Paglia, Camille

When anything goes, it's women who lose.

- Paglia, Camille

If you live in rock and roll, as I do, you see the reality of sex, of male lust and women being aroused by male lust. It attracts women. It doesn't repel them.

- Paglia, Camille

A woman simply is, but a man must become. Masculinity is risky and elusive. It is achieved by a revolt from woman, and it is confirmed only by other men. Manhood coerced into sensitivity is no manhood at all.

- Paglia, Camille

Men know they are sexual exiles. They wander the earth seeking satisfaction, craving and despising, never content. There is nothing in that anguished motion for women to envy.

- Paglia, Camille

Every man must define his identity against his mother. If he does not, he just falls back

into her and is swallowed up.

- Paglia, Camille

There are no accidents, only nature throwing her weight around. Even the bomb merely releases energy that nature has put there. Nuclear war would be just a spark in the grandeur of space. Nor can radiation alter nature: she will absorb it all. After the bomb, nature will pick up the cards we have spilled, shuffle them, and begin her game again.

- Paglia, Camille

Despite crime's omnipresence, things work in society, because biology compels it. Order eventually restores itself, by psychic equilibrium.

- Paglia, Camille

Elizabeth Taylor is pre-feminist woman. This is the source of her continuing greatness and relevance. She wields the sexual power that feminism cannot explain and has tried to destroy. Through stars like Taylor, we sense the world-disordering impact of legendary women like Delilah, Salome, and Helen of Troy. Feminism has tried to dismiss the femme fatale as a misogynist libel, a hoary cliché. But the femme fatale expresses women's ancient and eternal control of the sexual realm. The specter of the femme fatale stalks all men's relations with women.

- Paglia, Camille

There is no true expertise in the humanities without knowing all of the humanities. Art is a vast, ancient interconnected web-work, a fabricated tradition. Over-concentration on any

one point is a distortion.

- Paglia, Camille

Popular culture is the new Babylon, into which so much art and intellect now flow. It is our imperial sex theater, supreme temple of the western eye. We live in the age of idols. The pagan past, never dead, flames again in our mystic hierarchies of stardom.

- Paglia, Camille

Pornography is human imagination in tense theatrical action; its violations are a protest against the violations of our freedom by nature.

- Paglia, Camille

Pregnancy demonstrates the deterministic character of woman's sexuality. Every pregnant woman has body and self taken over by a chthonian force beyond her control. In the welcome pregnancy, this is a happy sacrifice. But in the unwanted one, initiated by rape or misadventure, it is a horror. Such unfortunate women look directly into nature's heart of Darkness. For a fetus is a benign tumor, a vampire who steals in order to live. The so-called miracle of birth is nature getting her own way.

- Paglia, Camille

Prostitution is not just a service industry, mopping up the overflow of male demand, which always exceeds female supply. Prostitution testifies to the amoral power struggle of sex, which religion has never been able to stop. Prostitutes, pornographers, and their patrons are marauders in the forest of archaic night.

- Paglia, Camille

The prostitute is not, as feminists claim, the victim of men but rather their conqueror, an outlaw who controls the sexual channel between nature and culture.

- Paglia, Camille

Pursuit and seduction are the essence of sexuality. It's part of the sizzle.

- Paglia, Camille

We should teach general ethics to both men and women, but sexual relationships themselves must not be policed. Sex, like the city streets, would be risk-free only in totalitarian regimes.

- Paglia, Camille

You have to accept the fact that part of the sizzle of sex comes from the danger of sex. You can be overpowered.

- Paglia, Camille

Out with stereotypes, feminism proclaims. But stereotypes are the west's stunning sexual personae, the vehicles of art's assault against nature. The moment there is imagination, there is myth.

- Paglia, Camille

Beauty is our weapon against nature; by it we make objects, giving them limit, symmetry, proportion. Beauty halts and freezes the melting flux of nature.

- Paglia, Camille

Capitalism is an art form, an Apollonian fabrication to rival nature. It is hypocritical for feminists and intellectuals to enjoy the pleasures and conveniences of capitalism while sneering at it. Everyone born into capitalism has incurred a debt to it. Give Caesar his due.

- Paglia, Camille

Cats are autocrats of naked self-interest. They are both amoral and immoral, consciously breaking rules. Their evil look at such times is no human projection: the cat may be the only animal who savors the perverse or reflects upon it.

- Paglia, Camille

Television is actually closer to reality than anything in books. The madness of TV is the madness of human life.

- Paglia, Camille

My generation of the Sixties, with all our great ideals, destroyed liberalism, because of our excesses.

- Paglia, Camille

The 1990s, after the reign of terror of academic vandalism, will be a decade of restoration:

restoration of meaning, value, beauty, pleasure, and emotion to art and restoration of art to its audience.

- Paglia, Camille

If civilization had been left in female hands we would still be living in grass huts.

- Paglia, Camille

Woman is the dominant sex. Men have to do all sorts of stuff to prove that they are worthy of woman's attention.

- Paglia, Camille

Teenage boys, goaded by their surging hormones run in packs like the primal horde. They have only a brief season of exhilarating liberty between control by their mothers and control by their wives.

- Paglia, Camille

Cinema is the culmination of the obsessive, mechanistic male drive in western culture. The movie projector is an Apollonian straight-shooter, demonstrating the link between aggression and art. Every pictorial framing is a ritual limitation, a barred precinct.

- Paglia, Camille

American universities are organized on the principle of the nuclear rather than the extended family. Graduate students are grimly trained to be technicians rather than connoisseurs. The old German style of universal scholarship has gone.

- Paglia, Camille

Our major universities are now stuck with an army of pedestrian, toadying careerists, Fifties types who wave around Sixties banners to conceal their record of ruthless, beaver-like tunneling to the top.

- Paglia, Camille

Minerva save us from the cloying syrup of coercive compassion!

- Paglia, Camille

The greatest honor that can be paid to the work of art, on its pedestal of ritual display, is to describe it with sensory completeness. We need a science of description. Criticism is ceremonial revivification.

- Paglia, Camille

All objects, all phases of culture are alive. They have voices. They speak of their history and interrelatedness. And they are all talking at once!

- Paglia, Camille



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