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The New York Times

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A defeat for white identity

Ross Douthat

OPINION

Running for president in 2016, Donald Trump sold two kinds of populism. One appealed to white tribalism and xenophobia — starkly in his early embrace of birtherism, recurrently in his exaggerations about immigrant crime, Muslim terrorism and urban voter fraud.

The other was an economic appeal, aimed at working-class voters hit hard by deindustrialization who found the existing Republican agenda too libertarian. Trump promised to protect entitlements and replace Obamacare with something more generous; his anti-immigration arguments were about jobs as well as crime; he promised lavish infrastructure spending and trade deals that would bring back factory jobs; he pledged to make the G.O.P. a "worker's party."

What the midterms tell us about racial backlash and economic populism.

When this combination of appeals delivered victory, it set off an interminable debate about whether to look at Trumpian populism primarily through the lens of race or economics. Interminable, but crucial, because the answer would say a lot about whether a less tribal political alignment is possible — with Democrats winning back blue-collar whites or Republicans building a pan-ethnic nationalism — or whether we're doomed to a permanent racial polarization of the parties.

The rebuttal, the case for privileging race, relies on a raft of studies, the most recent one summarized by Vox's Zack Beauchamp just weeks before the midterms, which show that those Trump-Obama switchers were more likely to express racially conservative attitudes and hard-line anti-immigration views than they were to have suffered recent economic setbacks.

The hypothesis floated by these studies' interpreters is that the combination of Obama's presidency and Trump's deliberate race-baiting had an activating effect on white anxiety. Racial backlash against the first black president was more limited in 2016 because Romney didn't play to racial fears, but the backlash escalated, and flipped more white voters, once the next Republican nominee did.

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The New York Times publishes opinion from a wide range of perspectives in hopes of promoting constructive debate about consequential questions.

PHILIPPE WOJAZER/REUTERS, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Emmanuel Macron of France and Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany after unveiling a plaque north of Paris commemorating the armistice that ended World War I.

Tensions ease in Gaza

JERUSALEM

Israel allows aid to flow across border as Hamas moves to quell protests

BY DAVID M. HALBFINGER

For months, Israel has tried to quell Gaza's border protests with force. Now Israel is taking a different approach, easing a blockade and allowing millions of dollars in aid to flow into Gaza, the impoverished enclave controlled by Hamas, its bitter foe.

The aim of the change, in a plan mediated by Egypt and with money supplied by Qatar, is to provide much-needed relief for Gaza, restore calm on the Israeli side of the border and avert another war.

The clashes along Gaza's border have caused misery on both sides: At least 170 Palestinians have been killed, and thousands of acres of Israeli farmland have been torched.

But the change in Israel's approach presents risks for leaders on both sides that could doom even this limited warming of relations.

Watching unhappily is the Palestinian Authority, which regards any hint of cooperation between Israel and Hamas as virtually an existential crisis and, many in Israel believe, would welcome a new Gaza war.

SAID KHATIB/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Palestinians running for cover from tear gas on Friday near the border between Israel and Khan Yunis in the Gaza Strip. Hamas officials are seeking to restrain protests.

Since last month, tanker trucks have rolled in from Israel every day with diesel fuel to operate a second turbine at Gaza's sole power plant. The added power generation has sharply increased the daily electricity supply from just a few hours to 12 hours or more — helping families, hospitals, businesses and, not least, sewage treatment plants.

On Thursday, Israel allowed a car to cross into Gaza with three suitcases holding $15 million in cash. By Friday morning, thousands of civil servants and police officers employed by Hamas, the Islamic militant group that controls Gaza, were at the post office to collect sorely needed back pay.

And on Friday afternoon, for the second consecutive week, Hamas officials sought to reduce the intensity of the protests along the border, curtailing the use of incendiary balloons and urging demonstrators to stay well back from the Israeli barrier fence.

Taken together, the de-escalation moves look like a straightforward, simple transaction — one meant to ease tensions that had risen to the boiling point and seemed to presage a full-fledged war between Israel and Hamas. But there was nothing simple about those steps, which required the efforts of Egypt, Qatar, the United Nations and others. And while the parties are clearly acting in their self-interest, they are doing so in the face of serious political risks.

For Israeli leaders, the fuel and cash flowing into Gaza — both donated by Qatar — give the appearance that they are paying hush money to Hamas, their hated enemy, responsible for many deadly terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians.

But Prime Minister Benjamin Netan-

ISRAEL, PAGE 5

The demons of conflict are back in Europe

As leaders observe the end of World War I, familiar forces threaten democracy

BY KATRIN BENNHOLD

The Rev. Joseph Musser's family has always lived in the region of Alsace, but not always in the same country.

His grandfather fought for the Germans in World War I, and his father for the French in World War II. Today, no one is fighting anymore. His great-niece lives in France but works in Germany, crossing the border her ancestors died fighting over without even noticing it.

It is this era of peace and borderless prosperity that champions of the European Union consider the bloc's singular achievement.

"The foundation of the European Union is the memory of war," said the Reverend Musser, 72. "But that memory is fading."

Dozens of world leaders gathered on Sunday in Paris to mark the centenary of the armistice that ended World War I, but the chain of memory that binds Mr. Musser's family — and all of Europe — is growing brittle.

The anniversary came amid a feeling of gloom and insecurity as the old demons of chauvinism and ethnic division are again spreading across the Continent. And as memory turns into history, one question looms large: Can we learn from history without having lived it ourselves?

In the aftermath of their cataclysmic wars, Europeans banded together in shared determination to subdue the forces of nationalism and ethnic hatred with a vision of a European Union. It is no coincidence that the bloc placed part of its institutional headquarters in Alsace's capital, Strasbourg, France.

But today, younger generations of Europeans have no memory of industrialized slaughter. Instead, their consciousness has been shaped by a decade-long financial crisis, an influx of migrants from Africa and the Middle East, and a sense that the promise of a united Europe is not delivering. To some it feels that Europe's bloody last century might as well be the Stone Age.

Yet World War I killed more than 16 million soldiers and civilians, and its legacies continue to shape Europe.

"The war to end all wars" set the scene for an even more devastating conflict and the barbarism of genocide. Winston Churchill, Britain's legendary wartime leader, thought of 1914-1945 as one long war.

"Those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it," he said in 1948.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, whose decision to welcome more than a million migrants to Germany in 2015 first became a symbol of a liberal European order, then a rallying cry for a resurgent far right, said the jury is still

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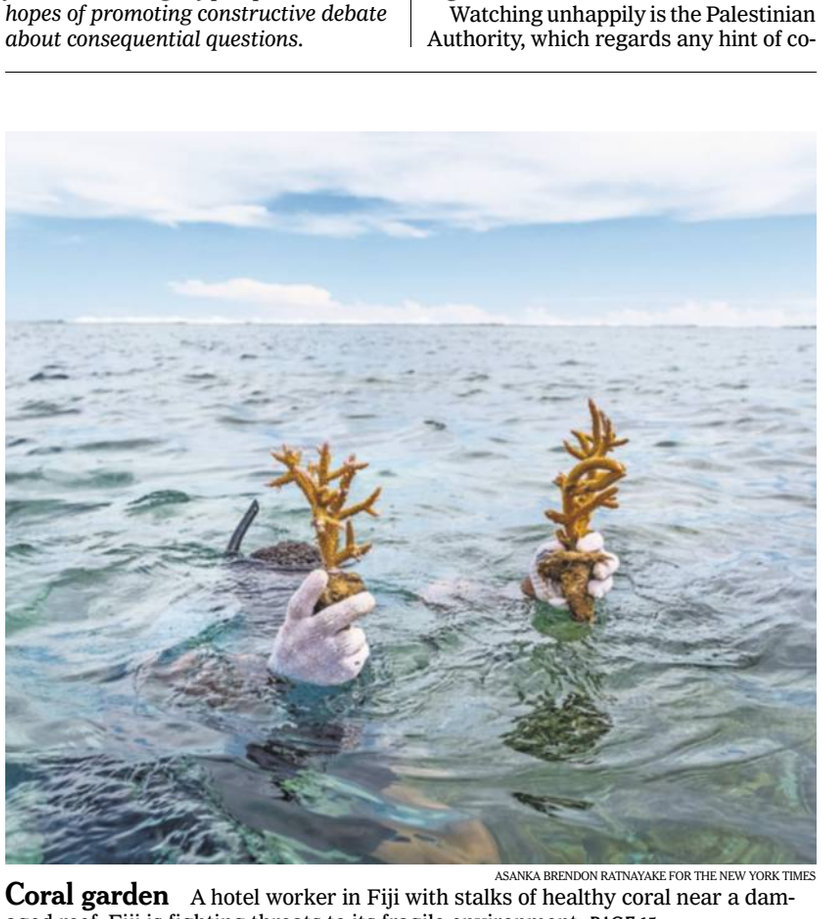

ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Coral garden A hotel worker in Fiji with stalks of healthy coral near a damaged reef. Fiji is fighting threats to its fragile environment. *PAGE 15*

Steering a technology giant through turbulent times

CORNER OFFICE

Google's chief executive talks about the challenges his company is facing

BY DAVID GELLES

Google is facing more challenges today than at any time in its 20-year history. Employees are outraged about sexual harassment. Executives are under scrutiny over a secretive effort to make a censored version of its search product for China. Google will shut down its social network next year after the discovery of a security vulnerability. Political and social debates, including one about building military-grade artificial intelligence, are roiling the work force.

Yet the man responsible for leading Google through this minefield is not one of the company's founders — Larry Page and Sergey Brin — or even Eric Schmidt, the company's former chief executive and chairman, who was ushered aside last year. Instead, the man in charge of arguably the most influential company in the world is Sundar Pichai, a soft-spoken engineer who grew up in Chennai, India.

Mr. Pichai was a voracious reader as a boy and attended the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology, then Stanford in California and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received advanced degrees. After stints at Applied Materials and McKinsey, he joined Google in 2004.

Mr. Pichai helped develop the company's browser, Chrome, and in 2014 he took over product, engineering and research efforts for the company's products and platforms, including

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PAGE TWO

Ancient demons return to Europe

ARMISTICE, FROM PAGE 1
out on whether Europe will heed the lessons of its past.

"We now live in a time in which the eyewitnesses of this terrible period of German history are dying," she said of World War II. "In this phase, it will be decided whether we have really learned from history."

The last World War I veteran died in 2012. And the number of those who experienced World War II and the Holocaust is rapidly shrinking, too.

Politicians are apt to use history selectively when it suits them. But the history in this case is ominous.

Now as then, Europe's political center is weak and the fringes are radicalizing. Nationalism, laced with ethnic hatred, has been gaining momentum. Populists sit in several European governments.

In Italy, a founding member of the European Union, the nationalist deputy prime minister, Matteo Salvini, has turned away migrant boats and called for the expulsion of Roma. Prime Minister Viktor Orban of Hungary speaks of a "Muslim takeover" and unapologetically flaunts his version of "illiberal democracy."

"In 1990, Europe was our future," he said earlier this year. "Now, we are Europe's future."

The political discourse is deteriorating in familiar ways, too. In Germany, the far right has become the main voice of opposition in Parliament, mocking the mainstream media as "Lügenpresse," or lying press — a term that was first used by the Nazis in the 1920s before their ascent to power.

Traute Lafrenz, the last surviving member of the White Rose, an anti-Hitler student resistance group in the 1940s, said she got goose bumps seeing images of Hitler salutes at far-right riots in the eastern German city of Chemnitz recently.

"Maybe it's no coincidence," Ms. Lafrenz, now 99, told Der Spiegel. "We are dying out and at the same time everything is coming back again."

After World War II, the European Union sought to prevent anything like it from happening again by creating a common market, a common currency, a passport-free travel zone and by pooling sovereignty in a number of areas.

But now, there are a number of nationalist leaders who would like to pull the European Union apart — among them President Trump, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey.

Historians guard against drawing parallels between the fragile aftermath of World War I and the present, pointing to a number of notable differences.

Before World War I, a Europe of empires had just become a Europe of nation states; there was no tried and tested tradition of liberal democracy. Economic hardship was on another level altogether; children were dying of malnutrition in Berlin.

Above all, there is not now the kind of militaristic culture that was utterly mainstream in Europe at the time. France and Germany, archenemies for centuries, are closely allied.

"What is being eroded today, is being eroded from a much higher level than anything we had ever achieved in Europe in the past," said Timothy Garton Ash, a professor of European history at the University of Oxford.

JULIEN WARNAND/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

A man in a French World War I uniform was among those commemorating the armistice at a cemetery in Verdun, France. Below, photographs of soldiers killed in the war at the Menin Gate in Ypres, Belgium.

VIRGINIA MAYO/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Still, Mr. Garton Ash sees 1918 as a warning that democracy and peace can never be taken for granted.

"It's a really sobering reminder that what seems like some sort of eternal order can very rapidly collapse," he said.

In that sense, if Europe's motto after World War II was "never again," the lesson of World War I is "it could happen again."

Daniel Schönpflug, a German historian who published "A World on Edge," an evocative book tracking 22 characters in the interwar period, points out that for centuries, periods of prolonged war in Europe's violent history have been followed by periods of prolonged peace.

"But once the generation with living memory of fighting had died, the next war came along," Mr. Schönpflug said. "History teaches us that when the generation that experienced war dies out, caution diminishes and naïveté toward war increases."

"That means we have to be very careful today," he said.

In 1918, the artist Paul Klee made "The Comet of Paris," a tightrope walker hovering precariously in the air with a comet searing through the sky above and the Eiffel Tower below. What is unnerving about the image is that one cannot discern the rope even though one knows it is there.

"It sums up where people were then, and in a way where we are today," said Mr. Schönpflug.

No one knows what might come next. Europe has entered the unknown.

In 1929, as it happened, people entered a murderous decade without even knowing.

"That's what's so eerie looking back," said James Hawes, a historian and author of "The Shortest History of Germany." "Right up to 1931-32, no one realized what was about to happen. They thought they were just entering another decade."

What might future historians write about the Europe of 2018?

Antony Beevor, the British author of numerous best-selling history books, is pessimistic. He predicts that the moral dilemmas of the future will undo European liberal democracy. And he says the migration crisis of 2015 was only a foretaste of what is to come.

"Future waves of migration are inevitable and Europe is their main destination," Mr. Beevor said, pointing to the disruptive forces of poverty and climate change in developing countries as the main reasons. "European leaders will face the choice of turning back starving refugees or of handing ammunition to the far right and eroding the fabric in their own societies," he said.

Others see it differently. Niall Ferguson, a British historian and senior fellow at the Hoover Institution, says the biggest problem facing Europe is not populism but the incomplete currency union of the euro.

"The major threat of Europe at the moment is not Orban or Salvini, the major threat is that the E.U.'s institutional arrangement is unstable," Mr. Ferguson said.

It has been a goal of President Emmanuel Macron of France to fix that; but there is no consensus backing him.

Whatever the future of Europe's institutions, one big difference from 100 years ago is that the Continent is no longer at the heart of geopolitics.

"A century ago, Europe was the center of the world — even if it was the dark tragic center of the world," said Dominique Moïsi, a French author and thinker. "Today we might be back to tragedy but not to centrality."

"History is moving elsewhere," he said.

Christopher F. Schuetze contributed reporting from Berlin.

Steering a technology giant through turbulent times

CORNER OFFICE, FROM PAGE 1
search, ads and Android. He was made chief executive in 2015 and joined the board of Alphabet, Google's parent, last year.

This interview, which was condensed and edited for clarity, was conducted in New York.

Tell me about growing up in Chennai.
There was a simplicity to my life, which was very nice, compared with today's world. We lived in a kind of modest house, shared with tenants. We would sleep on the living room floor. There was a drought when I was growing up, and we had anxiety. Even now, I can never sleep without a bottle of water beside my bed. Other houses had refrigerators, and then we finally got one. It was a big deal.

But I had a lot of time to read. I was processing a lot. I read whatever I could get my hands on. I read Dickens. Friends, playing street cricket, reading books — that was kind of the totality of life. But you never felt lacking for anything.

What was it like coming over to attend Stanford?
It was the first time I had ever been on a plane. I always wanted to be in the Valley. I kind of knew that's where everything happened. I remember landing in California, and I stayed with a host family for about a week. I was in the car going from the airport, and was like, "Wow, it's so brown here." The family was like, "We like to call it golden."

When I was back at I.I.T., I had access to the computer so rarely — maybe I'd been on it three or four times. To come and just have these labs in which you had access to computers and you could program, it was a big deal to me. I was so wrapped up in that, that to some extent I didn't understand there was a much bigger shift happening with the internet.

You started at Google 14 years ago. Does it still feel like the same company you joined?
When I first joined Google I was struck by the fact that it was a very idealistic, optimistic place. I still see that idealism and optimism a lot in many things we do today. But the world is different. Maybe there's more realism of how hard some things are. We've had more failures, too. But there's always been a strong streak of idealism in the company, and you still see it today.

What's your approach to technology and screen time with your family?
When I come home on a Friday evening, I really do want to let go of my devices for a couple days. I haven't quite succeeded in doing that. At home, our television is not easily accessible, so that there is "activation energy" before you can easily go watch TV. I'm genuinely conflicted, because I see what my kids learn from all this. My son is 11 years old, and he is mining Ethereum and earning money. He's getting some insight into how the world works, how commerce works.

Every generation is worried about the new technology and feels like this time it's different. Our parents worried about Elvis Presley's influence on kids. So, I'm always asking the question, "Why would it be any different this time?" Having said that, I do realize the change that's happening now is much faster than ever before. My son still doesn't have a phone.

Why does it seem so easy for tech companies like Google to ban pornography and graphic violence from social media platforms, but so much harder for them to root out propaganda, misinformation and disturbing content aimed at kids?
There are areas where society clearly agrees what is O.K. and not O.K., and then there are areas where it is hard as a society to draw the line. What is the difference between freedom of speech on something where you feel you're being discriminated against by another group, versus hate speech? The U.S. and Europe draw the line differently on this question in a very fundamental way. We've had to defend videos which we allow in the U.S. but in Europe people view as disseminating hate speech. Should people be able to say that they don't believe climate change is real? Or that vaccines don't work? It's just a genuinely hard problem. We're all using human reviewers, but human reviewers make mistakes, too.

How do you approach this in China, where Google is considering returning to the market with a search engine?
One of the things that's not well understood, I think, is that we operate in many countries where there is censorship. When we follow "right to be forgotten" laws, we are censoring search results because we're complying with the law. I'm committed to serving users in China. Whatever form it takes, I actually don't know the answer. It's not even clear to me that search in China is the product we need to do today.

An estimated 20,000 Googlers participated in a sexual harassment protest this month. What's your message to employees right now?
People are walking out because they want us to improve, and they want us to show we can do better. We're acknowledging and understanding we clearly got some things wrong. And we have been running the company very differently for a while now. But going through a process like that, you learn a lot. For example, we have established channels by which people can report issues. But those processes are much harder on the people going through it than we had realized. [After this interview took place, Google said Thursday that it would end the practice of forced arbitration for claims of sexual harassment.]

