

Harlot: A Revealing Look at the Arts of Persuasion

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#DefineRhetoric 2013

Harlot Editors

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#DefineRhetoric 2013



We're delighted to share the results of our second annual Twitter challenge to #DefineRhetoric. Once again, friends of *Harlot* have taken up the challenge of defining the harlot of the arts. As you'll see, her shape-shifting trickster spirit is alive on Twitter. Kudos and thanks to everyone who got involved!

Below you'll find the winners of our highly unscientific voting system, plus some other favorites—definitions that made us pause, made us chuckle, and made us sit back and enjoy the enigma.

The Winners

First Place — *Rhetoric: opening one's ears before opening one's mouth.* [@cdmandrews](#)

Second Place — *Rhetoric is disagreeing with someone by saying, "I totally agree with you, but..."*. [@kstedman](#)

Third Place — *Rhetorics are machines to culture with.* [@cgbrooke](#)

Honorable Mentions

It got me into bed. [@mgarcia](#)

Rhetoric is interacting with attention. [@linzharding](#)

My favorite definition comes from I.A. Richards: the study of miscommunication and its remedies. [@johnpwalter](#)

Rhetoric is the subtle yet deliberate shrugging of a hipster's shoulders. [@stephenjmcclroy](#)

Rhetoric is book one, page one, paragraph one, sentence one, word one, letter one; it is the beginning of everything. [@RhetRock](#)

And the Contenders (in no particular order)

Rhetoric is when you write a complaint email, reread it, and add a clearer, softer paragraph at the very beginning. [@kstedman](#)

... what informs our decisions to say what we say, wear what we wear, eat what we eat, say what we eat, & eat what we say. [@jsanofranchini](#)

knowing the ish you can't say, understanding why and having the discipline not to say it. [@dradambanks](#)

Rhetoric is the *work* of relations: Rhetoric is the work of *relations*. [@sophist_monster](#)

Rhetoric is a collection of algorithms for generating and interpreting arguments. [@jamesjbrownjr](#)

the ability to be pliant without being compliant. [@drbrowne](#)

Rhetoric is ethics. [@mattoakes](#)

This. [@beccadargatz](#)

Millions of brief, fleeting opportunities to make connections and build communities through our thoughts, deeds, and words. [@TylerBranson](#)

Rhetoric is how we get into each other's heads. [@dnathk](#)

the process you use to keep you from cussing out the "is it OK if I miss this class?" student. [@dradambanks](#)

Speaking a message in such a way that it becomes heard. [@OccupyRhetoric](#)

Rhetoric the hypnotist pushing you from thought to action. [@TheGunnShow94](#)

Rhetoric is the practice/study of articulating articulants articulately. [@easyrhetor](#)

Show, not tell. [@Schmeggelz](#)

#definerrhetoric is saying "Shut up!" 100,000 ways for 100,000 audiences and purposes. [@TheSD](#)

the combination of logic, emotion, persuasion, timing and power in interpersonal relationships. [@kaitlynkivi](#)

Rhetoric is a comma splice with purpose. [@RhetRock](#)

Rhetoric is simple: choose battles wisely; fight them well; don't make everything a battle [@martinm0955](#)

A discipline directed, at times, to speak toward multiple publics/fields/languages when there is little time or space. [@OccupyRhetoric](#)

The practice of making meaning to make things mean while knowing that ambiguity is cooperative and inevitable and necessary. [@jdanielwariya](#)

Rhetoric is convincing someone else you're right when you aren't too sure yourself. [@emilyyrosc](#)

Rhetoric is the apple to my pie, it's the straw to my berry, it's the thing I do every day! [@nmuller95](#)

Rhetoric is finding ways to make your life easier through language. [@RhetRock](#)

Showing, saying, sounding, cooking, writing something that has an impact on an audience. [@joeliosis21](#)

Rhetoric means sometimes having to say "You're sorry." [@drewloewe](#)

Rhetoric is the stream of phenomena you're sending and the stream that you're being sent. [@kstedman](#)

Rhetoric is like revenge—it cuts both ways. [@RhetRock](#)

Rhetoric is learning all available means of persuasion... not just Aristotle's. [@gonzlaur](#)

"Burke doesn't think rhetoric makes human-ness. Burke thinks the function of human-ness is to be rhetorical." -Nan Johnson [@jenlmichaels](#)

Rhetoric is when you flip a coin and it lands on the edge, not heads or tails, but both. [@RhetRock](#)

Rhetoric: the art of #interrupting how we think by default, so that we may invent, think, and act more consciously & justly. [@dancingdivala](#)

Rhetoric is seduction. [@ncnapoli](#)

"rhetoric is a living and breathing practice that takes place in real social contexts." - DeGenaroa [@codemesh](#)

Rhetoric is the disco ball of language. [@RhetRock](#)

quite simply, rhetoric is power over the human mind, heart, and will. [@dnathk](#)

The space between the talking drum and what it says. [@drbrowne](#)

the MCs ability to move the crowd/the DJs gift at creating a crowd that can be moved. [@dradambanks](#)

Rhetoric is can we get extra credit for this Professor Parsons? [@chelsfink](#)

Rhetoric is the process of turning nouns and adjectives, subjects and objects, into VERBS. [@anokaydane](#)

Rhetoric is meaning making and making meaning. [@johnpwalter](#)

Saying a thing on multiple levels, to reach multiple audiences, at once. [@OccupyRhetoric](#)

Rhetoric is the stick that hits the beehive. [@RhetRock](#)

#DefineRhetoric? It's like defining the color or these walls, the sound of my shoes, a squint, a half-word caught in the throat, a lie. [@kstedman](#)



Jumping into the [@HarlotTweets](#) #DefineRhetoric competition with a video I made in 2011 -

[Definition of Rhetoric](#) from [Casey](#) on [Vimeo](#). [@soulsmlies](#)

Rhetoric is what your cell phone understands you meant to input vs. what you understood that you wanted to input. ass salad? [@RhetRock](#)

Rhetoric: Good for those who wish to revise power, ignorance, or history. [@cdmandrews](#)

Rhetoric - breaking down the unbreakable to make sense of it, then putting it back together and explaining it to someone else. [@RhetRock](#)

Rhetoric is what teachers do before the semester when students enroll and what students do around finals. [@Viergge](#)

Rhetoric is the difference between a twig that snaps because a pursuer steps on it and a branch creaking in the wind. [@kstedman](#)

Rhetoric is the magician's hat. [@RhetRock](#)

Rhetoric is being too cute by half without anyone else noticing. [@Vieregge](#)

Trying to #definerrhetoric is like defining all the ambient sounds around me, the shadows I see, the news I read, the feel of my chair. [@kstedman](#)

Thanks for playing! Chime in below if you have additions, revisions, objections, etc. We look forward to next year's batch of brilliance!

Image credit: ["Twitter" by eldh on Flickr](#) by eldh on Flickr