

The High School We Can't Log Off From

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It appears we're in the midst of yet another Twitter backlash. Marquee users have been slowly [backing away](#) from their feeds (or [slipping off](#) the grid entirely); last week, Twitter's stock [plunged](#) by more than 20 percent after the company reported a decline in monthly users.

The arguments for defection are at this point familiar: Twitter is a dark reservoir of hatred, home to the diseased national id. It turns us into our worst selves — dehumanizing us, deranging us, keying us up, beating us down, turning us into shrieking outrage monkeys hellbent on the innocents of Oz. It uncomplicates complicated discussion; stealth-curates our news; hijacks our dopamine systems, carrying us off on a devil's quest for ever more dime bags of retweets and likes.

All of which feels painfully right, at least on the Twitter that I know, which mainly concerns itself with current affairs and political opinion. The question is why. Most Twitter users know that the medium has an unfortunate tendency to transform adults into anxious adolescents. But perhaps it's time to start thinking about this problem clinically. The fact is, Twitter is changing us — regressing us — in ways developmental psychologists would find weirdly recognizable.