

## MEDIA RELEASE

Date: 24/9/2020 | **EMBARGOED UNTIL 30/9/2020**

From: *Australian Book Review*

(03) 9699 8822 | [abr@australianbookreview.com.au](mailto:abr@australianbookreview.com.au)

# The Twitter mob by Johanna Leggatt

Amid growing disquiet about ‘cancel culture’ and censorious voices on social media, Melbourne journalist Johanna Leggatt explores the threat Twitter poses to the work of writers and journalists in the October issue of *Australian Book Review*. Beginning with the recent case of Rachel Baxendale, a journalist at *The Australian*, who was subjected to much invective because of her persistent questions about the quarantine fiasco in Victoria, Leggatt laments the ‘routine trashing of reputations on Twitter’ and wonders why Twitter has ‘devolved into a channel for our most juvenile emotions’. Leggatt notes that women receive a disproportionate amount of trolling online – Leigh Sales among them.

Leggatt challenges the groupthink of social media users and worries about the implications for journalists – those natural contrarians – who are increasingly prompted to self-edit: ‘careful not to upset the mob or to advance an idea that runs counter to their tribe’s values’.

Are journalists at risk of falling prey to ‘mob mentality’? Will freedom of speech survive ‘Twitter’s playground psychology of likes and retweets’? These are some of the questions Johanna Leggatt poses in this bold, unmissable feature.

## Quotes from Johanna Leggatt’s article

‘There is a predictable and dulling rhythm to the routine trashing of reputations on Twitter.’

‘Twitter is a blunt, crude, and highly effective tool to bring about the annihilation of another human being.’

‘In their 2018 “Troll Patrol” study, Amnesty International found that female journalists and female politicians were subjected to some kind of harassment or abuse on Twitter roughly every thirty seconds, and women of colour experienced significantly higher levels of abuse overall.’

Johanna Leggatt



## About Johanna Leggatt

Johanna Leggatt is a Melbourne-based journalist and critic.

## Interviews

Johanna Leggatt is available for interview.

Please contact Peter Rose at [editor@australianbookreview.com.au](mailto:editor@australianbookreview.com.au) or call on (03) 9699 8822.