ERIK TANNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Sundar Pichai has been chief executive of Google since 2015. "Technology doesn't solve humanity's problems. It was always naïve to think so," he said.

Is there a morale problem at the company?
There's a lot of challenges in the world, and given what Google does, we feel like we are on the cutting edge of many of these issues. But when people say, "Wow, there's a lot of challenges," I always say, "There's no better time to be alive." I go through the exercise of placing myself at different times in the world. If you were alive during World War I, or influenza, or the Great Depression, and there's World War II to come. If you were in the 1960s, and Martin Luther King was shot dead, and R.F.K. would later get shot dead, and we were in Vietnam and there was a Cold War and a Cuban missile crisis — there is no better time to be alive.

But having said that, I think as humanity we're increasingly dealing with bigger things. As a company like Google, we have a deeper mission, and we feel the weight of that on our shoulders. I feel like people are energized and people want to change and make the world better.

Do you worry that Silicon Valley is suffering from groupthink and losing its edge?
There is nothing inherent that says Silicon Valley will always be the most innovative place in the world. There is no God-given right to be that way. But I feel confident that right now, as we speak, there are quietly people in the Valley working on some stuff which we will later look back on in 10 years and feel was very profound. We feel we're on the cusp of technologies, just like the internet before.

Do you still feel like Silicon Valley has retained that idealism that struck you when you arrived here?
There's still that optimism. But the optimism is tempered by a sense of deliberation. Things have changed quite a bit. We deliberate about things a lot more, and we are more thoughtful about what we do. But there's a deeper thing here, which is: Technology doesn't solve humanity's problems. It was always naïve to think so. Technology is an enabler, but humanity has to deal with humanity's problems. I think we're both over-reliant on technology as a way to solve things and probably, at this moment, over-indexing on technology as a source of all problems, too.

World

Warmer welcome for caravan in Mexico

MEXICO CITY

The group has forced a reckoning on country's treatment of migrants

BY ELISABETH MALKIN

The caravan of Central Americans that has been making its way from Honduras toward the United States border moved on from Mexico City in the predawn weekend chill, as migrants strapped on backpacks, rolled up blankets and hoisted sleeping children into their arms to begin the next leg of their journey.

For much of the past week, the giant capital, which prides itself on being a sanctuary for refugees, turned an athletic stadium into a camp for some 5,000 migrants and offered them every type of city service.

Ever since the caravan crossed into Mexico three weeks ago, the country has faced a reckoning over the way it treats Central American migrants. Contradictory impulses are in play.

In Mexico City last week, doctors and dentists were on hand for free checkups, and children spent the mornings drawing and coloring. A mariachi band played after breakfast, young men sparred with retired boxers and, this being Mexico, masked wrestlers turned up for a lunchtime bout.

It wasn't always this way. For decades, successive administrations used strong enforcement measures to control Mexico's borders. The migrants tried to travel out of the sight of the authorities, putting them out of mind of most Mexicans.

Now, Mexico City's embrace of the caravan has thrown an opposing idea into sharp relief, an acknowledgment that the country's asylum laws require the government to protect migrants, who are vulnerable to criminal gangs.

"There is a constant back and forth," said Stephanie Leutert, who studies Central American migration at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. "We want to stop people — and we want to make sure they are safe," she said, summarizing the tension in the Mexican government's approach.

That ambivalence was on full display on Friday.

Local officials cleared the way for an advance group of the caravan to board empty subway trains at 6 a.m. that ran express to the edge of Mexico City. A few miles further on, police flagged down commuter buses to carry five or 10 migrants at a time to the next stop.

Traveling in stages, the migrants reached the city of Queretaro, 135 miles to the northwest, by evening. The state governor announced that 760 people had arrived and would spend the night in the city's stadium to await the arrival of the rest of the group on Saturday.

The migrants' goal is Tijuana, across the border from San Diego, a route that avoids the crime-scarred states of northeastern Mexico.

"We will try to create a chain of protection across the states," said Nasheli Ramírez, the president of Mexico City's human rights commission. She described the route and where responsibility would pass, one by one, to her counterparts in other states.

Such good will was missing, though, for another migrant caravan. A few miles north of the Guatemalan border, federal police and immigration agents stopped a group of about 250 people — mostly men from El Salvador — and took them on buses to a migration detention center, Sergio Seis, a local migration official, said. This group, it appeared, would not be given the same welcome that the first caravan — and two subsequent others now moving through southern Mexico — had received.

The conflicting approaches have played out as President Trump has continued to hammer away at the idea that a caravan of people fleeing poverty, violence and political repression presents a threat to the security of the United States.

On Friday, he announced changes to policies that will limit migrants' ability to seek asylum, a move aimed at the caravans.

But caravan members have paid little heed to Mr. Trump's declarations. Many of the migrants are unlikely to qualify for asylum because they are seeking work, not refuge, in the United States.

"We have to fight, we have to give it a try," said Agustín Ramírez, a sawmill worker from the Honduran town of Talanga. "God moves mountains."

The migrants left Honduras a month ago in a caravan that swelled into the thousands as word spread and people — especially families — sought safety in numbers.

They arrived in a Mexico hanging in political limbo. The outgoing government of Enrique Peña Nieto is set to hand over power on Dec. 1 to a new leftist government. For years, first during the Obama administration and then after Mr. Trump took office, Mr. Peña Nieto's government had been acting as a junior partner of the United States in blocking the migrants' passage north.

President-elect Andrés Manuel López Obrador has promised a different approach.

He has pledged to grant temporary work visas to Central American migrants, declaring that nobody should be forced to migrate, and seems unlikely to stand in the way of those who choose to test their luck by traveling to the American border.

Mr. Trump has prioritized the detention of migrants over the new free trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, said Carlos Heredia, an economist who studies migration at CIDE, a Mexico City university. Mr. López Obrador's response, he said, has been: "'I will not do the United States' dirty work.'"

"It is certain that there will be a clash between Washington and the López Obrador government," Mr. Heredia said. "Whatever Mexico does, it will never be enough. Trump will keep raising the bar."

Paulina Villegas contributed reporting.

RODRIGO ABD/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Central American migrants on the subway after leaving a temporary shelter at a stadium in Mexico City. While there, they had access to free medical checkups.

ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

A migrant with donated clothes and shoes at a shelter set up in Mexico City. The migrants' goal is to reach Tijuana, across the border from San Diego.

Animal image in Borneo cave is world's oldest

BY CARL ZIMMER

On the wall of a cave deep in the jungles of Borneo, there is an image of a thick-bodied, spindly-legged animal, drawn in reddish ocher.

It may be a crude image. But it also is more than 40,000 years old, scientists reported last week, making this the oldest figurative art in the world.

Until now, the oldest known human-made figures were ivory sculptures found in Germany. Scientists have estimated that those figurines — of horses, birds and people — were at most 40,000 years old.

Researchers have found older man-made images, but these were abstract patterns, such as crisscrossing lines. The switch to figurative art represented an important shift in how people thought about the world around them — and possibly themselves.

The finding also demonstrates that ancient humans somehow made the creative transition at roughly the same time, in places thousands of miles apart.

"It's essentially happening at the same time at the opposite ends of the world," said Maxime Aubert, an archaeologist at Griffith University in Australia and a co-author of the report, published in the journal Nature.

Archaeologists have been discovering cave paintings and ancient sculptures for centuries, but it was only in the mid-20th century that it became possible to precisely determine their age. Traces of radioactive carbon are present in some types of art, and scientists gauge their age by measuring how long the carbon has been breaking down.

In the 1950s, radiocarbon dating on paintings in the Lascaux Cave in southern France showed that the images — of horses and other animals — were made 15,500 years ago.

On further investigation, the Lascaux paintings were shown to be 18,000 years old, making them the oldest artwork known at the time. Eventually even older art came to light. Another French cave, called Chauvet, is decorated with drawings of animals that researchers estimate date back as far as 37,000 years.

In 2003, Nicholas Conard of the University of Tübingen in Germany discovered the ivory figurines, which turned out to be far older: up to 40,000 years old. For years, those sculptures stood out as the oldest figurative artworks on the planet. "It was very lonely for a long time," Dr. Conard said.

The drawing is at least 40,000 years old, raising intriguing questions about creativity in ancient societies.

Scientists suspected that still older art was out there, but radiocarbon dating has limits. Many cave paintings lack the carbon required to date them.

Moreover, the half-life of radioactive carbon is only 5,730 years. In a sample that's 40,000 years old or older, all of the carbon required to date it may be long gone. In recent years, scientists have developed a new dating method.

When water trickles down cave walls, it can leave behind a translucent curtain of minerals called a flowstone. If a flowstone contains uranium, it will decay steadily — and at a predictable rate — into thorium.

In 2014, Dr. Aubert and his colleagues dated the age of a flowstone that covered a picture of a pig-like animal called a babirusa in a cave in Sulawesi. They discovered that the image was at least 35,400 years old.

That ancient age stunned Dr. Aubert and his colleagues, and they grew eager to use their method on other cave art. Pindi Setiawan, an archaeologist at Bandung Institute of Technology in Indonesia, invited Dr. Aubert and his colleagues to try it in Borneo. Dr. Setiawan and Adhi Agus Oktaviana, of the Indonesian National Center for Archaeological Research, had spent years studying drawings in remote mountain caves there.

Getting to the site was not easy. The team had to travel upriver by boat into the rain forest, then to backpack up mountains for days, hacking a path with machetes. Over the course of two field seasons, the researchers visited six caves. They removed bits of flowstone overlying paintings and used the samples to date the minimum age of the artwork underneath.

The scientists discovered flowstones underneath some images, as well; these samples allowed them to determine a maximum age.

The earliest art in the caves, the researchers found, were reddish-orange hand outlines and drawings of animals. The oldest of all, they announced Wednesday, was covered by a flowstone that formed 40,000 years ago.

That drawing depicts a four-legged animal that Dr. Aubert suspected was a species of wild cattle called a banteng.

Since the 40,000-year-old flowstone covers the banteng image, the artwork must be older than that — and thus the oldest known figurative art on the planet. It's hard to say when people first began to make these cave drawings, but one intriguing clue comes from a hand stencil. A flowstone atop it is 23,600 years old, while another underneath is 51,800 years old.

Combining the evidence from this stencil and the banteng image, it's possible that people started making art in the Borneo caves sometime between 52,000 years ago and 40,000 years ago.

The new discovery indicates that people in Borneo were already making figurative images at the same time as people in Europe — or perhaps even thousands of years beforehand. Now Dr. Aubert and other researchers are puzzling over what prompted these bursts of creativity.

One thing is clear: Figurative art came late in the history of our species.

The oldest fossils of Homo sapiens, found in Morocco, are 300,000 years old. A study last year of genetic diversity among people today indicates that populations began diverging from one another in Africa between 260,000 and 350,000 years ago.

Today, every culture makes art of some sort, and it is likely that humans in Africa over 200,000 years ago had the capacity to create it.

But for thousands of generations, there's no evidence that people actually made figurative art. The closest thing to it are abstract engravings etched on shells or pieces of ocher.

Only much later did our species expand out of Africa. They arrived in Southeast Asia and Australia perhaps as early as 70,000 years ago. Modern humans didn't get to Europe until much later, about 45,000 years ago, researchers suspect.

Dr. Aubert speculated that over thousands of years, certain societies of hunter-gatherers found places with good food supplies, or developed new kinds of tools, and thus attained denser populations. In those societies, people may have begun communicating with symbolic images and pictures.

"When they arrive at a certain place and there's an increase in population, they make rock art," Dr. Aubert said.

There are many examples of early cave art that have yet to be dated with the latest flowstone method. "They're just everywhere," Dr. Aubert said.

For now, however, he just wants to go back to the caves of Borneo and figure out how ancient humans made those remarkable images. Aside from their artwork, no one has found a trace of the people who once lived there.

PINDI SETIAWAN

Paintings in a cave in Borneo. The oldest known figurative image made by humans, discovered by scientists in Borneo, may represent a type of wild cattle.

The state of play as Brexit draws near

Britain's prime minister is hoping there will be a breakthrough very soon

BY STEPHEN CASTLE

Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union on March 29. If it is to avoid a chaotic withdrawal, one that could leave ports blocked and food and drugs running short, it needs an agreement spelling out the divorce terms from the European Union. Once that critical document is completed, it must be approved by the European Parliament and by British lawmakers in a climactic vote. So time is running out.

For months, negotiations were deadlocked in Brussels while Prime Minister Theresa May's divided Conservative Party was in turmoil, a reality underscored on Friday by the surprise resignation of Jo Johnson, a transport minister, over withdrawal from the bloc, a process known as Brexit.

So far Mrs. May has survived, and she hopes for a breakthrough in the coming days. But the parties are not there yet, and Britain's domestic politics are combustible. Here is the state of play.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

The prime minister has put her jittery cabinet on standby to endorse a deal she believes she can strike with the European Union. On Friday, she met with the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and talks with European officials were to continue through the weekend.

Her hope is to persuade her cabinet to sign off on an outline agreement early this week. It would then be blessed by European leaders at a special meeting at the end of the month.

POOL PHOTO BY GARETH FULLER

Prime Minister Theresa May is walking a very fine line to get a deal done.

But crucial details remain to be resolved, and Mrs. May is performing a balancing act, trying to strike a deal with Brussels without prompting more resignations from her government.

As he quit his position on Friday, Mr. Johnson demanded a referendum on the terms of any Brexit deal, accusing Mrs. May of presenting Britons with a choice between "vassalage and chaos."

Mr. Johnson, who campaigned in the 2016 referendum to remain in the European Union, is a brother of Boris Johnson, a leading advocate of Brexit who quit his cabinet post as foreign secretary to protest Mrs. May's strategy.

WHAT ARE THE STICKING POINTS?

There are several, but one stands out: the Irish border. Everyone agrees that when Brexit happens, there should be no physical border between Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom, and Ireland, which will remain in the European Union. The question is how to keep the border frictionless when the United Kingdom is no longer part of the customs union that facilitates uninterrupted trade within the European Union.

The pro-Brexit fundamentalists have offered gauzy visions of high-tech wizardry that would remove the necessity for physical checks of vehicles. But that has widely been dismissed as unrealistic.

The European Union is demanding a "backstop" plan for the time before that technology is in place. Under its proposal, Northern Ireland would remain inside the European customs union and much of its single market.

Mrs. May says that would unacceptably split the United Kingdom in two, with Ireland effectively annexing Northern Ireland and creating a border in the Irish Sea.

A breakthrough seems to be close on a compromise that would place the entire United Kingdom in a temporary customs arrangement with the European Union. But hard-line Brexit supporters fear that Britain could end up being locked indefinitely into Europe's customs rule book, dashing their dream of striking trade deals around the world.

IS THAT THE ONLY OPPOSITION?

No. Most opposition Labour lawmakers are likely to vote against the emerging deal, if it comes together. More worrying for Mrs. May is the reaction of the Democratic Unionist Party of Northern Ireland, which has considerable leverage. As Mrs. May's sole partner, the party, known as the D.U.P., props up her Conservative government, which lacks a parliamentary majority.

Door-to-door Afghan battle — against polio

BY FAHIM ABED

JAWED TANVEER/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Administering the polio vaccine in Kandahar Province in Afghanistan. Almost a million children in the province need at least one dose a month to head off polio, health workers say.

At just 2 years old, Madina had been vaccinated seven times. It was not enough: When she fell ill this fall, a trip to the doctor in Kandahar City confirmed that she was among the latest Afghan toddlers to contract polio.

Almost a million children in Kandahar Province alone, like Madina, need at least one dose of oral vaccine a month to head off the disease, health workers say. But many of them also live in the most violent and socially disrupted parts of southern Afghanistan, where the Taliban control large areas and do not want government health workers going door to door.

These realities make a sustained vaccination campaign brutally difficult for health workers. And Afghanistan, one of three countries where polio is still endemic, is losing ground. Officials have registered 19 cases of polio so far this year, up from 13 each of the previous two years, according to World Health Organization figures.

In August, I followed a polio vaccination crew in Kandahar and saw how, even in areas where health workers have been able to function, many things stand in their way: security fears and drought, deep poverty and stifling tradition, widespread illiteracy and superstition.

Still, starting just after dawn each day, the vaccination teams are at it, hoping to reach just a few more children.

Mawlawi Abdul Rashid of Kandahar City, a religious scholar and member of one team, said most of the residents were poor and desperately worried about what their children would have to eat each night. Drought adds to the daily burden, with families in many neighborhoods having to buy water from tankers after wells dry up.

Given that, Mr. Rashid said, "They don't care about polio vaccine as much."

Mohammad Shah, 38, said that as a vaccine campaigner in the city he had been visiting more than 100 houses a day in temperatures reaching 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37 degrees Celsius). He said some families asked for food and other necessities instead of the vaccine — a need that Mr. Shah, a father of five, said he understood.

"They keep asking us to bring them wheat, soup and other staples," he said.

Despite efforts to have religious scholars express support for the vaccine, Mr. Shah said mistrust about it persisted. Many worry about whether strict interpretations of Islam allow the vaccine. Some question its contents and believe conspiracy theories that Westerners have manipulated it to cause infertility.

Abdul Razaq, 65, who was administering the vaccine in the Loya Weyala area of Kandahar City, which is dominated by people displaced by fighting, said around 10 of the 200 families there refused it. "It's very difficult to convince those families who reject the vaccine," he said. "But we try our best."

Most families hold traditional views and are wary of letting men enter a home if no male family members are present. For that reason, the health workers try to have at least one woman on each vaccination team. But there are not enough female workers, and all-male teams are frequently turned away.

Polio was eradicated before 2000 in Western countries, but it is still a critical issue for Afghanistan, said Destagir Nazari, of the Health Ministry. "The world is trying to eradicate the virus completely," he said. "It is an international responsibility for Afghanistan to eradicate it, and we try our best to do so."

Across Afghanistan, more than 10 million children require polio vaccine. Canada, Japan and the United States are among the largest donors for the vaccination drive.

The vaccinators' days are long. They start early in the morning, gathering in the health facilities of each neighborhood of Kandahar City to collect the vaccine and vitamin E tablets, which they carry in plastic coolers.

Teams then head out in rented taxis or on motorcycles, armed with lists of families in their areas that have children younger than 5. They go door to door, circling back after a break for lunch and prayer to the houses where children weren't home in the morning.

At one house, a woman insisted that she didn't want her 3-year-old daughter, Mursal, to be vaccinated. She wouldn't give a reason, but the workers suspected she was worried for religious reasons. Each member of the three-person team tried to persuade her, even reading from a book of religious declarations that allowed the vaccine.

The last member of the team to try, Mr. Razaq, was blunt: If you keep rejecting the vaccine, he asked, will you be able to take care of your daughter when she contracts polio? He pleaded, insisting that he was religious, too, but still made sure all his young children were vaccinated. At last, he got through, and Mursal received her dose for the month.

