

## Transcript for *Ex Libris, Twitter* by Jenzia Burgos Published on *Confluence*, March 2019

### Author's Note:

It dawned on me only last summer that I needed to create a Twitter account. Not for social upkeep, no. No less for the memes, although those are wonderful. I needed Twitter— as many journalists need Twitter— simply for the health of my aspiring career.

I realized this necessity, ever begrudgingly, when I struggled to find opportunities as a young arts and culture writer elsewhere: career center listings were outdated, editors were unreachable, and sharing one's work on other social media felt like a misplaced PR stunt (I'm sorry to say, my Abuela on Facebook doesn't care to see my latest musings on downtown theater.) And so, I downloaded Twitter. I sighed. I settled in for the worst.

But Twitter surprised me. It invigorated me, it teased me, it filled me with the boundless hope that journalism is not dead yet. It gave this book-loving, occasional-luddite millennial writer a new home among the web. *Ex Libris, Twitter* is a piece that looks at this recent love affair, and points toward Twitter's possibilities for the state of journalism today.

You can check out the entire piece directly on Twitter by [clicking here](#), or view the embedded timeline below. This piece reads chronologically; on Twitter, simply scroll to continue. However, if you view here on *Confluence*, please be sure to **click the 'Load more Tweets'** when you reach the end of each section to continue viewing the piece in its entirety.

### Embedded Twitter Timeline:

"Ex Libris, @Twitter"

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Most mornings begin the same way for me— imaginably for you too, though I hope, both for your sanity and preservation, that I am wrong.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Most mornings, I wake and reach for my phone, only to land somewhere among the Twittersverse.

**GIF of hand holding phone on Twitter and scrolling. Animated blue birds fly from the screen.**

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** I scroll to hear my countrymen: cultural critics, creative writers, tech synthesizers, local business owners, community organizers, comedians, politicians, spiritual gurus, artists, and thinkers at large.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** ([@amandapetrusich](#), [@emilynussbaum](#), [@rachsyne](#), [@jbakernyc](#), [@bycdl](#), [@mariasherm](#), [@SamuelAAdams](#), [@annkpowers](#), [@vcunningham](#), [@thecityofjules](#),

[@PoRican](#), [@jabladoraaa](#), [@jawnita](#), [@meeshkakim](#), [@laurasnapes](#), [@hilmonstah](#), [@tenaciouspm](#), [@dstfelix](#), [@rgay](#), [@jiatolentino](#), [@jesshopp](#), [@lizpelly](#))

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Like Plato's symposium of the digital age, Twitter is a cesspool of their ideas.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** I love wading through.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Emoji of three blue asterisks.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Mornings on Twitter are much like the library afternoons of my youth, really:

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** perusing titles, such that I *scroll*;

**GIF of Animated shoe-tipped fingers, dancing on an iPhone screen against a hot pink background.**

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** pulling at the stacks, in that I *like*; **Thumbs up emoji.**

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** jotting down quotes that sit with me; as in, *retweet*.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** I even borrow for later, checking out Tweets with extensions like Pocket (<https://getpocket.com/>) or Instapaper (<https://instapaper.com>)— virtual archives lost to the cloud, just like the heap of unread hardcovers piling at the base of my childhood bed.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Except I *\*did\** eventually get around to reading those. Something about physical presence begs your attention.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Tweet threads stored to a single browser tab with other saved-for-later things— well, not so much...

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** They may already be deleted by the time you return to them.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Emoji of downward pointing arrow.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Yet it is precisely this transience that makes Twitter the public's preferred periodical of late.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Yes, periodical— if Tom Wolfe championed a New Journalism of the '60s, then Twitter is our Newest Journalism.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Not weekly, not daily— always NOW!

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Forget Wolfe's long form; try 280 characters, or less!

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Gone are the days of flipping or thumbing or clicking your way around; enjoy Twitter’s endless scroll and endless content, instead.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Twitter boasts no finicky paywall, no prerequisites for entry—and so long as you opt for a chronological feed, content unfolds as a decidedly democratic thread.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Subscribe to hundreds of voices, and suddenly, you will find a cacophony of highbrow and lowbrow and Culture and Camp, and you, yes \*you\*, can engage.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** You land among the Twittersverse not only to see what’s happening ↘ but to \*become\* what’s happening.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** ¶

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Sitting among the stacks, I thought I was nobody.

**Link to Mitski’s “Nobody” music video on YouTube.**

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** A silent girl, with too many words bustling inside a head threatened by the prospect of their permanence— how could I assert myself so certainly, my words forever fixed on a page?

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** What ego compels these writers!

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** And such a doubt to make \*me\* think I am not one of them! I was and I am, yet it felt impossible a task to hammer out those first stories.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Pen in hand (pen emoji) yellow legal pad at my desk (notebook emoji)— I drummed over each sentence as if a simple strikethrough were never an option, the clean print of library books somehow glossing my brain.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Still, I write much like this today; it has seeped into the habits of my Word processor, my fingers reluctant as ever to concede to Backspace.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Except on Twitter, I never seem to worry.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** All is fleeting, unfixed.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** There is freedom in that 320 million-user void.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Shout into me, says the Twittersverse.

**GIF of Donald Trump’s mouth with Twitter’s iconographic blue birds flying out of it.**

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Perhaps that mental roadblock is freed in other writers and journalists, too— how often do they take to Twitter, sharing the best of their ideas, only for them to appear as headlines and ledes in a piece the very next week.

**Ex Libris Retweeted:**

**Emily Hughes (@emilyhughes):** Has anyone written a good longread about the reemerging interest in witchcraft among 20/30-something women in the last couple years?

**Ex Libris Retweeted:**

**roxane gay (@rgay), Replying to @glutenfreegirl @PadmaLakshmi:** I am actually going to write an essay about this. Like most people, I want to be the best person I can be but this notion that we're never ever okay as who we are is really damaging and unhealthy.

**Ex Libris Retweeted:**

**rachel syme (@rachsyme):** I am going to try to become more civically involved, do more things you can only do here, and write more about the city itself and its history. Otherwise, why be here? I want to actively push against this place becoming one big Prime warehouse with some banks and coffeeshops

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** And how often are those very pieces informed by the Twitter dialogue that ensued— other critics and friends and followers weighing in, delivering a story already informed by at least some sect of the public:

**Ex Libris Retweeted:**

**Media Diversified (@WritersofColour):** Hey! Do you have any tips / ideas / links / videos / personal stories to do with anti-blackness / colourism in South Asia? I'd love to hear them. Feel free to reply to this message and start a thread surrounding the subject.

**Ex Libris Retweeted:**

**Frankie Zelnick (@phranqueigh):** Raise your hand if you've "literally wept" from stress at a job that paid you less than 40 grand a year.

**Ex Libris Retweeted:**

**kelsey mckinney (@mckinneykelsey):** What we are setting up for is a world in which the only people who get to write culture and features are the very rich and the people who got in before the door closed which is bad for this industry and bad for the way we cover America.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** To tweet, by design, is to foster this inclusion.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** Our newest journalism, then, looks little like the insular seriousness of a girl sitting by her lonesome in a library, her ideas strictly bound like books.

**Ex Libris (@TweetsExLibris):** It is a girl gone free among the feed.