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**Subject:** The New York Times Magazine: Why Can't the Democrats Turn the Page?

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 The New York Times

 The New York Times

Friday, November 3, 2017

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Barack Obama left office as one of the most popular presidents in American history — and left behind an underfunded, demoralized Democratic Party that, even amid a polarizing and clarifying Trump presidency, is struggling to articulate what, and whom, it stands for. “I love the guy, I miss him,” Scott Peters, a Democratic congressman from California, tells Robert Draper, a writer at large for the magazine. “But organizationally, the party is in disarray. We’re at the lowest level of elected officeholders since Hoover. We got a bit lazy and found ourselves relying on Barack Obama’s charisma, and it left us in bad shape.”

In this week’s cover story, [Draper details the Democrats’ efforts](#), on public stages and in YouTube ads and behind closed doors, to fix their problems before Election Day 2018, when an increasing number of political prognosticators believe the party might have a reasonable chance of capturing the House of Representatives — a victory that would throw President Trump’s agenda into disarray. “Right now it’s such a target-rich environment for us,” one Democratic consultant tells Draper. But, “We’re having trouble explaining why we’re the heroes and the Republicans are the villains.”

Elsewhere in the magazine, Burt Helm writes about [Facebook’s oracular algorithm](#) that determines the fates of start-ups. Christine Smallwood [profiles Greta Gerwig](#), in her directorial debut. And Wyatt Mason writes about the first English translation of the [“Odyssey” — by a woman](#).

Happy reading,

**Jake Silverstein**

Editor in Chief



Illustration by Matt Dorfman

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# A Post-Obama Democratic Party in Search of Itself

By ROBERT DRAPER

The 44th president left office as one of the most popular in American history. He also left behind a party struggling to find an identity — and to reconnect with voters in time for the 2018 elections.

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Illustration by Pablo Delcan



Erik Madigan Heck for The New York Times

## How Facebook's Oracular Algorithm Determines the Fates of Start-Ups

By BURT HELM

The platform is so good at 'microtargeting' that many small e-commerce companies barely even bother advertising anywhere else.

## Greta Gerwig's Radical Confidence

By CHRISTINE SMALLWOOD

In her directorial debut, the writer and actress has created a character rarely seen onscreen: a young girl who loves herself.

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## Beatrice Fihn Thinks We Can Abolish Nuclear Arms

Interview by CAITLIN ROPER

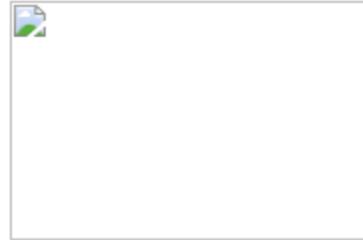
The Swiss activist on what it's like to win the Nobel Peace Prize and how to change people's minds about nuclear weapons.



# Can I Turn In a Bad Fraternity at My Son's College?

By KWAME ANTHONY APPIAH

The magazine's Ethicist columnist on when to betray a confidence and when to intervene in a relative's private affairs.



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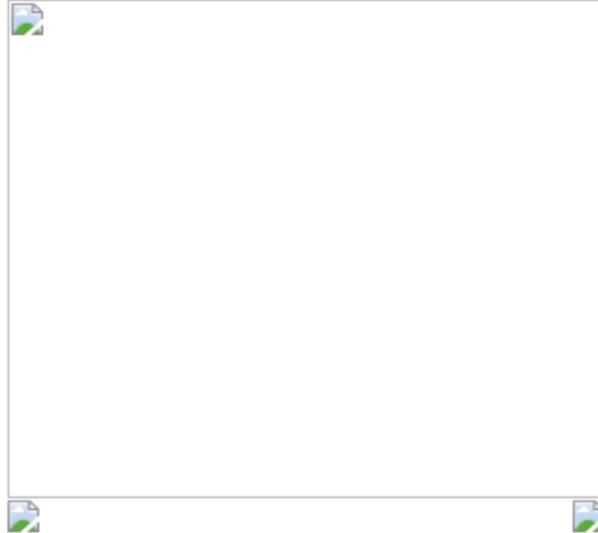
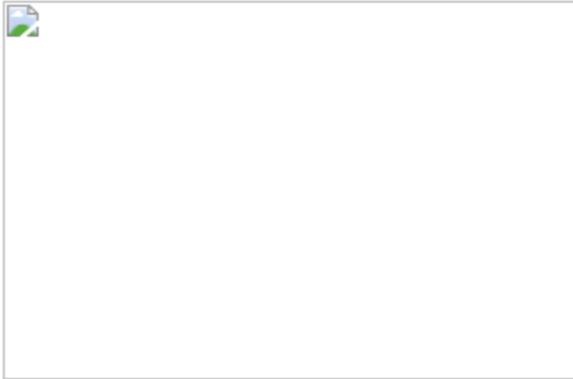


Illustration by Jon Han

# Not the Bots We Were Looking For

By JOHN HERRMAN

Technologists once told us that social bots would change our lives forever. They were right — but not in the way they expected.



Geordie Wood for The New York Times

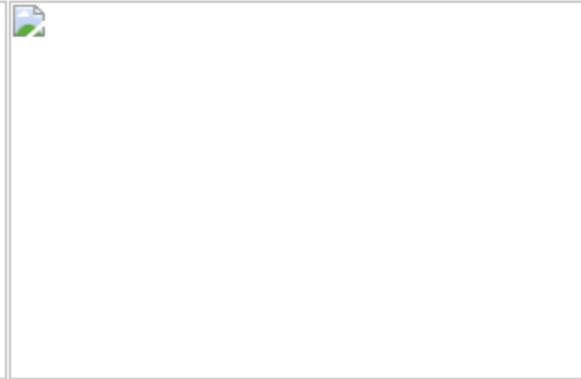


Photo illustration by Derek Brahney

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## The First Woman to Translate the ‘Odyssey’ Into English

By WYATT MASON

The classicist Emily Wilson has given Homer’s epic a radically contemporary voice.

## When ‘Conservatives’ Turned Into Radicals

By JANE COASTON

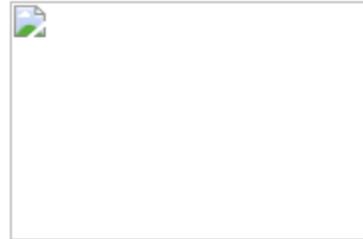
The movement’s elites may talk about tradition and order, but the base of voters wants something else: sudden, uncompromising change.

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## Why Was Their Brother’s Memory and Behavior so Strange?

By LISA SANDERS, M.D.

He swore he was no longer drinking. But something was making him act oddly.



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## Letter of Recommendation: Cabbages and Kings

By DAN KOIS

A game that’s actually fun to play with your children.



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