Sometimes religious scholars, like Mr. Rashid, accompany the teams and help reassure families. "According to Islam, health is very important, and we can use anything to ensure our health," he said. "We convinced 70 families this month who were rejecting polio vaccine."

Other times, balloons work.

That was enough at one house: A woman there said no to the vaccine, but the boy with her wanted a balloon — so he got both it and his dose.

But bigger fears are at work than the children's distaste for medicine. Many families know the Taliban are suspicious of the government vaccination drive and worry that they will become targets if they are seen allowing the health workers into their homes.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban spokesman, said that the insurgents were not against the vaccine and that they supported administering it in areas under their control. But they will not allow government teams to go door to door in their areas, saying they believe the workers sometimes act as spies.

The Taliban usually insist on distributing the vaccine centrally from mosques. But health workers say only a house-by-house approach can come close to ensuring that enough doses are distributed each month.

Mr. Shah, who has been administering the vaccine for 12 years, said that as hard as this year had been, it was getting better, at least in his area: Last year 25 families there rejected the vaccine. This year, that dropped to eight. "When I see a polio victim, I feel very sorry for him and I understand that's why my job is so important," Mr. Shah said.

Officials, though, lament that progress is so halting despite all their efforts.

Abdul Qayoom Pokhla, head of Kandahar Province's public health department, said that even without the stress of war, eradicating polio there would take at least one or two years. "We need a secure environment to implement the polio vaccine campaign," he said.

Tensions ease in Gaza

ISRAEL, FROM PAGE 1

yahu has been under enormous pressure from Israeli residents near Gaza to bring a halt to the airborne arson and sporadic rocket attacks they have endured since early this year. Mr. Netanyahu has made clear, despite pressure from some in his right-wing coalition, he sees little gain from another war in Gaza.

For the leaders of Hamas, restraining the protests for what amounts to a financial aid package invites accusations by rival factions of selling out the Palestinian cause.

But Hamas also has been increasingly accused of ineptitude by ordinary Gazans in street protests, on social media and even in a rare report by an Israeli television station from Gaza. With that dissatisfaction growing, there were rising fears that Hamas would be pressured by its more hawkish rivals into a renewed round of violence against Israel.

Perhaps the clearest loser from a cooling off in Gaza is the Palestinian Authority. Its president, Mahmoud Abbas, has for two years imposed harsh economic sanctions on Gaza in an effort to severely weaken Hamas, which violently ejected the authority from Gaza in 2007.

By cutting Gaza's supply of electricity and slashing salaries of tens of thousands of authority employees who live in Gaza, Mr. Abbas helped precipitate the financial collapse and brewing humanitarian crisis that Israel, Qatar, Egypt and the United Nations hope to ameliorate.

Mr. Abbas has demanded reconciliation of his ruling Fatah faction with Hamas before any cease-fire agreement is reached between Israel and Gaza. He has portrayed any negotiation that excludes him as an effort to divide and conquer the Palestinian people.

At the same time, he has erected stiff obstacles to such a reconciliation, chiefly by insisting that Hamas disarm as a precondition. Many in Israel believe Mr. Abbas privately hopes the Israeli military will destroy Hamas.

Not surprisingly, then, Mr. Abbas and his aides howled last month when the United Nations envoy to the region, Nickolay E. Mladenov, arranged for Qatar to purchase $10 million in fuel from Israeli suppliers each month and deliver it to the Gaza power station.

A top Abbas lieutenant, Ahmad Majdalani, declared Mr. Mladenov was "no longer acceptable" to the Palestinian government. Others derided Mr. Mladenov as a tool of the Trump administration, which some Palestinians believe wants to cut the Gaza Strip loose from the West Bank permanently.

On Friday, similarly, the Palestinian Authority's official news agency, Wafa, denounced the infusion of Qatari cash into Gaza, suggesting that Hamas had debased the sacrifices of the fence protesters. "A cheap price for the blood of our precious people in the Gaza Strip," it said.

"I was talking to a family the other day that said, 'I can actually charge my phone.'"

Clearly, Mr. Abbas stands to suffer the greatest loss of face from efforts to loosen his economic stranglehold on Gaza. He has championed the two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, while Hamas has rejected it. Yet, this year, Mr. Abbas has nothing to show for his longstanding strategy except punishing aid cuts and diplomatic slights by the Trump administration, said Nathan Thrall, an analyst at the International Crisis Group.

"Hamas is delivering 1,000 times more than that," Mr. Thrall said. "It's actually delivering results." Mr. Thrall added that Mr. Abbas, also known as Abu Mazen, was 83 and ailing. "It's very dangerous," he said. "What if his health deteriorates rapidly? At a moment when everybody is saying Hamas's path works and Abu Mazen's doesn't, who's more likely to replace him?"

For the moment, officials involved say the Qatari-funded fuel shipments and cash infusions are making a dent in at least the most immediate problems afflicting Gazans.

"I was talking to a family the other day that said, 'I can actually charge my phone,'" said Jamie McGoldrick, the United Nations humanitarian coordinator for the Palestinian territories. "It means somebody's got a bit better life than they had two weeks ago."

But the electrical system, which has benefited from minimal usage because of mild weather, is expected to be strained again in a few weeks when winter weather arrives and Gazans turn on the heat.

Even some of those collecting their checks on Friday were less than sanguine. "This is only a painkiller," said Raed Abu Safia, 46, a science teacher from Gaza City, after receiving about 40 percent of a month's salary. "I'm drowning in debt."

Beyond those initial steps, much more must be done for a cease-fire to take hold, say people familiar with the Egyptian plan.

A more lasting détente between Israel and Gaza, however, would require progress in areas where the differences seem irreconcilable. Israel wants Hamas to relinquish two Israeli captives and the bodies of two Israeli soldiers as a precondition for allowing major international reconstruction projects in Gaza. Hamas has so far refused the demand, unless it is part of a large-scale prisoner swap.

And Egypt's main goal remains to restore the Palestinian Authority to power in Gaza.

But Mr. Abbas is unlikely to go along with that unless either Hamas unilaterally disarms or Israel provides assurances that it will not punish him should Hamas, on his watch, use weapons against Israel.

Such assurances are unlikely, particularly with elections coming soon in Israel, said Nimrod Novik, a veteran Israeli peace negotiator with close ties to Egypt and the Palestinians.

Mr. Novik said he feared that Israel would find itself back in much the same place, facing a possible Gaza war, in a matter of months.

"The short-term stuff is only good to calm things down," he said. "But once things calm down, the Israeli attention span is very short. Our strategic response is a sigh of relief."

Iyad Abuheweila contributed reporting from Gaza City.

IBRAHEEM ABU MUSTAFA/REUTERS

Employees of the Hamas-run Gazan government lining up on Friday to receive desperately needed back pay from the $15 million in cash that was supplied by Qatar.

Business

Pulling in buyers, a few thousand at a time

Advertisers see value in 'nanoinfluencers' to promote their brands

BY SAPNA MAHESHWARI

By now you have probably heard of influencers, that group of internet-famous people who have more than a million social media followers and can make big money by plugging various brands. And you may have even heard of microinfluencers, who do the same thing for a still sizable but somewhat smaller social media audience — from the tens to low hundreds of thousands.

Now get ready for the nanoinfluencers.

That's the term ("nanos" for short) used by companies to describe people who have as few as 1,000 followers and are willing to advertise products on social media.

Their lack of fame is one of the qualities that make them approachable. When they recommend a shampoo or a lotion or a furniture brand on Instagram, their word seems as genuine as advice from a friend.

Brands enjoy working with them partly because they are easy to deal with. In exchange for free products or a small commission, nanos typically say whatever companies tell them to.

With roughly 2,600 Instagram followers, Alexis Baker, 25, had a relatively ordinary social media presence, with photos of fashionable outfits and tropical vacation spots filling her feed. But her online persona changed when she started posting in praise of products like Suave Professionals Rose Oil Infusion shampoo, Clinique Beyond Perfecting foundation and concealer, and Loco Coffee, a mix of cold brew and coconut water.

People who know Ms. Baker were surprised when the hashtags used to denote advertisements — #sponsored and #ad — started popping up on her account. They were also a little impressed that she was Instagramming like an influencer.

"My friends were like: 'Wait a minute — you don't have tens of thousands of followers. How did you get contacted about this?'" Ms. Baker said in an interview. "I didn't really have an answer for them."

Ms. Baker, a leasing manager in Alexandria, Va., said she had stumbled into the hobby-slash-gig after being scouted by Obviously, which describes itself as "a full-service influencer marketing agency."

To Mae Karwowski, the chief executive of Obviously, nanoinfluencers are a largely untapped and inexpensive opportunity.

"Everyone who's on Instagram has that friend who is just really popular and is racking up 'likes' and comments and has great content," said Ms. Karwowski, who defined nanoinfluencers as people with roughly 1,000 to 5,000 Instagram followers. "They've probably never worked with a brand before, but they're just really good at social media."

JUSTIN T. GELLERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALEXIS BAKER, from Alexandria, Va., stumbled into her role as nanoinfluencer after being scouted by Obviously, which describes itself as an "influencer marketing agency."

LAUREL GOLIO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MAE KARWOWSKI, who is the chief executive of Obviously, said that the company has 7,500 nanoinfluencers in its database and plans to double that number by March.

Companies are seeking out relative unknowns during a gold rush in advertising through popular social media personalities. But as influencers — like the 20-year-old fashion model Luka Sabbat, with his 1.4 million Instagram followers — have grown in popularity, they have started charging more. And with their success and online fame, they may be losing the homespun quality that once distinguished them from the crowd of celebrity endorsers.

"There is such a saturation at the top," Ms. Karwowski said. "We've seen a real push to work with smaller and smaller influencers, because their engagement is so high and we have the technology to work with a lot more influencers now and track and measure what is and isn't working."

The influencer economy is opaque — and rife with questionable tactics — but there's no doubt it attracts big money. A reminder of that came recently when a public relations firm sued Mr. Sabbat, saying he failed to fulfill the terms of an agreement with Snap Spectacles. According to the suit, Mr. Sabbat was offered $60,000 for providing one Instagram post and three Instagram Stories and for being photographed during fashion weeks while wearing the spectacles.

Prices have climbed, even for the midlevel group known as microinfluencers. Taylor Camp, for example, who has almost 37,000 Instagram followers on an account called TheTieGuy, said in an interview that he had recently earned $500 for two Instagram posts for a men's shaving company.

For most nanoinfluencers, money isn't part of the deal. Free products are viewed as fair compensation for the ads they post outside their day jobs.

"If it does happen to blow up and take off full time, then great," Ms. Baker said. "But that is not what I'm looking for at all. It's just something I love doing.

"I love taking really, really great-quality photos," she continued. "I love challenging myself with how I can advertise and market something, and seeing the impact it has on people is really rewarding."

Kelsey Rosenberg, a 26-year-old in Columbus, Ohio, with 1,900 Instagram followers, saw an opportunity when influencer marketing took off. She contacted companies, including bars and restaurants in her area, and now regularly incorporates advertising into her Instagram feed.

"It's like one of your friends telling you a new skin care product is amazing, but instead of me telling my friends at happy hour, it's me telling them on Instagram," she said.

There are strings attached, though.

"You have to keep it on your feed for a certain amount of weeks," Ms. Rosenberg said, "and they want you to say certain keywords, like something is 'cruelty free' or something 'smells good,' or whatever their marketing says. They want you to mimic that."

Haley Stutzman, a 22-year-old in Bentonville, Ark., who has around 5,500 Instagram followers, said most advertisers approved her work before it went up.

"I'll send a screenshot of my blog draft, or I'll give them a few photos to pick from, if it's going to be one post for Instagram," she said. "They'll send kind of like a contract, and the bigger the brand, the more intense their contract."

Ms. Stutzman, a product specialist at Better Homes & Gardens, said her coworkers didn't quite understand what she was up to on social media, even as her account has grown into a "part-time side hustle kind of thing." Her parents were also mystified — until she snagged a couch from Burrow, a start-up, and a trip to Myrtle Beach, S.C., through Kate Somerville, a beauty brand.

Sarah Stovold, a managing director at NextWave, a consultancy with a focus on youth marketing, said younger consumers, especially the 13- to 21-year-old cohort known as Gen Z, had a different relationship with companies than their elders. "There's a strong entrepreneurial spirit in this group," Ms. Stovold said. "They've seen friends and people they see as friends developing some prosperity from doing this type of engagement with brands."

Krishna Subramanian, a founder of Captiv8, another influencer marketing firm, said he was skeptical about brands' marketing their wares through people with unremarkable social media followings.

"Are they able to actually measure something out of it and say, 'This is successful, we want to do more of it'?" he asked.

"My friends were like: 'Wait a minute — you don't have tens of thousands of followers. How did you get contacted about this?'"

But Ms. Karwowski, of Obviously, said she was confident in the strategy. Her firm has 7,500 nanoinfluencers in its database, she said, and it plans to double that number by March.

"The youngest generation has grown up with this technology, so they're very accustomed to seeing people talk about products they like and are recommending, so now there is a new willingness for them to participate in that," Ms. Karwowski said.

She added, "You're able to place a lot of really small bets rather than, 'We're going to work with Kim Kardashian.'"

Some nanoinfluencers are still grappling with allowing brands into their social media accounts.

Erin Gee, a 34-year-old government worker and spin-class instructor in Ottawa with just over 1,200 Instagram followers, started promoting the Fré skin care brand after getting a direct message from the company.

"They said: 'We like your Instagram page and what you're posting. Would you be interested in testing out our products to see if they work for you?'" Ms. Gee said.

Along with the free stuff, the company sent her instructions.

"They gave specific strict guidelines, like 'Here's the possible text you could use, here's the hashtag, and we expect a post within this amount of time,'" she said.

Ms. Gee admitted to having mixed feelings.

"I feel kind of like an infomercial, and I'm generally kind of uncomfortable pushing things on people," she said. "But I've seen a return on that, albeit small."

Close encounters: Putting Facebook's Portal to the test

BY MIKE ISAAC
AND FARHAD MANJOO

Facebook's new gadgets, Portal and Portal Plus, are meant to bring people closer together.

So we — Mike Isaac and Farhad Manjoo, two technology writers for The New York Times — took the $199 and $349 devices for a test run over the past week to see if they could make us feel more connected to each other.

We both installed the Portal, which starts shipping on Thursday, in our homes (our bedrooms, to be exact). The devices are video-calling machines that people can use to talk through a screen to other Facebook users. They have a 12-megapixel camera with high-definition video and artificial intelligence software; the camera follows people about as they move around.

The Portal has raised some privacy concerns, especially since Facebook has been scrutinized for the amount of information it already has on users.

Were we worried about what these always-on devices might collect on us? Here's how it played out.

Mike: Why hello, Farhad! It's been a while since we last shared a column together.

Farhad: I've had the time of my life not talking to you. Then last week, I learned I'd be getting Facebook's new video-calling machine so you could call me up whenever you felt like it. Oh boy.

Do you know how The Times has been running ads showing all the hazards reporters have to go through to get important stories? I think agreeing to install a Facebook-designed machine that puts me on speed dial for Mike Isaac should get me a starring role in one of those spots.

Mike: You should be so lucky.

So I have to say, waking up next to you in my bedroom was, uh, quite an experience. I put my Portal Plus on the desk that sits bedside. The screen saver cycled through my photo albums on Facebook and Instagram — and also occasionally your face.

Farhad: I'm guessing you loved this thing.

Mike: Er, not exactly.

What was your experience like initially? The unboxing process was funny to me. It felt like an Apple design moment; every piece of plastic and "pull here" tab was carefully placed, with the intentionality that Apple usually saves for its device packaging, but with a very Facebooky twist on things. There was an iconic Facebook thumb on my power cord holder, for example.

Setting up my Portal Plus was easy. Popped the thing out of the box, plopped it on my desk, plugged it in, connected to Wi-Fi and my Facebook account. From there, I think, I called you almost immediately.

Farhad: You sure did!

I was frankly blown away by how well-designed Portal was. It has one purpose — calling other people who use Facebook — and it does that extremely well. I've used other calling devices, like Amazon's Echo Show, but to me they've been more promising than practical.

The great thing about these devices is that they are stationary and always on. When you want to call someone, you just tell it to call the person — no looking for your phone, no holding the phone while you chat. It all just works with a single utterance. (Everything old is new: These devices are like landlines!)

The problem with Amazon's Echo Show is its fixed viewing angle — if you don't have it pointed exactly at you, it's hard to have a conversation. My kids, who use the Show to call my parents, are always fighting with each other about who gets to stand right in front of the screen.

The Portal solves that problem in a neat way: It uses software to follow you around a room, always keeping the speaker in frame and cropped. I found this very useful.

Mike: The hardest part for me was dealing with how much I instantly liked the device. I expected it to be chintzy because it's the company's first piece of hardware. But it wasn't. The screen is huge on my Portal Plus — basically like an iPad Pro strapped to a tall Sonos — and the calls were all crystal-clear video quality.

PRESTON GANNAWAY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Mike Isaac, a Times technology reporter, talking with his colleague Farhad Manjoo through Facebook's Portal video-calling device.

I will also admit I loved the augmented reality lenses, a flourish Facebook is adding to pretty much all of its camera-based apps. Just like Snapchat, I can choose a filter that turns my face into a werewolf, or stick a (live) cat on my head as a hat. Cat-as-a-Hat: a goofy gimmick worthy of Dr. Seuss — but it works!

Farhad: Of course, I can see people objecting — wait, not only are you putting a Facebook-connected machine in your house, but its camera will also follow you around the room, like some kind of digital Eye of Sauron?!

Mike: That was my biggest problem — and likely Facebook's most difficult hurdle to overcome when selling the Portal. It was the idea that I was putting an always-on camera in my home, connected to Facebook, 24 hours a day. There was no shaking the feeling that I was being watched.

Facebook anticipated this. To protect from that creepy feeling, they built a kill switch into the hardware that turns off the microphone and camera. They also provided a piece of plastic to physically sheathe the camera's eye. No more taping over the laptop lens, as Mark Zuckerberg, Facebook's chief executive, once did.

Facebook also went out of its way to let us know that all video chats are encrypted, and the company does not store the contents of the calls, nor does it listen in on them.

But even that wasn't enough for me! Whenever I wasn't using the Portal, I unplugged it. I turned the camera around to face the window looking over the back yard. I would periodically check to make sure all lights or microphones were off when I took a phone call or text.

Am I too paranoid? Maybe. But that's only because of the tech environment we find ourselves in, largely a situation of Facebook's own making. The company doesn't really have anyone to blame but itself.

Farhad: I think your fears are reasonable, both about these types of devices in general and about one made by Facebook in particular.

Facebook has a demonstrably worse record on privacy than many of its big-tech peers. It also has a business model, targeted advertising, which encourages it to walk up to the limit of what users will accept, and sometimes to walk beyond that line. Let's not forget that Mark Zuckerberg once said that privacy is an outdated social norm.

I don't think he believes that anymore, and Facebook has been working to improve how users can manage their private data on the platform.

Still, if you're going to choose between a calling device made by Facebook and one made by Amazon or Apple, you wouldn't be crazy to discount Facebook's device because of its business model and history.

