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Nothing Unlucky About this 13

Harlot Editors

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[Triskaidekaphobia](#)? Please. There's nothing to fear about our 13th issue.

Although we at *Harlot* find superstition fascinating for its persuasive power, we're not governed by it.* Instead, we believe in steady improvement born of hard work and honesty, which is why as 2015 got underway, the editors did what so many do: reflect on our history and hopes for the future. As always, we feel incredibly grateful for the support of this community—those of you who read, contribute, review, edit, design, and play along. We're so glad you're part of Team Harlot!

But we've also come to recognize how disproportionately academic that team remains. We're all here because we share a vision of *Harlot* as an alternative space, a point of contact among diverse publics. But that vision is not yet realized; our conversations are playful and productive... but not (yet) truly public. That's the next challenge, and it's significant. It's time we—and that means you too!—draw a big breath, recalibrate, and set forth with a renewed sense of optimism and direction.

You'll see the early results of this reflection manifested most clearly in the [refined review criteria](#) and [guidelines for reviewers](#), which ask readers from within and outside academic contexts to consider the following criteria:

1. *Relevance*: Is the topic and argument of this piece relevant to a variety of audiences? Does the article forefront the significance of the topic in everyday life?

2. *Focus*: Does this piece reveal something about persuasion in a clear and compelling way? Is the argument sound and well supported?

3. *Style/Appeal*: Does this piece seem inviting to a variety of audiences (consider form, writing style, vocabulary, use of citations/scholarship, length). Does the author seem to privilege or exclude certain audiences?

4. *Ethics*: Is the work respectful and inclusive of diverse individuals and communities? Does it work to foster productive conversation?

Harlot's mission is all about inclusivity and accessibility for a wide range of audiences, and this review process has been designed with that goal in mind. We recognize, of course, the challenges inherent in this mission. Revealing how the arts of persuasion work in our everyday lives is difficult enough. After all, a specialized vocabulary was developed for precisely this reason, a natural by-product of careful observation and the desire to explain and edify.

Yet *Harlot* asks for more. It calls for pieces that are not only relevant to a broad readership but also comprehensible to them—creations that explain, edify, *and* entertain. For as Marshall McLuhan said, "Anyone who tries to make a distinction between education and entertainment doesn't know the first thing about either." The editors have faith that *Harlot*'s current and future community members are ready to blur those lines as our collaborative experiment continues...

We encourage you to check out the new reviewer guidelines, and if you haven't already, [sign up as a reviewer](#) for *Harlot*. We also hope you'll start sketching plans for your own submission—and encourage your friends, family, neighbors, and smart strangers to do the same!

But first, of course, we hope you'll check out and share the superb set of pieces curated for Issue 13:

» In "Designs of Meaning: Tools for Digital Storytellers," Aimée Knight and Austin Starin offer the fruits of their collaboration, a unique collection of tools designed to "empower you to create more meaningful and engaging stories." Their webtext strikes a beautiful balance of pragmatic and pretty.

» Christine Martorana looks at how the Facebook page of a deceased friend functions in the wake of his passing in "Death: The End We All Have to Face(book)." Mourning in a digital age, Martorana reveals for us, is a deeply rhetorical affair—one that reconfigures notions of death's permanence as virtual presences continue to develop.

» In "Dottie and Me: Constructing Childless-by-Choice Alternative Rhetorics," Courtney Adams Wooten examines how those who choose not to have children can best communicate their decisions in productive ways, so that childlessness is no longer seen as a stigma or taboo but a valid life choice.

» "Pleased to Tweet You" is an interactive exploration and exposé of live-tweeting at academic conference. Cate Blouke teams up with Paul Muhlhauser to describe and reenact the "participatory theatre" created through conference goers use of Twitter in this unique piece.

» Michael Soares asks how childhood film fandom shapes our inner lives in "Life in Movie Stills: Pedagogy, Bruce Lee and Me," which challenges the reductive tendencies of political correctness and encourages us to see film as a creative catalyst for persona-building.

Enjoy! Use! Share! Comment!

...and stay tuned for the oh-so-promising [Craft Rhetorics](#) issue in Fall 2015!

* *Superstition* could be a very cool theme for a special issue, should any enterprising potential guest editors be reading this. Send us a proposal and cross your fingers!