All that said, a lot of people are just fine with the level of insight Facebook has into their lives. If you already chat and call on Facebook Messenger on your phone, then chatting and calling from Portal isn't putting you in any greater danger.

Mike: Are you going to buy one?

Farhad: Probably not — not because I don't like it, but because I doubt it would be very useful for me. I have an Echo Show, and I like that it gives my kids an easy way to talk to my parents (who also have one). But it's not an everyday-use case, and there are plenty of other ways to make video calls.

Portal is better than the Show at making calls, and for a first piece of hardware, it's quite impressive. But it's still a device of fairly limited functionality — a well-designed luxury at this point.

Mike: Agreed. But I'll admit: I'll miss our Portal calls when we return the units to Facebook.

I guess we'll always have our Slack chats.

BUSINESS

Few signs that economy helped Republicans

BY BEN CASSELMAN
AND JIM TANKERSLEY

JERRY HOLT/STAR TRIBUNE, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

Representative Jason Lewis of Minnesota, a Republican, lost his re-election bid, even though the unemployment rate in his district was just 2.5 percent.

Unemployment in the United States is abnormally low. Growth has sped up. A $1.5 trillion tax cut, signed by President Trump last year, is fueling consumer spending. Faced with strong Democratic enthusiasm and fund-raising and hindered by an unpopular president, Republicans were still counting on that economic strength to lift them at the voting booth, or at least to limit the damage.

It didn't. Republicans lost in House districts with low unemployment rates. They lost in districts that have gained manufacturing jobs. They lost in districts that got big tax cuts. And they lost overwhelmingly in the kind of affluent, educated suburbs that have experienced the strongest overall recovery — and that were once among the most reliable Republican districts.

Republicans had lost at least 32 net seats in the House as of Saturday morning on the American East Coast, and will probably lose a few more, once all the votes are counted. It is possible, of course, that Republican losses might have been even larger, were it not for the strong economy. But there was little sign of that in district-level results: Many of the Democrats' pickups came in places where the economy is strong.

All told, there was no apparent relationship between Republican candidates' performance in the House races on Tuesday and the strength of the economy in those districts, an analysis of economic and electoral data shows.

Republicans fared better in the Senate, but there is no sign that the economy was a major factor in those races, either. Kevin Cramer, a Republican, unseated Senator Heidi Heitkamp in North Dakota, which has the nation's lowest unemployment rate, 2.7 percent. But in neighboring Minnesota, where the rate is just a tenth of a percentage point higher, the Democratic incumbent, Amy Klobuchar, cruised to a 24-point victory.

Analyzing the role of the economy in elections is particularly difficult in the Senate, because there are fewer races and senators represent entire states, in which economic conditions can vary by area. But the results from Tuesday do not appear to align with measures of state economic health.

FALLING SHORT IN A HOT MARKET

If the economy were going to save Republicans anywhere, it should have been in Minnesota's Second Congressional District, where the unemployment rate was 2.5 percent in the third quarter of the year — down a percentage point in the past two years — and where the typical household earned more than $80,000 in 2017.

Yet the Republican incumbent, Jason Lewis, lost by more than five points to a local businesswoman, Angie Craig, whom he had beaten in a tight election two years earlier.

Ms. Craig wasn't the only Democrat who found success in a part of the country where the economy is exceptionally strong. Republican incumbents were defending eight seats that are among the 25 districts where unemployment is lowest. They lost five, including two districts each in Minnesota and Iowa, where the local unemployment rate is below 3 percent.

Republican incumbents fared better on average in districts with higher unemployment rates.

And while that partly reflects baked-in partisan dynamics — Republicans tend to do well in rural areas, where unemployment tends to be higher — the party's candidates also did better relative to past elections in districts where the jobless rate was higher than the national average. Of the 25 House districts with the highest unemployment rates heading into Election Day, 10 had Republican incumbents.

At least nine of those incumbents won, by an average of more than 30 points; in the 10th race, in California, the incumbent was unseated by a Democrat.

The unemployment rate, of course, is far from the only measure of economic strength. And Democrats may have had success in part because many voters — particularly women — weren't convinced that the economy was booming.

But Democrats also did well in parts of the country that are thriving under broader measures of economic health.

TAX LAW AS AN IMPEDIMENT

When Republicans passed a $1.5 trillion tax cut late last year, they envisioned it as a centerpiece of their sales pitch for the midterms. But they may have miscalculated how potent an electoral weapon the tax law would become against them.

Despite giving at least a modest tax cut to most households, the tax law has struggled to win majority support from voters. Several of its biggest champions lost their seats on Tuesday. They included four members of the House Ways and Means Committee, which wrote the law, most notably Peter Roskam of Illinois, the chairman of the tax policy subcommittee, and Erik Paulsen of Minnesota, the chairman of the Joint Economic Committee.

On average, Republican candidates did no better in districts where residents got larger tax cuts, as measured by estimates from the Tax Foundation, a conservative research group.

The law appears to have hurt Republicans in some high-income, high-tax districts, where many residents were angry about the law's $10,000 cap on the deduction for state and local taxes. In Virginia's 10th Congressional District, the Republican incumbent, Barbara Comstock, lost her seat. Her Democratic challenger, Jennifer Wexton, called the law the "Comstock-Trump tax scam."

NOT REALLY A SURPRISE

Republicans expressed hope before the election that the economy would help them in tight races. Days before the vote, Representative John Culberson of Texas said the strength of the economy in his district was "absolutely" resonating with voters. "It's something we're very proud of in West Houston," he said.

Mr. Culberson praised tax cuts and drew sharp contrasts with his Democratic opponent, Lizzie Pannill Fletcher, on economic issues. He said in an interview that voters "understand there is a profound philosophical difference between a free-market fiscal conservative like John Culberson, with a record of doing the right things for the right reason, and a liberal Democrat like my opponent."

Yet Ms. Fletcher won the district by nearly five percentage points.

History suggested that Republicans were being overly optimistic about the effect of the economy. In past midterm elections, economic conditions have mattered far less than presidential approval.

The president's party has lost large numbers of House seats even with low unemployment several times, including 1966 and 2006 during the administrations of Lyndon B. Johnson and George W. Bush.

Of course, things could have been worse for Republicans on election night if the economy had been weak. That would have been particularly likely if, say, a recession had depressed Mr. Trump's approval rating.

Markets can shift focus

Strategies

JEFF SOMMER

So much for the midterms.

Now the markets can start obsessing about gridlock, impeachment and the 2020 election.

And they can resume worrying about bread-and-butter issues like corporate earnings, interest rates and the threat of rising tariffs and recession.

Uncertainty about control of Congress has at last been lifted: Come January, the Democrats will run the House, while the Republicans will retain a slender majority in the Senate.

From the standpoint of the markets, that welcome clarity on Wednesday set off the biggest one-day midterm election rally since 1982. And while investors were relieved that the results conformed with Wall Street expectations, longstanding financial concerns were made even more visible while introducing a series of other political problems.

"The midterm results only highlight the ongoing political divisions within the country and the parties," John Raines, head of political risk at the business information service IHS Markit, and Lindsay Newman, a principal analyst there, wrote on Wednesday.

Sooner rather than later, the focus of financial markets is likely to shift to a new set of political and economic concerns.

On the political side, these include:

• The likelihood of investigations of the Trump administration in the House of Representatives and perhaps, down the road, impeachment proceedings.

• The prospect of congressional gridlock and vituperation.

• Rising partisan conflict as politicians prepare for 2020.

At the same time, the markets will refocus on the bread-and-butter concerns that have weighed on stock and bond returns for much of the year.

Among these worries are the possibilities that:

• The rate of corporate earnings growth, unusually robust right now, has already peaked, creating a benchmark that most companies won't meet next year.

• The Federal Reserve's interest rate increases will slow the economy, puncturing the prices of risky assets like stocks, which have already begun to lose altitude.

• The Trump administration's aggressive trade policy — and worsening foreign relations with allies and adversaries alike — will raise global tensions further and hurt the economy.

• After a long recovery, the economy will fall into a recession in the next two years, producing a deep bear market.

This may seem like an excessively glum list, right after elections that sent the stock market into a bout of euphoria. If the markets abhor uncertainty, then these midterm elections were wonderfully reassuring.

"The consensus was right," John Lynch, chief investment strategist for LPL Financial, wrote on Wednesday. Wall Street generally viewed the election's broad outcome as highly probable and fairly desirable, though not the outcome thought most likely to produce the highest stock returns.

That would have been a Republican sweep with a large majority in the Senate as well as the House, leading to a repeal of the Affordable Care Act and cuts in programs like Social Security and Medicare.

The UBS Global Wealth Management Chief Investment Office considered the various possibilities ahead of the election, concluding that such a sweep "should boost global stock markets, limit increases in long-term bond yields and support the U.S. dollar."

But the "base case" that UBS and most other analysts forecast ahead of the voting was what actually happened — a split decision producing gridlock. The real-world validation of the consensus tilted stock prices upward. The markets have generally prospered after the midterms, regardless of which party has won.

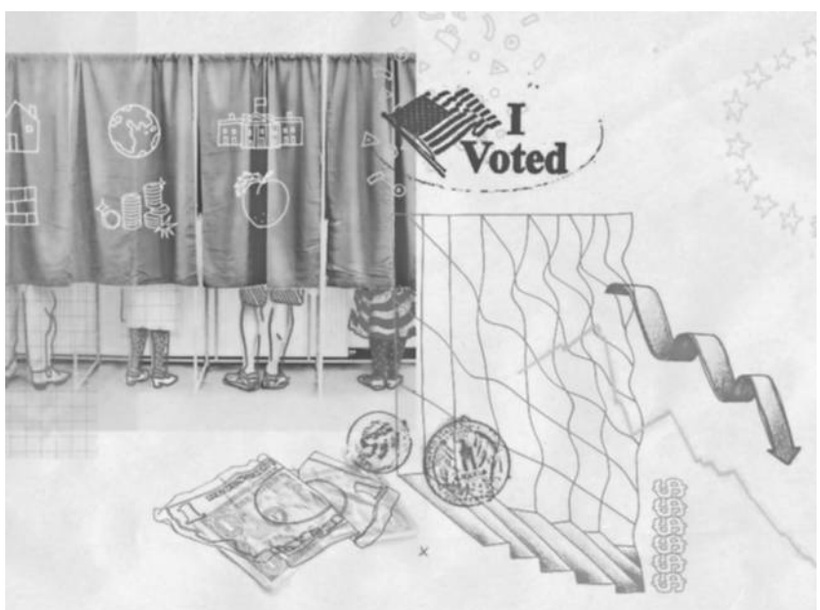
In addition, despite substantial evidence to the contrary, there is a deep, stock-bolstering belief on Wall Street that gridlock — defined as a period during which no single party controls all three branches of government — has been good for the market.

But the data bears this out only when a Democrat has been president and Republicans have held either the House or the Senate. Since 1901, in all such cases, the Dow Jones industrial average has outperformed its long-term average, an analysis by Bespoke Investment Group shows. If a Republican was president under such conditions, the market has lagged.

In the five previous congressional sessions since 1901 in which Republicans controlled the White House and the Senate while Democrats controlled the House — the political alignment in Washington starting in January — the annualized return has been a loss of 1.69 percent. That's not encouraging, though the data is too scanty to use "as a blueprint for what to expect this time around," Bespoke said.

The IHS Markit analysis predicted a "legislative impasse" in the new Congress but reserved the possibility of deals on big issues. And several analysts said these might be an infrastructure rebuilding program, measures to reduce prescription drug prices or an agreement to help the so-called Dreamers, the young undocumented immigrants who have benefited from an Obama-era program called Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals but face the possibility of deportation under Trump administration policies.

The one sure thing in Washington appears to be a high level of political strife. That was underlined on Wednesday when Mr. Trump fired Attorney General Jeff Sessions and replaced him with Matthew G. Whitaker, a loyalist who has been critical of the special counsel investigation into Russia's election interference. House investigations into these matters could begin early next year, and, at some point, the start of impeachment proceedings is certainly possible.



DIANA CHU

Sports

Manchester City's brilliance comes at a cost

On Soccer

BY RORY SMITH

OLI SCARFF/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

Manager Pep Guardiola with David Silva in Manchester City's win over Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League. City's success has yet to carry over into that competition.

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND The problem with Manchester City, as Arsène Wenger saw it, was not simply that it possessed an apparently bottomless well of wealth. It was that City was smart, too. "Petrol and ideas," as Wenger, the former Arsenal manager, put it. "Money and quality."

Wenger spent much of his career railing against soccer's drift into the grasp of oligarchs and plutocrats, vainly espousing the virtues of sustainability as the game swooned before leveraged billionaires and sovereign investment funds. It was Wenger who first introduced the idea of "financial doping" to the sport, preaching parsimony during a gold rush.

By the end, though, even he did not believe City's success could be explained solely by its balance sheet. Its pre-eminence could not have been achieved without the billion-plus pounds provided by its backer, Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan, but it would not have been so complete, had that money not been spent so wisely.

The most obvious manifestation of that has been on the field: Pep Guardiola's team won the Premier League last season with more points and more goals than any team in the modern era.

Off the field, though, the modern City has also become a point of reference to many. City Football Group, the umbrella organization that owns City and its interlinked network of sister clubs, has been consulted by the Chinese Super League on how to run its teams more sustainably. In the United States, in particular, Major League Soccer has made use of the vast database of information held by City's recruitment department when assessing potential signings from minor European leagues.

Even Real Madrid, a club more accustomed to leading than following, was impressed by City's model. Real executives told City's chief executive, Ferran Soriano, that it was not something they could copy — Real's prestige would be diluted by franchising, they felt — but they admired the concept. Like everyone else in soccer, they accepted that City was about more than just oil: it had ideas, too.

Increasingly, it seems as though that combination is simply too much for the rest of the Premier League. Guardiola's team has dropped only four points this season; it remains on course to equal, or beat, its points total from last year. On Tuesday, Guardiola was asked if the league as a whole would eventually suffer for City's unimpeachable excellence. "I don't know," he said, "if it's a problem."

Similar success in the Champions League, the competition its executives — if not its fans — cherish more than any other, has proved more elusive. City does not need the trophy, though, to know that it has already joined Europe's front rank of teams. In the documents released by the whistle-blowing platform Football Leaks to the German magazine Der Spiegel, five Premier League clubs were named as party to a plan to start a breakaway European Super League — replacing the Champions League — starting in 2021. City was among them.

Those documents, though, have painted an entirely different picture of City from the one that had convinced so many of its opponents to follow its example.

In a weeklong exposé of the methods the club has used to circumvent UEFA's Financial Fair Play regulations — to, in a comment attributed to Simon Pearce, one of the club's most influential executives, "do what we want" — Der Spiegel and Football Leaks have depicted a club that has, for almost a decade, worked tirelessly to deceive and co-opt the game's authorities, to make sure the rules do not apply to City; and whenever it has not gotten its way, it has reacted with petulant anger.

There are details of inflated sponsorship deals designed to mask covert cash injections from the club's owners; of closed payment loops with spurious third-party companies for players' image rights; of a former manager's salary that seems, at least in part, to have been bolstered by an "advisory" role with another club owned by Sheikh Mansour; of a secret partnership with a Danish team that may have breached rules on a club's influence; of legal threats toward not only UEFA but to the accounting firm sent in to examine the club's accounts; and of back-room deals with Gianni Infantino, at the time the general secretary of UEFA and now the most powerful man at FIFA.

Nobody comes out of the revelations well: not Infantino, craven and crawling; not UEFA, willing to prosecute the minnows while the sharks swim free; not the clubs, led by Bayern Munich, which talked of leaving not only UEFA but FIFA itself in search of more money; not Javier Tebas, the president of La Liga in Spain, who has called for those guilty of "dirty tricks" to be punished, which would coincidentally help several of the teams in his competition; not the clubs or organizations who should be righteously angry at flagrant rule breaches but who have maintained the silence of the complicit; and certainly not City — or, for that matter, Paris Saint-Germain — which signed up to a set of rules and promptly searched for ways to break them.

The New York Times has not seen the source documents Der Spiegel has obtained, and cannot verify them. But City has not declared any of the information reported so far to be false. It has simply dismissed the documents as a "clear and organized attempt" to smear the club's reputation.

It might also point out, of course, that it has already been punished for failing to comply with Financial Fair Play — 60 million euros, or about $68 million, in 2014, though some of it was suspended or subsequently refunded — even if, as the documents show, intensive lobbying meant that fine was substantially lighter than it might have been.

The documents suggest that City is likely to believe that relief was justified, too. The club has hardly made a secret of the fact it felt Financial Fair Play was a ruse concocted by the game's traditional elite to keep upstarts like City and P.S.G. in their place. If City was trying to find a way around the rules, it was only because the rules were unfair.

Besides, even if the allegations are true, and tens or hundreds of millions of dollars more were injected into City than the club's accounts recorded, that does not change the fundamental truth, the one even Wenger recognized: That money alone is not enough.

There is a broader issue here, one that stretches beyond whether City has been punished enough, or whether the fair play rules were well-conceived in the first place. To zoom in on those issues is to get lost in the weeds.

Even as City — like P.S.G. — reportedly poured considerable time, effort and expense into breaking UEFA's regulations, it was simultaneously meeting any threat of a punishment with ire and anger, contemplating whether any potential fine might be better spent on a legal team to take on, and crush, the organization levying it. When the sum it would be forced to pay was eventually decided, City could afford to declare that tens of millions of euros did not "materially affect" its business.

That is the true image cast by the revelations of the last week, one that has ramifications far beyond tribal self-interest: of not just one club, but of a whole host of them that believe the rules should be altered to fit their needs; of teams so inflated by success that they can now casually disregard the diktats of their governing bodies; of teams too big to fail, beyond control.

That is what led City both to deceive and then disdain UEFA. It is what led to the endless changes to the Champions League and the tweaks to domestic cup competitions and a series of bans for illegally approaching, or signing, young players: an essential arrogance, a disregard for consequence, a belief that might makes right.

It is what threatens the fundamental rupture in the fabric of the game best reflected in that Bayern-concocted plot for a breakaway super league that would involve pulling players out of all international soccer, including the World Cup.

Perhaps it is understandable that City tried to circumvent a set of rules designed, to a large extent, specifically to protect the teams it was trying to usurp. Perhaps it was justified in fighting, tooth and nail, the idea that it might be punished by what it considers a rigged system. Perhaps UEFA got lucky that it did not go to court. Perhaps, too, it would be evidence of a skewed morality to condemn City's owners for all of that but not for the allegations of human rights abuses and oppression they have overseen in the United Arab Emirates.

But to turn a blind eye to that, as the game's authorities seem likely to do, is to help yet again usher in a game with one rule for the rich and another for the poor.

P.S.G. admits racial profiling of recruits

PARIS

BY ELIAN PELTIER
AND TARIQ PANJA

The French soccer powerhouse Paris St.-Germain acknowledged Thursday that for the past five years some of its scouts had used racial profiling in the recruitment of young players, hours after a news media report that it was part of an effort to limit the number of black players signed by the club.

The charges of discrimination were outlined in a report by Mediapart, which is part of a European investigative journalism collective that has used hacked documents to produce a series of articles on the internal workings of several top European soccer clubs. On Thursday, Mediapart published scouting reports it said were used by P.S.G. recruiters from 2013 until earlier this year to evaluate young players; along with evaluating a player's physical and technical skills, scouts were asked to check a box noting each player's "origin."

The club, which has been transformed into a global force by its Qatari owners, claimed senior officials had no knowledge of the racial profiling program. P.S.G. attributed the form, and the system, to an ex-employee responsible for leading a team that recruited players from outside of the Paris region.

P.S.G. said it began an internal investigation into the profiling last month — "as soon as it was informed" about the tracking of players' ethnicities — even as it acknowledged the form had been in use for years.

"The Club General Directorate had never been aware of an ethnic registration system within a recruitment department nor had it in its possession," P.S.G. said in a statement. "In view of the information mentioned therein, these forms betray the spirit and values of Paris Saint-Germain."

P.S.G. already faces questions about its financial affairs after earlier revelations publicized in the so-called Football Leaks scandal. Many of the articles are the result of information obtained in an apparent hack that has exposed internal documents and private emails of top soccer officials.

The P.S.G. recruiting affair comes seven years after an ugly episode in which senior officials of France's soccer federation, including the national team coach at the time, Laurent Blanc, discussed setting up secret quotas limiting the number of players of North African and sub-Saharan origin at its youth training academies. Blanc was cleared of wrongdoing after an inquiry.

The revelations quickly became a national scandal, drawing condemnation and reigniting debates about race and integration in France. The current storm at P.S.G. comes only months after a much-celebrated victory at the World Cup last summer by a France team composed of players from a mix of ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds.

Only months earlier, though, scouts working for P.S.G. were still being asked to identify young players as French, North African, West Indian or Black African, according to a copy of a form that was published by Mediapart and whose original version was reviewed by The New York Times.

Mediapart reported that Marc Westerloppe, P.S.G.'s former head of player scouting outside of the Paris area, suggested in 2014 that the club needed more "balance" because "there are too many West Indian and Africans around Paris."

Jean-Claude Blanc, P.S.G.'s director general, said in a telephone interview with The New York Times that the comments had sparked turmoil inside the club at the time and that the forms stopped circulating this spring, shortly after Westerloppe left the club.

Tariq Panja reported from London.

'Players are not the game'? Analytics guru clarifies

On Baseball

BY TYLER KEPNER

WENDY MAEDA/THE BOSTON GLOBE, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Bill James, the writer and researcher who is a consultant to the Boston Red Sox, caused a stir with comments he made about how easily baseball players could be replaced.

If you gathered every player in major league history — from Old Hoss Radbourn to Justus Sheffield, more or less — and seated them at Yankee Stadium, you could not even fill half the ballpark. Fewer than 20,000 people have ever played baseball at the highest level. The ability to do so is rare and precious.

Bill James understands this better than most. James has been a groundbreaking, thought-provoking writer and researcher for more than 40 years, relentlessly challenging conventional wisdom. An outsider for decades, he has advised the Boston Red Sox through their run of four championships in this century. His influence on the modern game is profound.

Now, though, James has rankled his team and the players' union with Twitter posts questioning the relative worth of players and suggesting that they are replaceable.

In a Wednesday tweet that has since been deleted, James wrote: "If the players all retired tomorrow, we would replace them, the game would go on; in three years it would make no difference whatsoever. The players are NOT the game, any more than the beer vendors are."

In a telephone interview on Thursday, James clarified what he meant.

"I don't speak for the Red Sox, and I try to make that clear as often as I can," he said. "But from the Red Sox standpoint, we have a responsibility not to offend the players, and it's unfortunate that I did offend the players. I didn't mean to do that. I don't know that the idea that the game endures and we're all just passing through it is inherently an offensive idea. But if I phrased it in an offensive way, that was not my intention."

The idea of replacing all the players is not as far-fetched as it sounds. At spring training in 1995, after a strike had canceled the previous year's World Series, owners attempted to break the union by using replacement players for exhibition games. That shameful farce nearly bled into the regular season, and players have never forgotten.

Tony Clark, the executive director of the players' association who made his major league debut in 1995, issued a blistering statement on Thursday condemning James's stance.

"The comments Bill James made yesterday are both reckless and insulting considering our game's history regarding the use of replacement players," Clark wrote. "The Players ARE the game. And our fans have an opportunity to enjoy the most talented baseball Players in the world every season. If these sentiments resonate beyond this one individual, then any challenges that lie ahead will be more difficult to overcome than initially anticipated."

Current and former players, like Justin Verlander, Jameson Taillon, Torii Hunter and Al Leiter, also criticized James's comments. The Red Sox moved quickly to distance themselves from him with their own statement:

"Bill James is a consultant to the Red Sox. He is not an employee, nor does he speak for the club. His comments on Twitter were inappropriate and do not reflect the opinions of the Red Sox front office or its ownership group. Our Championships would not have been possible without our incredibly talented players — they are the backbone of our franchise and our industry. To insinuate otherwise is absurd."

By wading into the topic of player value, with a new off-season just underway, James may have thrown himself into the kind of Twitter lava that has caused others — in entertainment, media and elsewhere — to lose their jobs. James hopes not.

"I enjoy working for the Red Sox," he said, "and I would like to continue that as much as I can."

In the baseball industry, few things are as politically poisonous as floating the notion that players are replaceable. Players were furious last winter about teams' sluggish approach to free agency, and many suspected the owners of colluding against them, as they had in the 1980s. Brodie Van Wagenen — at the time a star player agent, but now the New York Mets' general manager, of all things — even threatened a boycott of spring training.

The owners' reluctance to spend on free agents was often tied to analytics, and the movement James spawned by highlighting the objective reasoning behind the metrics. Front offices increasingly strive to be efficient in finding value, and rewarding free agents for past performance can be wasteful, compared with using younger and cheaper talent.

Many free agents who signed late last winter did turn out to be overvalued. Could a replacement-level starter have matched the production of, say, Baltimore's Alex Cobb, who was 5-15 with a 4.90 earned run average after signing a four-year, $57 million contract in March? Or Lance Lynn, who signed with Minnesota for one year and $12 million, then was 10-10, 4.77, for the Twins and the Yankees?

On Twitter, James cited no specific examples of players being overpaid. But he said it was "asinine to say that players making only a few million a year are underpaid," as fans and reporters often say when comparing players' salaries.

"It's a question of which perspective you choose," James said on Thursday, adding later: "I got in trouble by trying to tell people you don't have to choose the players' perspective. That is what I was trying to say: You *can* choose the perspective of broader society. It makes equal sense to do so. But the sabermetric perspective of it — the view from the marketplace — has become so dominant that it squashes its opposition."

SPORTS

An N.B.A. rookie eager to build a legacy

ORLANDO, FLA.

Mo Bamba of Orlando looks to the future with a company to order his life

BY SCOTT CACCIOLA

ZACK WITTMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The rookie Mo Bamba greeted the crowd before his N.B.A. debut at the Orlando Magic's season opener against Miami last month.

Mo Bamba returned from a preseason workout with the Orlando Magic to a full apartment. He was greeted by three friends, whose sole business is the business of Mo Bamba, and by several employees of Wayfair, the online home goods company that had furnished his new downtown penthouse as part of an endorsement deal.

All Bamba needed to do was pose for pictures.

"This is excellent, guys!" Bamba, 20, said as he tumbled onto his new bed and spread his arms, which nearly extended into the living room.

Bamba, a rookie center from the New York neighborhood of Harlem, has a new home in Orlando and a new job with the Magic, who were to play the Knicks on Sunday at Madison Square Garden. He is seven feet tall, with room to grow. He wants to develop a consistent outside shot. He wants to become one of the league's sturdiest defenders.

But he also has ambitions that go beyond basketball, and he wants to do things his way.

"One thing that drives me crazy," Bamba said during an appearance on "The Shop," a talk show with LeBron James on HBO, "is when people tell me that I sound good for an athlete."

He continued: "They be like, 'You don't sound like you from Harlem.'" What, he wondered, is that supposed to mean?

Bamba is riding a wave of rebellion in professional basketball, powered by talented young athletes who are determined not to let others' expectations constrain their ambitions. The N.B.A. is big business, and players — even unproven ones like Bamba — are small corporations unto themselves. But Bamba wants to be in charge of his future.

He does not, for example, have an agent, a rarity among N.B.A. players. What he does have is Lenox Partners, which he co-founded with Greer Love, 36, a childhood mentor who left his job in private equity last spring to start the company. Love described it as "the umbrella entity that manages all the various facets of Mo's life," whether investments, philanthropy or sponsorship deals.

"It's about trying to surround Mo with the best experts possible," said Love, who has an M.B.A. from Michigan and recently bought a home in Orlando. "If he sees something that interests him, we try to find the best expert to get him from Point A to Point B."

Beyond business stuff, a unique partnership is at work here — a bromance, even. Love has known Bamba since Bamba was in the fourth grade.

"He's been pretty darn consistent as the years have gone on," said Bamba, who first came to know Love as a volunteer basketball coach at his elementary school. "I remember when this dude was begging me to send him my math problems, so he could help me out."

Lenox Partners has two other employees: Noah Coslov, whom Love brought on for marketing help, and Denario Watkins, Bamba's best friend since the third grade.

Now, out on the balcony of his new home in Florida, Bamba was struggling with the midday glare as the Wayfair people set up their photo shoot. Love handed him a pair of sunglasses.

"Dad shades," he said before handing them back to Love, who shrugged.

Another thing about Bamba: While he leans on people like Love and Watkins, he tends to do what he wants to do.

"Mo trusts Greer," said Shaka Smart, who coached Bamba during his lone college season at Texas. "Greer has been a real rock for him in terms of stability and guidance in some aspects of his life. But in other aspects of his life, Mo is incredibly self-sufficient: 'I'm good. I don't need help with this.'"

Growing up in Harlem, Bamba shared an apartment with his mother and three siblings. (His father moved out when Bamba was 7, but they remain close.) They lived across the street from public housing, which Bamba's mother discouraged him from visiting. Bamba's parents are from Ivory Coast, and he recalled getting into scuffles with other boys.

"The children of African immigrants were always getting hazed," he said.

But the courts at the projects had the best hoops, so Bamba evaded the watchful eye of his mother. He caught the attention of the neighborhood, though, eventually becoming something of a local legend who would inspire a rap anthem, the viral "Mo Bamba" song by his friend Sheck Wes, before his first professional game.

Bamba built his legend as he began to shoot baskets at P.S. 208, where Love, then a 26-year-old investment banker, was volunteering on the weekends.

Love had gotten involved through New York Cares, a nonprofit that pairs volunteers with organizations looking for help. He wanted a break from his 80-hour work weeks, he said, and the school needed someone to run a clinic for 60 or so children a couple times a month.

"They would roll out 20 basketballs," Love said, "and it was basically, 'Hey, just make sure nobody kills each other.'"

Bamba and Watkins were among the boys who showed up, and Love soon hatched the idea of tryouts for a fifth-grade team. It remains a source of friction that Love cut Bamba at tryouts. Love said it was because Bamba was in the fourth grade. But so was Watkins, and he made the team.

"Yeah, pretty messed up," Bamba said.

Bamba joined the team the following year, and Love became more mentor than coach, a big brother of sorts who would help all the players with their homework and their problems. Love eventually left for business school but pledged that he would still be a part of their lives.

"My promise to these guys was, 'Hey, I'm just a text away,'" he said.

Bamba, whose mother pushed him to excel, left New York, too, to attend boarding school in New Hampshire. He was not a basketball prodigy — not yet, anyway. He was studious and curious, with interests in math and history.

Bamba later attended Westtown School outside Philadelphia, where he emerged as a basketball star. He put Love, who was then working in Detroit, in charge of his college recruitment. They were methodical, creating a spreadsheet of Fortune 500 executives from the schools Bamba was considering. He chose Texas and its enormous pool of alumni.

"Academics were certainly important," said Smart, his college coach, "but he also wanted to connect with people and build a network that he could utilize and rely on for many years."

After one season at Texas, Bamba made his way to Barclays Center in June for the N.B.A. draft, where the Magic made him the sixth overall pick. He had his own cheering section that included a group of students from P.S. 208. Bamba has kept in close contact with many of his former teachers.

"There's so much ugliness in the neighborhoods, so when you have someone who can really make it out, it just inspires everybody — even the administrators," Jackie Colon, the assistant principal at P.S. 208, said in a telephone interview. "If we can touch the life of one kid, we've done a good thing."

As for Bamba's business partnerships, Love is aware that some people might be skeptical about his intentions — and the optics of Love's latching onto a rising star. It was an issue that surfaced last summer, when one of Bamba's half brothers accused Love of providing Bamba with benefits that violated N.C.A.A. rules. Love was cleared of wrongdoing.

For his part, Love said he just wanted to help children when he met Bamba nearly 10 years ago.

"I had my own career long before this," Love said. "And if I had to place a bet on somebody becoming this superstar — there was just no way. I wish I was that good at making predictions."

"If he sees something that interests him, we try to find the best expert to get him from Point A to Point B."

Bamba, who is the type of person to fill a hand-soap dispenser with water to make it last longer, is adjusting to his new circumstances as a pro living in an apartment with sweeping views of his new city. He is guaranteed more than $10 million through his first two seasons. Before he was even drafted, he used the money from a promotional appearance to move his mother into a new apartment in Manhattan. That was a dream fulfilled, he said.

Still, Orlando's coach, Steve Clifford, has tried to curb expectations. The Magic are not banking on Bamba from the outset. Through his first 10 games, Bamba came off the bench to average 6.5 points and 6 rebounds.

"I hope people are fair with him, that's all," Clifford said.

Bamba knows to be patient, too. Reflecting on his journey, he recalled leaving Harlem and heading to private school.

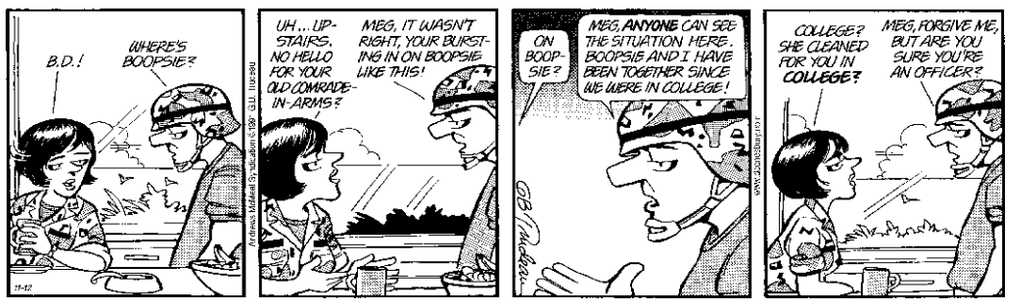
"I remember when I first got there, I didn't even know the proper dress code," he said. "I didn't really know what was going on. But I eventually figured it out."

That has been a theme throughout his life. He figured out how to cope with the teasing of neighborhood children. He figured out how to find the most competitive games. He figured out how to navigate the complexities of life in Harlem. And now, with a little help from his friends, he is determined to figure out the N.B.A.

NON SEQUITUR

PEANUTS

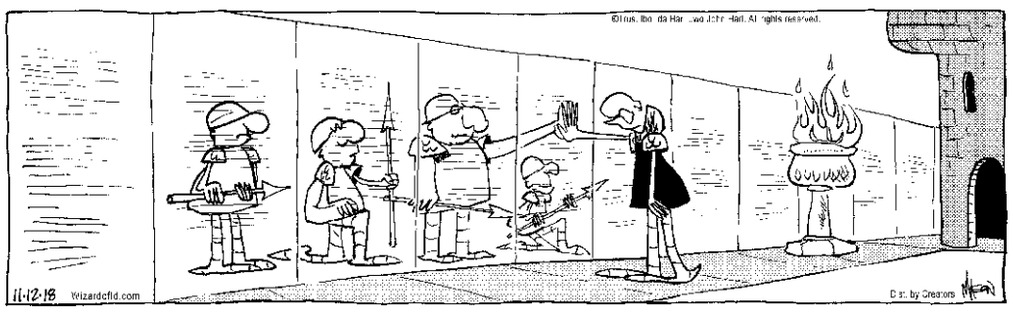
DOONESBURY CLASSIC 1991



GARFIELD

CALVIN AND HOBBES

WIZARD of ID



DILBERT

SUDOKU No. 1211

		1				3		
		6						4
			5	8	7			
				1				
				2				
		3			4	9		5
4	5						2	
					8		3	
8		9			6			

Created by Peter Ritmeester/Presented by Will Shortz
(c) PZZL.com Distributed by The New York Times syndicate

Fill the grid so that every row, column 3x3 box and shaded 3x3 box contains each of the numbers 1 to 9 exactly once.

For solving tips and more puzzles: www.nytimes.com/sudoku

Solution No. 1011

7	3	8	4	1	6	2	5	9
9	2	6	3	7	5	8	4	1
4	1	5	9	8	2	6	7	3
6	7	4	8	5	1	3	9	2
8	9	2	7	6	3	4	1	5
1	5	3	2	4	9	7	6	8
5	4	9	6	3	8	1	2	7
2	8	7	1	9	4	5	3	6
3	6	1	5	2	7	9	8	4

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

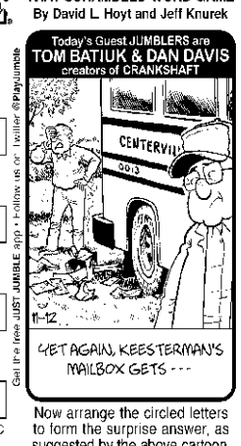
Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RVPIE

CABIS

CEDDEA

RUYTEK



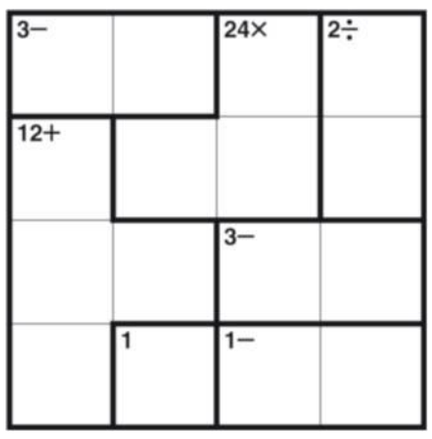
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: "____" - ____

(Answers tomorrow)

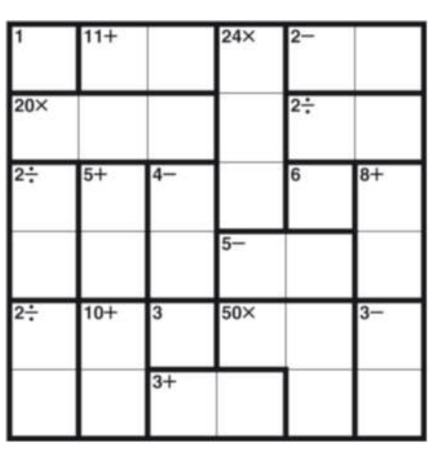
Saturday's Jumbles: HYENA GRAND DRENCH DISOWN
Answer: Being dealt a royal flush and winning — GO HAND IN HAND

KENKEN



Fill the grids with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 4x4 grid will use the digits 1-4. A 6x6 grid will use 1-6.

For solving tips and more KenKen puzzles: www.nytimes.com/kenken. For Feedback: nytimes@kenken.com



Answers to Previous Puzzles

3	4	2	1
2	3	1	4
1	2	4	3
4	1	3	2

5	2	1	3	4	6
1	5	3	2	6	4
4	3	2	6	1	5
3	6	4	5	2	1
2	1	6	4	5	3
6	4	5	1	3	2

CROSSWORD | Edited by Will Shortz

Across

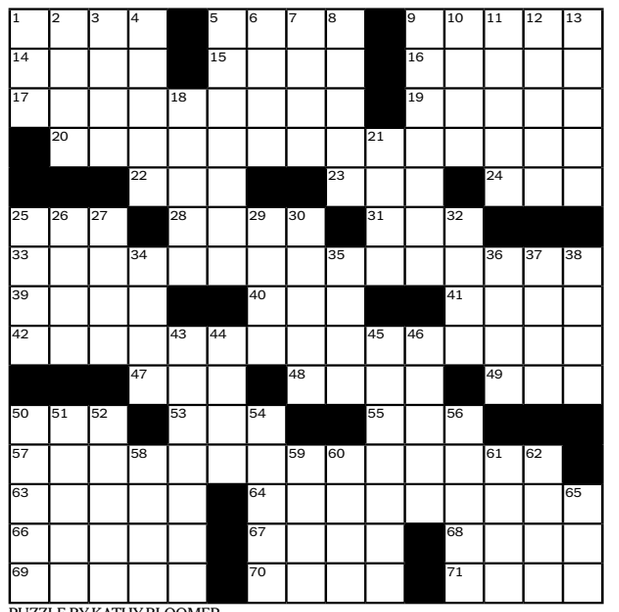
1 Walk in the kiddie pool
5 Org. for the Los Angeles Sparks and New York Liberty
9 Minor fight
14 Affordable German car
15 Garden worker
16 "Star Trek" lieutenant who speaks Swahili
17 Drops dead
19 Tilts
20 Declare something completely finished
22 Cain or Abel, to Adam and Eve
23 Tiny
24 "___ we can" (2008 campaign slogan)
25 Self-proclaimed greatest boxer
28 One-named soccer great
31 Sis's sibling
33 Expression of disgust in Valley Girl-speak
39 Give the glad eye
40 Grp. to call to get a tow
41 Site with a "Shop by category" button
42 Have surgery
47 Not worth a ___
48 One-named singer with the 1985 hit "Smooth Operator"
49 Concorde, e.g., for short
50 Ingested
53 Org. with the longtime leader Wayne LaPierre
55 QB's mistake: Abbr.
57 Show up for negotiations ... or a hint for 20-, 33- and 42-Across
63 ___ Gay (W.W. II plane)
64 Act all hoity-toity
66 Indian princes
67 Felipe ___, first Dominican manager in M.L.B. history
68 Small construction unit?
69 Lose in a staring contest
70 Littlest in a litter
71 Sexual appetite

Down

1 Moo goo gai pan pan
2 Residents of a 1968 movie "planet"
3 Mosquito repellent brand
4 ___ Island, immigrants' landing spot, once
5 Comment after an amazing fact is stated
6 ___ Scotia
7 Meat in a burger
8 → or ←
9 Chumps
10 Spiced tea from the East
11 Like some noses and egg yolks
12 Bandleader Shaw
13 Histories
18 Listerine competitor
21 McEntire known as "The Queen of Country"
25 Eagerly expectant
26 Italian body of water
27 Inuit shelter: Var.
29 Pinocchio, notably
30 Les ___-Unis
32 Request from a dentist
34 Clothing department with jackets and ties
35 [LOL]
36 Japanese sashes
37 Clods
38 No, in Moscow
43 "You wouldn't believe it if I told you"
44 Currency unit worth a little more than a dollar
45 Delete from a manuscript
46 Longtime "S.N.L." cast member Thompson
50 Sour
51 Like music with traditional harmony
52 Smiley face with hearts for eyes, e.g.
54 Equal to face value
56 Pre-Little League game
58 Panache
59 Giant in streaming video
60 School attended by princes William and Harry
61 In ___ of (replacing)
62 Units of work in physics
65 Drunkard

Solution to November 10 Puzzle

S	T	R	I	P	P	E	R	S	■	W	A	R	E	S
T	H	E	M	O	L	D	A	U	■	A	B	O	V	E
Y	O	G	A	P	A	N	T	S	■	T	I	M	I	D
■	■	■	L	U	N	A	■	H	O	T	D	A	T	E
O	C	T	I	L	E	■	A	I	R	L	I	N	E	R
F	L	U	V	I	R	U	S	■	N	E	N	E	■	■
F	I	R	E	S	■	R	I	C	O	■	G	M	C	S
A	N	N	■	M	A	G	N	E	T	O	■	P	I	P
L	E	E	S	■	R	E	I	D	■	B	S	I	D	E
■	■	R	I	D	E	■	N	E	W	S	C	R	E	W
A	G	E	R	A	N	G	E	■	W	O	O	E	R	S
C	O	S	P	L	A	Y	■	W	E	L	T	■	■	■
T	O	Q	U	E	■	O	P	E	R	E	T	T	A	S
U	S	U	R	Y	■	Z	A	P	A	T	I	S	T	A
P	E	E	R	S	■	A	L	T	W	E	E	K	L	Y



PUZZLE BY KATHY BLOOMER

Opinion

Remembering a war that has never ended

World War I officially concluded a century ago. But its aftershocks reverberate even today.

Ted Widmer

On Nov. 11, 1918, a delegation of German representatives, not entirely sure that they represented their crumbling government, made their way through the forest of Compiègne toward a group of Allied officers. There, inside railroad car 2419D, they signed the armistice that brought World War I to a close.

It was the moment the entire world had longed for ever since lurching into war four years earlier. Both sides promised a quick victory before settling into a ghastly stalemate. Political leaders gave grandiloquent speeches about the purpose of the war. The young men in the trenches grew numb to their bombast. "We only know war lasts," concluded Wilfred Owen, the young English soldier-poet. The War to End All Wars could not even end *itself*.

But in the fall of 1918, Germany began to collapse. Suddenly, ancient dynasties teetered on their thrones: The kaiser prepared to abdicate, the Ottomans folded, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire flaked apart like a Viennese pastry.

Democracy was challenged by the deep hatreds stirred up by four years of total war.

In the first week of November, the end felt very near. But on Nov. 5, a midterm election humiliated President Woodrow Wilson. After the votes were counted, Republicans had control of the House and the Senate, with long-term implications for Wilson's postwar vision for a "League of Nations." For years, he had dangled democracy as the cure for the world's ailments. But the bitterness of the election raised serious questions about democracy's efficacy. Could a nation as divided as this inspire the world?

Former President Theodore Roosevelt, growing demagogic, attacked Democrats as "internationalists" and sputtered with rage against Wilson's idealistic plan for a peace that would allow "everyone to float to heaven on a sloppy sea of universal mush." Others felt similarly. After Wilson unveiled his Fourteen Points, Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau of France asked sardonically: "Fourteen? The good Lord has only 10."

But two days later, the winds of history seemed to lift Wilson again. On Nov. 7, a report of the armistice was sent to the New York office of the United Press wire service. Within minutes, people were in the streets. The New York Times called it "a delirious carnival of joy which was beyond comparison with anything ever seen in the history of New York."

Unfortunately, the report was premature. A few hours later, the State Department issued a correction. The crowds went home, crestfallen.

Four days later, the real news arrived. Once again, people rejoiced — this time, around the world. With no reason to show restraint, politicians drifted back toward the platitudes that came naturally. "Democracy" was the word of the hour — even King George V used it, in a note to Wilson, praising the noble cause. In Washington, Wilson announced plans for "the establishment of just democracy throughout the world." To a rapt Congress, he outlined the details of the armistice, and announced, at long last, "The war thus comes to an end."

But had it?

Already, countervailing gusts were blowing across Europe's shattered realms. The New Republic wrote, "Democracy is infectious," but it paled in comparison with the Spanish flu epidemic, which killed tens of millions in 1918 and 1919. Food shortages had brought populations close to chaos, especially in the final weeks, and Communism was spreading rapidly in Germany, Hungary and Poland.

Democracy was also challenged by the deep hatreds stirred up by four years of total war. Many Germans were not ready to absorb the news of armistice, after years of propaganda about inevitable victory. One soldier's reaction was visceral: In a hospital in Pomerania, Adolf Hitler wept when he heard about "the monstrous event" and became so distraught that he temporarily lost his eyesight ("everything went black before my eyes," he wrote). Ominously, he resolved to "go into politics." It would be a politics of blame, castigating Jews and leftists for the defeat. In 1940, he forced the French to surrender in the same railroad car.

In America, too, democracy was a challenging word to live up to. All Americans had contributed to victory, including African-American soldiers, women working on the home front and recent immigrants who volunteered for service in every way they could. They were in no mood to accept second-class citizenship. W.E.B. Du Bois wrote: "Make way for democracy! We saved it in France, and by the Great Jehovah, we will save it in the United States of America." That was not exactly what Wilson had in mind. Around the same day as the armistice, a young African-American named William Bird was lynched in Sheffield, Ala.

In other ways we live with the failures as well as the successes of 1918. Earlier that fall, Wilson wrote to an Arizona senator, Henry Ashurst, that he was working with the future in mind: "I am now playing for 100 years hence." He would be dismayed at all the ways in which our world resembles his.

In some ways, it is worse. A recent Pew Poll showed a rapid decline in admiration for the United States. For 12 years in a row, according to Freedom House, democracy has been on the wane. In the Middle East, Ottoman memories are back, feeding the sultanic ambitions of Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. In Russia, Vladimir Putin revisits the past in his own curious way, merging Soviet nostalgia with the czar's role as the defender of the Russian Orthodox Church. It will be surreal to see him among world leaders in Paris this weekend. Few have done less than Mr. Putin to make the world safe for democracy.

"We only know war lasts."

Of course we should honor the sacrifice of a generation who did all they were asked, and then some, to build a better world. That honor will be solemnly bestowed in Paris on the centenary of the armistice.

As French jets streaked over a military parade, perhaps the quiet voice of Wilfred Owen was heard. He was killed in the final week of the war — his parents received the news as the church bells were ringing, in celebration of armistice. Owen's precision with words suggests his revulsion at the undisciplined ways leaders spoke, then as now, dividing people. A century later, it is unlikely that we can escape the theater of grandiosity, with leaders crowding the stage for their photo op. But as the world marks the Armistice this week, a sense of self-restraint would be the most fitting way to remember the tragedy that ended in 1918.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY ARCHIVE/UIG, VIA GETTY IMAGES

Celebrating the end of World War I in London on Nov. 11, 1918.

TED WIDMER *is a distinguished lecturer at the Macaulay Honors College of the City University of New York and a fellow of the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.*

Trump has only sticks, no carrots

This administration's entire foreign policy relies on sanctions. But that's not coercing anyone — it's isolating America.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Gardiner Harris

The Trump administration imposed crippling sanctions on Iran on Monday in a widely anticipated slap at the country. The penalties, which grew out of President Trump's decision in May to abandon the Iran nuclear accord, take aim at Iran's oil, banking, shipping, shipbuilding and insurance sectors, and are intended to force Tehran to either abandon its foreign policy ambitions or collapse.

Administration officials became almost gleeful in the run-up to Monday: There was a 12-day countdown clock on the State Department's website that resembled an advent calendar; Mr. Trump tweeted a movie-poster-style image of himself with the words "Sanctions Are Coming" in a nod to the popular HBO series "Game of Thrones."

In the show, though, counterattacks are frequent, and the Trump administration is now facing its own backlash.

European diplomats are quietly insisting they will complete work in the coming days or weeks on an alternative payment system with Iran that will bypass American sanctions. China, India, Russia and Iraq are likely to defy the new sanctions, too, and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey said this week that he would ignore them. Iran's leaders remain defiant.

The challenges to the administration's Iran strategy are part of a broad pushback around the world to President Trump's aggressive and often bullying tactics, which have won him few friends and caused a steep drop in international regard for the United States. And the tough tactics have yet to prove successful almost anywhere, with threats growing in North Korea, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

Administration officials have long said that their strategies had yet to fully gestate. But two years after Mr. Trump's election, that excuse no longer works. When world leaders laughed at Mr. Trump at the United Nations in September, it was an expression of growing international disdain for the president's methods, which rely almost entirely on sticks in the form of sanctions and tariffs instead of the carrots of aid, investment and dialogue.

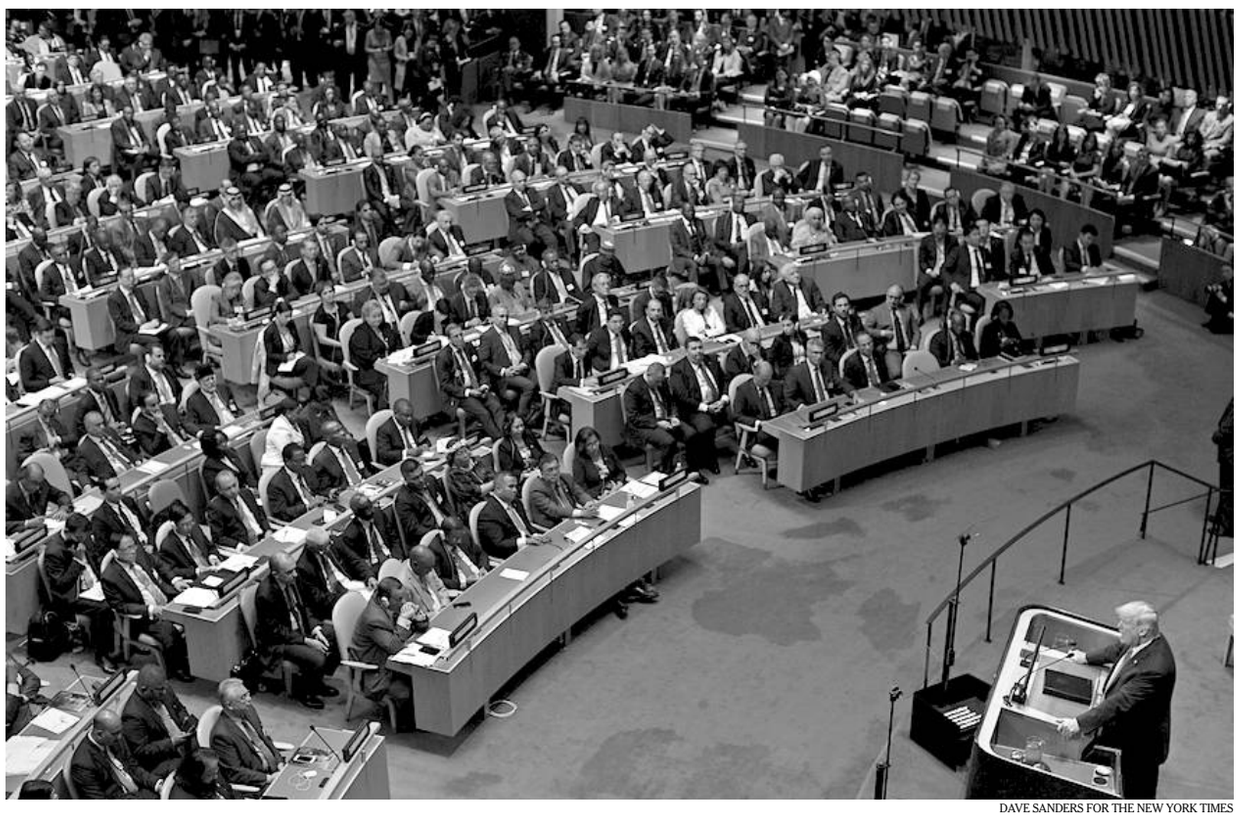
While the United States' use of sanctions has been gradually increasing for decades, Mr. Trump has made them the core of his foreign policy. From Iran to North Korea and Russia to Venezuela, from the drug dealers of Colombia to the bomb makers of Hamas, this administration's first — and sometimes only — instrument to shape world events, punish rivals and discourage challenges to American authority has been sanctions.

Last year, the Trump administration imposed sanctions on a record 944 individuals and entities, according to a count provided by the law firm Gibson Dunn. This year, the number is expected to far exceed 1,000, according to Adam M. Smith, who was a top sanctions official in the Obama administration. By comparison, President Barack Obama imposed penalties on 695 individuals and entities in 2016, the previous high mark.

"Sanctions are the perfect tool for someone like President Trump, who arrived into office with no governing experience and no real relationships in Congress, the bureaucracy or among world leaders," Mr. Smith said. "Sanctions let him govern on his own. He just has to write an executive order, and it's done."

Mr. Trump's fondness for sanctions illustrates a core contradiction of his foreign policy. No modern American president has been as dismissive of

HARRIS, PAGE 12



DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump rejected "the ideology of globalism" at the United Nations General Assembly in September.

OPINION

The New York Times
INTERNATIONAL EDITION

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MIDTERM CLIMATE REPORT: PARTLY CLOUDY

Decidedly mixed messages on climate change in particular and environmental issues in general emerge from the election.

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change made it clear that averting the worst consequences of climate changes (lesser consequences are by now all around us) will mean quickly cutting back on the use of fossil fuels that cause global warming.

Big Oil didn't get the memo.

Faced with what they saw as an existential threat to their businesses, BP, Valero, Phillips 66, the Koch brothers and other members of the fossil fuel fraternity dumped more than $30 million into Washington State to crush a ballot initiative that would have imposed the first taxes in the nation on carbon emissions. Backers of the proposal hoped it would serve as a template for similar action elsewhere and perhaps for the country as a whole. But the theoretical elegance of a carbon tax, which most economists and scientists believe is the surest way to control emissions on a broad scale, was no match even in reliably Democratic Washington for relentless fearmongering about job losses, higher electricity bills and more expensive gasoline.

The defeat in Washington was the most disappointing setback for climate activists in the midterm elections on Tuesday, a day of decidedly mixed messages on climate change in particular and environmental issues more broadly.

On the negative side of the ledger, the firewall in the Republican-majority Senate against any action at all on climate was fortified by assured Republican pickups in North Dakota, Indiana and Missouri. One new senator, Representative Kevin Cramer, who defeated Heidi Heitkamp in North Dakota, served as an energy adviser in the 2016 Trump campaign and was an architect of the president's energy agenda, which consists mainly of drilling oil and gas wells on just about every square inch of available federal land, onshore and off. If Rick Scott, the Republican Florida governor, maintains his narrow lead over Senator Bill Nelson, a Democrat, it will be another major loss for the environment. Governor Scott's administration for a time barred the use of the term "climate change" in official documents, and the governor was so inattentive to Florida's many climate-related risks, including sea level rise and flooding, that he was sued by a group of young people for ignoring the issue.

The news was far better in the House of Representatives, which flipped to the Democrats, and even better in the statehouses, where one climate activist after another supplanted Republicans who didn't much care. The House Science Committee is set to be led by Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas, who actually cares about science, instead of the antediluvian Lamar Smith, another Texan, who used his chairmanship to harass climate scientists and beat the drum for oil-and-gas interests. The likely next chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, Arizona's Raul Grijalva, is the polar opposite of Utah's Rob Bishop, the chairman and one of President Trump's main allies in the effort to rescind national monument designations as well as to open up public lands for extractive industries. New Jersey's Frank Pallone, expected to take charge of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, is far more concerned about climate change than any of the Republicans now on the panel.

In governors' races, Democratic candidates who worry about climate change did splendidly from Maine to New Mexico, replacing Republicans who were generally pro-fossil fuel. Several of Tuesday's winners have committed to a goal of 100 percent renewable energy in their states, including the newcomer Jared Polis in Colorado and the incumbent Kate Brown in Oregon. Several other newcomers — Gretchen Whitmer in Michigan, J.B. Pritzker in Illinois, Steve Sisolak in Nevada and Janet Mills in Maine — have promised to invest heavily in wind and solar power.

It is in people like these that the environmental community is now investing its hopes for near-term success, in part because governors with legislative majorities (Andrew Cuomo, take note) not only have a mandate to set ambitious targets for wind and solar power but also the wherewithal to persuade utilities to help meet those goals. And the impact could be considerable, especially if the states where Democrats picked up governorships commit themselves to the 26 percent to 28 percent reduction in greenhouse gases promised by President Barack Obama at the 2015 Paris summit on climate change.

Nobody thought the midterm elections were going to save the climate. And they didn't. What they did do was give the Democrats a chance to effect change on the state level — as well as the obligation and the power to hold the administration to account.

The newest Jim Crow

Michelle Alexander

ILLUSTRATION BY YOSHI SODEOKA; PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUANMONINO AND SENSORSPOT/E+, VIA GETTY IMAGES

In the midterms, Michigan became the first state in the Midwest to legalize marijuana, Florida restored the vote to over 1.4 million people with felony convictions, and Louisiana passed a constitutional amendment requiring unanimous jury verdicts in felony trials. These are the latest examples of the astonishing progress that has been made in the last several years on a wide range of criminal justice issues. Since 2010, when I published "The New Jim Crow" — which argued that a system of legal discrimination and segregation had been born again in this country because of the war on drugs and mass incarceration — there have been significant changes to drug policy, sentencing and re-entry, including "ban the box" initiatives aimed at eliminating barriers to employment for formerly incarcerated people.

This progress is unquestionably good news, but there are warning signs blinking brightly. Many of the current reform efforts contain the seeds of the next generation of racial and social control, a system of "e-carceration" that may prove more dangerous and more difficult to challenge than the one we hope to leave behind.

Bail reform is a case in point. Thanks in part to new laws and policies — as well as actions like the mass bailout of inmates in New York City jails that's underway — the unconscionable practice of cash bail is finally coming to an end. In August, California became the first state to decide to get rid of its cash bail system; last year, New Jersey virtually eliminated the use of money bonds.

But what's taking the place of cash bail may prove even worse in the long run. In California, a presumption of detention will effectively replace eligibility for immediate release when the new law takes effect in October 2019. And increasingly, computer algorithms are helping to determine who should be caged and who should be set "free." Freedom — even when it's granted, it turns out — isn't really free.

Under new policies in California, New Jersey, New York and beyond, "risk assessment" algorithms recommend to judges whether a person who's been arrested should be released. These advanced mathematical models — or "weapons of math destruction" as data scientist Cathy O'Neil calls them — appear colorblind on the surface but they are based on factors that are not only highly correlated with race and class, but are also significantly influenced by pervasive bias in the criminal justice system.

As O'Neil explains, "It's tempting to believe that computers will be neutral and objective, but algorithms are nothing more than opinions embedded in mathematics."

Challenging these biased algorithms may be more difficult than challenging discrimination by the police, prosecutors and judges. Many algorithms are fiercely guarded corporate secrets. Those that are transparent — you can actually read the code — lack a public audit so it's impossible to know how much more often they fail for people of color.

Even if you're lucky enough to be set "free" from a brick-and-mortar jail thanks to a computer algorithm, an expensive monitoring device likely will be shackled to your ankle — a GPS tracking device provided by a private company that may charge you around $300 per month, an involuntary leasing fee. Your permitted zones of movement may make it difficult or impossible to get or keep a job, attend school, care for your kids or visit family members. You're effectively sentenced to an open-air digital prison, one that may not extend beyond your house, your block or your neighborhood. One false step (or one malfunction of the GPS tracking device) will bring cops to your front door, your workplace, or wherever they find you and snatch you right back to jail.

Recent criminal justice reforms contain the seeds of a frightening system of "e-carceration."

Who benefits from this? Private corporations. According to a report released last month by the Center for Media Justice, four large corporations — including the GEO Group, one of the largest private prison companies — have most of the private contracts to provide electronic monitoring for people on parole in some 30 states, giving them a combined annual revenue of more than $200 million just for e-monitoring. Companies that earned millions on contracts to run or serve prisons have, in an era of prison restructuring, begun to shift their business model to add electronic surveillance and monitoring of the same population. Even if old-fashioned prisons fade away, the profit margins of these companies will widen so long as growing numbers of people find themselves subject to perpetual criminalization, surveillance, monitoring and control.

Who loses? Nearly everyone. A recent analysis by a Brookings Institution fellow found that "efforts to reduce recidivism through intensive supervision are not working." Reducing the requirements and burdens of community supervision, so that people can more easily hold jobs, care for children and escape the stigma of criminality "would be a good first step toward breaking the vicious incarceration cycle," the report said.

Many reformers rightly point out that an ankle bracelet is preferable to a prison cell. Yet I find it difficult to call this progress. As I see it, digital prisons are to mass incarceration what Jim Crow was to slavery.

If you asked slaves if they would rather live with their families and raise their own children, albeit subject to "whites only signs," legal discrimination and Jim Crow segregation, they'd almost certainly say: I'll take Jim Crow. By the same token, if you ask prisoners whether they'd rather live with their families and raise their children, albeit with nearly constant digital surveillance and monitoring, they'd almost certainly say: I'll take the electronic monitor. I would too. But hopefully we can now see that Jim Crow was a less restrictive form of racial and social control, not a real alternative to racial caste systems. Similarly, if the goal is to end mass incarceration and mass criminalization, digital prisons are not an answer. They're just another way of posing the question.

Some insist that e-carceration is "a step in the right direction." But where are we going with this? A growing number of scholars and activists predict that "e-gentrification" is where we're headed as entire communities become trapped in digital prisons that keep them locked out of neighborhoods where jobs and opportunity can be found.

If that scenario sounds far-fetched, keep in mind that mass incarceration itself was unimaginable just 40 years ago and that it was born partly out of well-intentioned reforms — chief among them mandatory sentencing laws that liberal proponents predicted would reduce racial disparities in sentencing. While those laws may have looked good on paper, they were passed within a political climate that was overwhelmingly hostile and punitive toward poor people and people of color, resulting in a prison-building boom, an increase in racial and class disparities in sentencing, and a quintupling of the incarcerated population.

Fortunately, a growing number of advocates are organizing to ensure that important reforms, such as ending cash bail, are not replaced with systems that view poor people and people of color as little more than commodities to be bought, sold, evaluated and managed for profit. In July, more than 100 civil rights, faith, labor, legal and data science groups released a shared statement of concerns regarding the use of pretrial risk assessment instruments; numerous bail reform groups, such as Chicago Community Bond Fund, actively oppose the expansion of e-carceration.

If our goal is *not* a better system of mass criminalization, but instead the creation of safe, caring, thriving communities, then we ought to be heavily investing in quality schools, job creation, drug treatment and mental health care in the least advantaged communities rather than pouring billions into their high-tech management and control. Fifty years ago, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. warned that "when machines and computers, profit motives and property rights are considered more important than people, the giant triplets of racism, extreme materialism and militarism are incapable of being conquered." We failed to heed his warning back then. Will we make a different choice today?

Where to cry in an open office

JiJi Lee

GEORGE WYLESOL

Your company designed an open office space to break barriers and encourage interaction, but that makes it much harder to sob over a spreadsheet. Here are the best places to cry without your co-workers interrupting you.

AT YOUR DESK WITH YOUR HEADPHONES ON: The trick is to release your tears one at a time. Tears are a dead giveaway that you're doing crying stuff and not work stuff.

AT RAVI'S STANDING DESK: The dry cleaning he's always hanging on it will provide partial coverage. Plus, crying at a sit/stand desk is *so* much better for your posture.

BY THE WATER COOLER: Boost collaboration with your co-workers by taking turns to openly weep. They might hesitate at first, but remind them it's easier to cry in person than via email.

BEHIND YOUR SUCCULENT: Sure, the company removed all the walls but at least it added Instagram-worthy décor. The company will be thrilled that you're getting so choked up over its long-term investment in plants.

BEHIND GARY, THE COLLEGE INTERN: Your crying will be obscured by Gary's long lectures on the egalitarian benefits of an open office and how he took a class on labor and productivity, so he gets it.

AT THE PRINTER: The hum of the printer will muffle any sobs as well as your co-worker's loud and explicit conversation about her cosmetic skin graft.

IN FRONT OF THE WHITEBOARD: Brainstorm ideas for your company's product launch while also doing a mind map of the emotions you plan to release in Q4.

INTO YOUR POKE BOWL: Pretend you're crying about the appropriation of Hawaiian food culture and not the disintegration of autonomy in the workplace.

AT THE TEAM MEETING: This is fine as long as you don't do that crying-spasm thing. Feel a spasm coming on? Just hold your breath like you'd hold in a hiccup. Do this for as long as you can. Your team won't know you're crying because you'll be unconscious.

IN THE ELEVATOR: A temporary refuge before the company halts elevator service to encourage employees to take the stairs and/or never leave the office.

BY THE SNACK WALL: All the low-cal yet high-energy snacks will fuel you for the next eight hours of crying.

BY YOUR C.E.O.'S WORK STATION: Flatten hierarchies by sobbing in front of your company leader. Open offices were made to foster communication, so introduce yourself and say, "Hi, I'll never make as much money as you!"

THE CENTER OF THE OFFICE: The company doesn't believe in walls, so why build one around your emotions? Let it go and play the "Frozen" soundtrack while you're at it.

Do a cartwheel that turns into a split and then cry onto Colleen's emotional support dog. You have the space for it! After all, the company wanted to increase productivity and you've never been more efficient with your crying in your life.

THE RESTROOM: This is where everyone goes to cry. Anticipate long lines.

JIJI LEE *is a comedian and writer in New York.*

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OPINION

No nice lady caucus

NEWS ANALYSIS

Susan Chira

The 116th United States Congress will have a record number of women. So that means more women will bring their vaunted ability to compromise and work across the aisle. Right?

No, as it turns out, women are no more immune to the forces intensifying partisanship than men. That's what political scientists have found. And some of the positive qualities women are praised for bringing to public office — collegiality, collaboration, relentless work ethic — aren't born of some sort of innate gendered goodness. Chalk it up to self-preservation. As in other fields, women in politics often feel that they are held to a higher standard than men — and that they may lose their seats if they don't deliver legislation.

Rather than an outbreak of bipartisanship, party polarization among women could well increase. That's because the majority of women elected are Democrats, many Republican women elected are conservatives who've embraced President Trump, and both parties face pressures from their base to tack left or right.

It is true that women in Congress play on softball teams that include Democrats and Republicans — with no fewer than four captains last year, two Democrats (Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Debbie Wasserman Schultz of Florida) and two Republicans (Shelley Moore Capito of West Virginia and Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida). The men, on the other hand, play partisan ball. Women in the Senate gather for a regular dinner, and there is a longstanding bipartisan Women's Caucus. But that doesn't necessarily translate into bipartisanship on votes or even sponsoring bills.

"It's Washington lore that at cocktail parties you develop these friends, everyone holds hands and sings 'Kumbaya' — but you're first and foremost a partisan when you get to Capitol Hill," said Jennifer L. Lawless, a political scientist at the University of Virginia.

She and a colleague evaluated bipartisanship on several measures, including how often men and women co-sponsor bills with members of the opposite party and whether men and women opted to travel on official congressional delegations with members of both parties, rather than stick to one-party travel. They found no differences between the sexes.

Tracy Osborn, a political scientist at the University of Iowa, notes that most research has found female politicians have grown apart ideologically. In her study analyzing roll-call votes in state legislatures, she found increasing polarization. Moderate Republican women once joined forces with Democrats to support such issues as abortion rights, but moderate women have felt increasingly unwelcome in the Republican Party, said Michele Swers, a professor of government at Georgetown. Democrats are in their own tug of war between progressives and centrists.

A database of all bills introduced to the House of Representatives from 1963 to 2009 showed that women not only propose more legislation than men, but they also do so on a wider range of issues. That research, conducted by Mary Layton Atkinson and Jason Harold Windett, political scientists at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, found that women who were successful at deterring challengers in primaries introduced twice as many bills as men. They deduced that women feel they must demonstrate more accomplishments than men to stay in office.

With 100-plus women heading to the House, let's examine some myths.

Indeed, studies have found that women in Congress are highly effective — they steer more federal spending to their districts than male legislators and have higher rates of passage of their sponsored bills, for example, according to Mirya R. Holman, a political scientist at Tulane University. (The only exception is bills on issues affecting women, health, education and social welfare, which may encounter institutional roadblocks). "We're still partisan — just better," Professor Lawless said of women in Congress.

Women in Congress say they bring their perspective to fill yawning gaps and previous blind spots in legislation. Issues at the forefront of the Democrats' agenda affect women disproportionately — more women live in poverty, more receive Medicare or Medicaid because they live longer than men, and many women oversee health care and education in their households.

Veteran congresswomen cite examples of their advocacy. Representative Barbara Lee, Democrat of California, said she presses to make sure that clinical trials include women of color, since they have often been left out of medical studies. Professor Swers noted that Senators Gillibrand of New York and Claire McCaskill of Missouri and former Senator Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire were driving forces behind hearings and legislation on sexual assault in the military, even if their specific solutions differed.

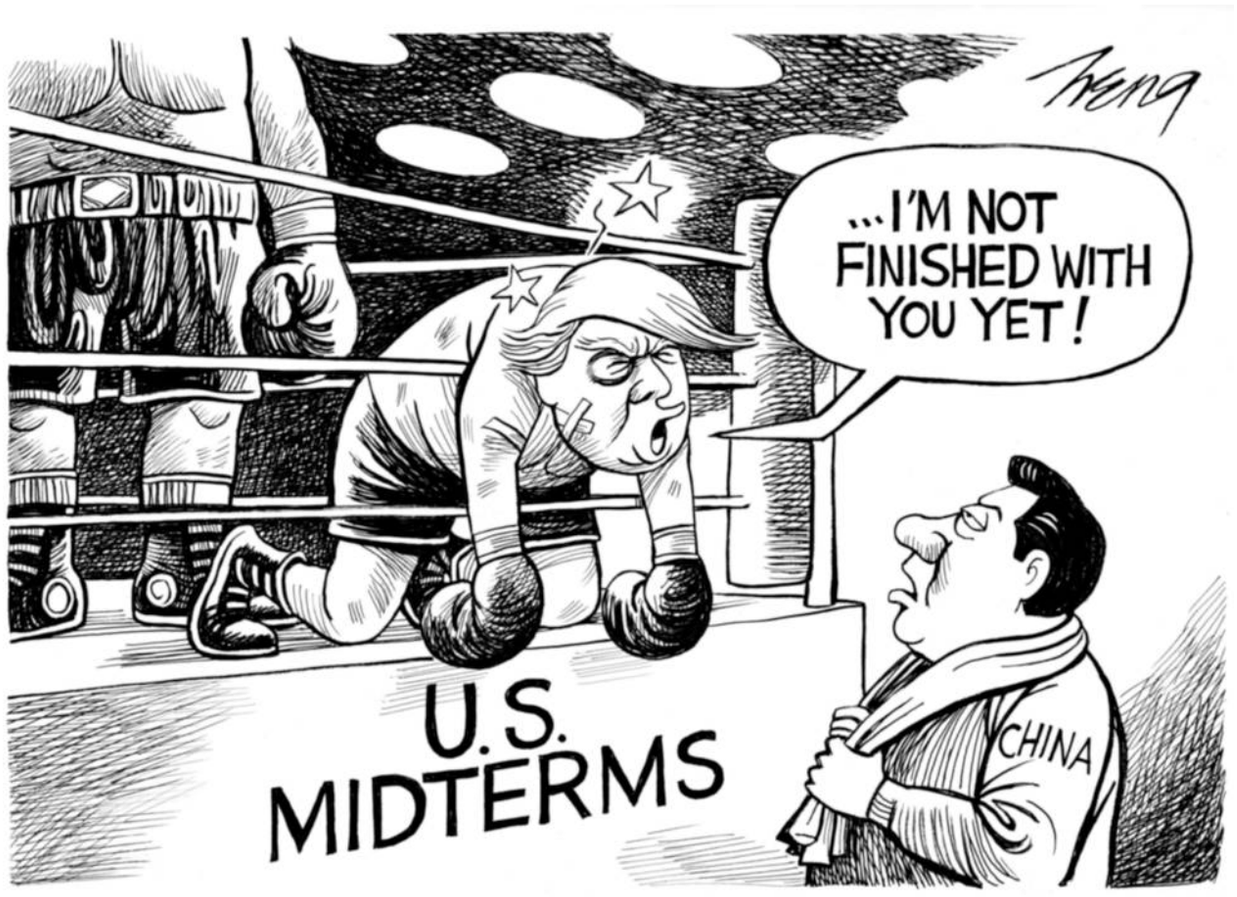
Of 83 women interviewed by the political scientist Kelly Dittmar and her co-authors for a recent book on women in Congress, "A Seat at the Table," many said that they focused on getting things done — and that building personal ties can help them try to find some aspect of policy they can collaborate on. So even if the overall number of bipartisan bills isn't different for women than for men, they do feel as though collaboration matters.

Representative Grace Meng, Democrat of New York, said: "It's nothing scientifically proven, but I do feel women legislators have a very different dynamic when they're working together. I have a network of women members, and when we have ideas we bounce them off each other and no one's worried about someone stealing credit."

She conceded that it has been harder than ever before to find cross-party agreement, but she pointed to two bipartisan initiatives: hearings on sexual assaults in the workplace, and her work with Republicans to offer wider access to feminine hygiene products.

Professor Swers noted that women elected from swing districts will have incentives to embrace moderation and strike compromises to keep their seats and to placate voters disillusioned with congressional paralysis. With Democrats in control of the House, more women will be in positions of power in the institution — Nancy Pelosi of California may well become speaker again, and women will head a few powerful committees like Appropriations and Financial Services.

In the end, even with the record numbers of women elected, they remain less than one quarter of Congress. "We're still a foreign body," Representative Meng said.



Trump has only sticks, no carrots

HARRIS, FROM PAGE 10

"globalism" or as vigorous in the defense of sovereignty as Mr. Trump. "We reject the ideology of globalism," he said at the United Nations on Sept. 25, adding that "responsible nations must defend against threats to sovereignty not just from global governance, but also from other new forms of coercion and domination." And yet the power of sanctions springs from the very system of international agreements that Mr. Trump rejects, and it is a device widely seen outside of the United States as an assault on sovereignty and a form of American coercion and domination.

In some ways, sanctions are the perfect American weapon. They are cheap, put no American lives at risk and elicit no equivalent response. Thanks to the centrality of the dollar to the global financial system, only the United States has the power to fully wield them.

Sanctions' power was demonstrated in April when penalties against the Russian aluminum producer Rusal for its connections to President Vladimir Putin of Russia, and against the Chinese telecommunications company ZTE for doing business with Iran and North Korea, crippled the two global giants.

The big problem, however, is that sanctions rarely work. Robert Pape, director of the Chicago Project on Security and Threats, said that in his study of 100 years of sanctions efforts, 90 percent of the penalties applied for national security purposes ultimately failed. In some cases, they were disastrous: Japan's 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor was in large part a response to American oil sanctions.

Iran proves the point. Tehran's regional meddling was particularly ambitious from 2012 to 2015 — just as sanctions were at their most onerous. There is a small chance that sanctions could lead to the overthrow of Iran's government, but the administration has repeatedly insisted that regime change is not its goal.

Besides being largely unsuccessful, the Trump administration's unilateral use of sanctions has fueled a campaign led by Europe, Russia and China to remake the financial system, removing the United States from its heart. The consequences for America's power, economy and alliances could be profound.

In some ways, sanctions are the perfect American weapon. They are cheap, put no American lives at risk and elicit no equivalent response.

Even before Mr. Trump's presidency, Jack Lew, Mr. Obama's treasury secretary, warned in 2016 that overuse of sanctions could produce a dangerous reaction "if foreign jurisdictions and companies feel that we will deploy sanctions without sufficient justification or for inappropriate reasons."

Now, with Mr. Trump's decision to walk away from the Iran nuclear accord and threaten allies who have remained in the deal, the backlash is gathering steam. European diplomats say they are determined, despite real challenges, to follow through on their promise to create a "special-purpose vehicle" independent of the dollar to continue commercial relations with Iran. Trump administration officials have reacted with derision and fury and have quietly threatened to sanction the entity.

Chinese and Russian officials have for years been trying to sell Europe on financial messaging and trade vehicles that skirt the dollar and the United States. So far, these efforts have had little success. That could change: "The world has been comfortable with the dollar as the currency of reference," said Nicolas Véron, a French economist and senior fellow at Bruegel, a think tank in Brussels. "But that could change if doing so is seen as carrying a prize in terms of greater geopolitical independence."

Marshall Billingslea, an assistant secretary of the Treasury, said in congressional testimony that efforts to set up alternative financial systems to avoid sanctions are "something that's a concern to us."

The Trump administration's critics worry that President Hassan Rouhani of Iran, who has said the new sanctions have isolated the United States and not Iran, may be right.

They also worry that while Iran's economy will suffer in the short term, the new sanctions will spur the creation of financial mechanisms that exclude the United States, undermining American power, economic might and ability to track and contain terrorism in ways that could far outlast the Trump administration.

"It is foolishness for the United States to accelerate the development of these financial alternatives, which are a profound security threat in the long run," said Elizabeth Rosenberg, a sanctions official during the Obama administration.

A defeat for U.S. white identity

DOUTHAT, FROM PAGE 1

I've taken swipes at these studies, but I'm more frustrated by the way they're used by pundits than by the work itself, which does tell us two important facts — that Trump probably won getting-by-O.K., working-class Americans rather than the truly desperate, and that Obama-to-Trump switchers had to have a certain *indifference* to minority concerns (which is what many social-science measures of "racial conservatism" pick up) to tolerate his more bigoted appeals.

At the same time these kind of studies often treat immigration as a strictly-racial issue when it's understood by many voters as an economic one (which is why African-American and native-born Hispanics can be immigration hard-liners). They elide the fact that you can base your vote on economic issues without being maximally economically anxious. (Given the G.O.P.'s historic brand as the party of business, you might expect a successful Republican economic-populist pitch to pick off the less anxious working class voters first.) And they encourage a slippage in liberal analysis where a voting bloc's susceptibility to identity politics get described starkly as a "white nationalism" that implicitly places those voters beyond the reach of reason — even when they voted for *Barack Hussein Obama* four short years before.

Which brings me to the recent midterms, which offered a natural experiment in the race-versus-economics question — because, as president, Trump has been more plutocratic than populist on many issues, even as he has kept up the tribalist provocations and, just before the midterms, used the migrant caravan as an excuse for race-baiting.

If the Obama-Trump voters were primarily motivated by racial anxiety, you would expect his approach to consolidate them for the G.O.P. — especially with a strong economy, with the Democrats putting up lots of minority candidates, and so on.

GABRIELLA DEMCZUK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Supporters watched President Trump enter a rally in Huntington, W.Va., on Nov. 2.

But white identity politics failed to hold Trump's gains. Some of the biggest swings against the G.O.P. were among middle and lower-income Americans, not just among affluent suburbanites. The Upper Midwest swung back toward Democrats. And among whites without college degrees, Democrats improved on Hillary Clinton's showing by eight percentage points — identical to their gains among college-educated whites.

This doesn't mean that the racial fears Trump stoked didn't bring some Republican voters to the polls. But it proves that white-identity politics isn't simply destiny, that Democrats can reach wavering white-working class voters instead of writing them off, and that if Republicans want to hold them, then actual economic populism — with its potential pan-ethnic rather than racially polarizing appeal — is a better bet than what we've gotten too often from his White House. In what is not the most optimistic time for race relations in America, I call that good news.

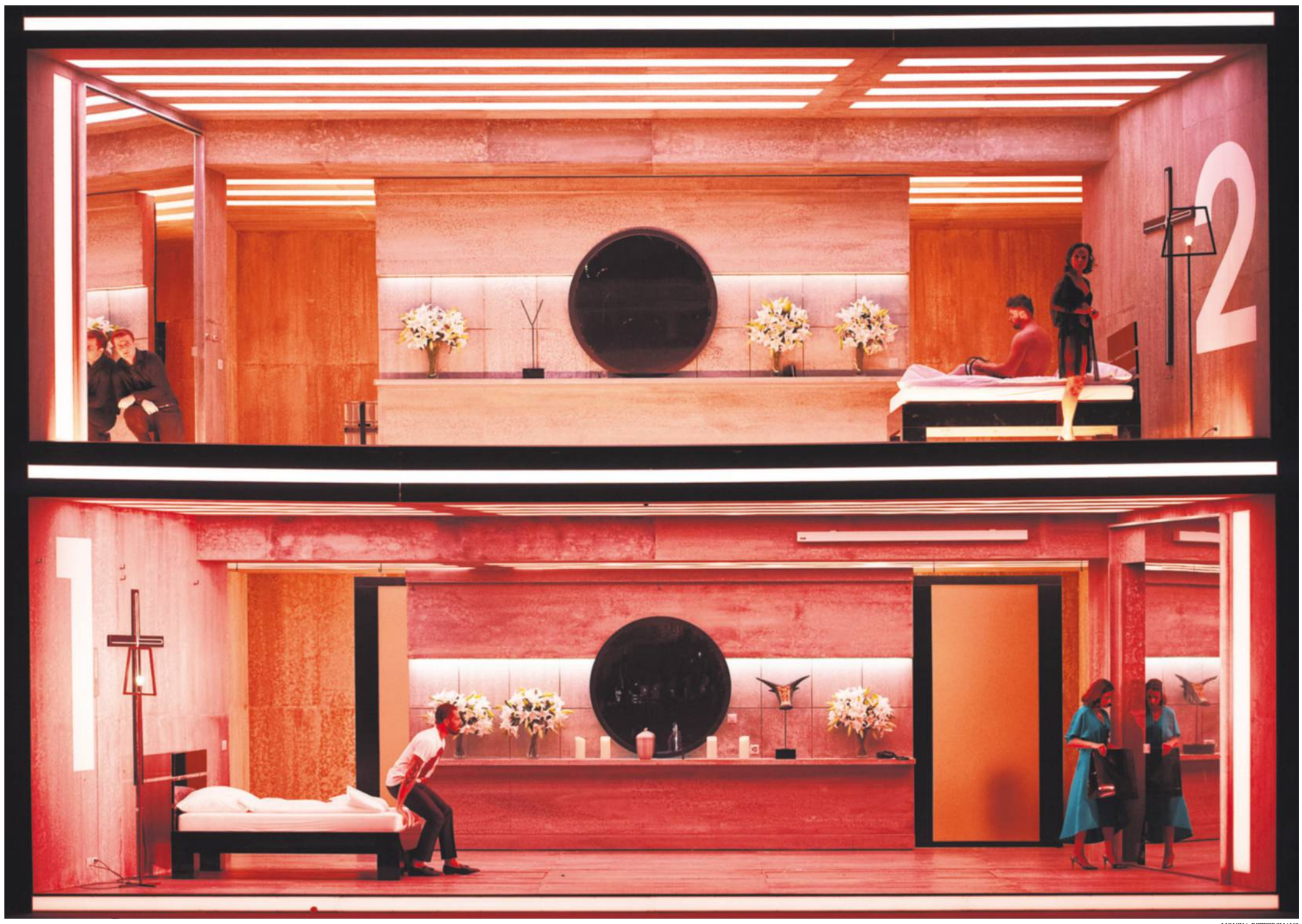
Culture

He's locked up, but his show goes on

ZURICH

Under arrest in Moscow, a director stages an opera in Zurich via flash drive

BY A.J. GOLDMANN



MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

Kirill Serebrennikov designed the two-level set for the Zurich Opera's production of "Così Fan Tutte," above, as well as the costumes. Below, Evgeny Kulagin practicing the final choreography with the singer Rebeca Olvera.

"We have a message from Kirill!" On a recent Tuesday evening in one of the Zurich Opera's rehearsal studios, the choreographer Evgeny Kulagin called out, and a dozen singers and backstage technicians came running. They bounded in to watch the latest video sent by their director, Kirill Serebrennikov, a man few of them have ever met.

Mr. Serebrennikov, one of Russia's leading stage and film directors, has been under house arrest in Moscow since August 2017 awaiting trial on corruption charges that are widely considered to be trumped up, a punishment for provocative work that stoked the ire of Russia's ruling elite. He is accused of embezzling 133 million rubles, or about $2.3 million, in government funds allocated to a festival he ran. If convicted, he faces up to 10 years in prison.

Despite his imprisonment, made even more challenging by Russia's opaque and sometimes arbitrary judicial system, Mr. Serebrennikov has directed a production of Mozart's "Così Fan Tutte" that opened here this month and will run in repertory through Dec. 1. Through a relay process that can seem closer to international espionage than traditional theater-making — involving files swapped on USB sticks, a lawyer acting as a courier, and extraordinary patience — the Zurich Opera has found a way for the director to retain artistic control from captivity, 1,400 miles away.

In the company's offsite rehearsal space that recent Tuesday, a semicircle of chairs was arranged around an iPad hooked up to a sound system. The members of the cast and crew took their seats as Mr. Kulagin, who has worked extensively with Mr. Serebrennikov and is credited as the production's co-director, pressed play on the tablet. A pixelated image of Mr. Serebrennikov, wearing a black T-shirt, a trim beard and black-rimmed glasses, came to life on the small screen.

In the 40 minutes that followed, the director made observations both practical and philosophical, switching fluidly between Russian and English.

"If your body says nothing, then your body kills your voice," he instructed singers he'd never seen or heard in person. "The audience needs to understand everything they see onstage without needing to read the titles."

"Don't lose the chance to show with what feeling you leave the stage," he added, about an exit he was dissatisfied with. "Don't be in a hurry."

Directing opera is complex even under normal circumstances, and those of this "Così" are far more cloak-and-dagger. Using an online server, Mr. Kulagin sends a video file of each rehearsal to Dmitri Kharitonov, Mr. Serebrennikov's lawyer in Moscow and one of the few people allowed direct contact with him. Mr. Kharitonov then copies the file to a USB stick and delivers it to Mr. Serebrennikov, who watches it and films his response. (Mr. Serebrennikov is barred from using the internet but is allowed to have a computer.)

Mr. Kharitonov returns later to retrieve the USB stick with the video message, uploads it and sends it to Mr. Kulagin in Zurich.

"Kirill jokes I am his directorial assistant, but I am just the mail — although it is not mail," Mr. Kharitonov said, emphasizing the point because mail is barred under the house arrest.

DANIEL AUF DER MAUER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Kirill lived with the hope every month that it would all be solved and he could go to Zurich and work on this opera," he said. "Unfortunately this did not end." Despite what the lawyer described as the "trauma" of not being able to participate in person, the work helped Mr. Serebrennikov "to endure these difficult months," Mr. Kharitonov said.

He said he'd lost track of how many times he delivered flash drives to Mr. Serebrennikov, estimating it has been several times a week since rehearsals began on Sept. 20.

"This is a complicated production," said Beate Breidenbach, the dramaturge for "Così," "and it would have been even without the whole backstage drama."

Mozart's 1790 work is opera's most famous instance of partner swapping. Under the guidance of a cynical philosopher, two young men test their girlfriends' fidelity. The two women, coached by a worldly maid, overcome their moral scruples and ultimately betray their fiancés. The Zurich production is contemporary-dress, with a two-level set that includes a weight room and yoga studio; the protagonists get chat notifications and take selfies.

As Mr. Serebrennikov's lengthy video message played, Rebeca Olvera, the soprano playing Despina, the maid, and Frédéric Antoun, the tenor singing one of the lovers, occasionally talked back to the screen in exasperation. Mr. Kulagin and Markus Wyler, a translator, often pressed pause to elaborate or explain. Michael Nagy, the baritone singing Don Alfonso, the philosopher, jotted notes.

"Sorry I took up so much time," said Mr. Serebrennikov, signing off. "But we needed to go through the entire second act."

Mr. Serebrennikov was contracted for "Così" after Andreas Homoki, the Zurich Opera's artistic director, admired his 2016 production of Rossini's "The Barber of Seville" at the Komische Oper in Berlin. In May 2017, Mr. Serebrennikov, who also designs his sets and costumes, came to Zurich to present his concept for the Mozart work. A few months later, he was placed under house arrest, but the company stuck with his vision.

"We chose this unusual path in order to support an artist in trouble," Mr. Homoki said.

"We all know that we have the opportunity to be part of something that people will talk about for years to come."

It would be a stretch to call Mr. Serebrennikov a dissident artist, but his plays and films have touched on sensitive topics in Russian society, including anti-Semitism, religious fanaticism and sexism. But he has emphatically demonstrated that he will not be silenced. Over the course of his confinement, Mr. Serebrennikov has been unusually prolific: In the past 14 months, he directed a ballet about Rudolf Nureyev for the Bolshoi in Moscow, and a film, "Summer," about rock 'n' roll in the Soviet Union, that had its premiere in competition at the Cannes Film Festival this year. The Gogol Center, the avant-garde theater Mr. Serebrennikov leads, has also forged ahead.

The evening after Mr. Serebrennikov's recent message arrived, Mr. Kulagin presided over an orchestra rehearsal in the opera house's auditorium with the zeal of a ringmaster, leaping onstage to correct a singer's gesture and help move props. When the music stopped, the cast and crew talked in a babble of languages: English, Russian, German and Swiss-German.

"It's an extraordinary situation for us all," said Cornelius Meister, the conductor. "But we all know that we have the opportunity to be part of something that people will talk about for years to come."

Whether Mr. Serebrennikov will be able to work in a more traditional fashion is now in the hands of a Moscow court. His trial began on Wednesday but could last for months. For the time being, Mr. Kulagin said, invitations for future work have kept pouring in.

"He's writing scenarios and doing sketches of models and sets," he said. "But the most important thing right now is for him to be free."

Neil MacFarquhar contributed reporting from Moscow.

King of the choppers

Freddie Mercury's teeth in 'Bohemian Rhapsody' are the work of a master

BY MEKADO MURPHY

If you thought Rami Malek's teeth were big in "Bohemian Rhapsody," consider this: They could have been even bigger. The giant prosthetic choppers the actor wore to help bring Freddie Mercury to life were made in different sizes, including a set that were the actual size of Mercury's teeth, but they were a little too large for Malek's face.

This and other biting tales came from an interview with Chris Lyons, the tooth-maker extraordinaire with the British company Fangs FX.

The artist, 55, has been making teeth for movies and television shows for decades, amassing hundreds of credits and fitting stars like Tilda Swinton, Meryl Streep and Johnny Depp with memorable creations. He even made gold fangs for a Doberman in a Kanye West video.

While Lyons's work usually plays a supporting part in productions, it moved into a starring role in the new Queen biopic. In an early scene, Mercury's bandmates-to-be are skeptical about his ability to be a frontman with such a mouthful, but Mercury suggests that having four extra teeth, which gave him his overbite, is a musical benefit.

Here, Lyons, who fabricated discolored teeth for Malek in the prison-drama remake "Papillon," talks about creating a set of Freddie Mercury teeth in gold, contributing to the recent "Star Wars" movies and making a larger-than-life replica of Björk's mouth.

Here are edited excerpts from that conversation.

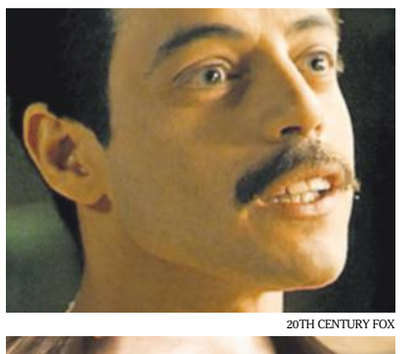
How do the teeth work to shape Rami Malek's mouth the way they do in the film?

They're big teeth and they're a little bit buck, so they stick forward slightly. When they go in Rami's mouth, it pushes his lip forward to give him that overbite look and makes it look more like Freddie's mouth.

Freddie was very self-conscious about his teeth and was often trying to hide them with his lip. Rami loved that, because he had to work to hide these teeth as Freddie did.

What are they made of?

Dental acrylics, basically. If your nan had false teeth and she takes them out and puts them in the glass beside her bed, it's similar material to that. But each tooth has been handmade in layers to get the colors and to fit Rami. Nothing's stock.



20TH CENTURY FOX

PETER MOUNTAIN/WALT DISNEY PICTURES

WEINSTEIN COMPANY

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS

Sporting teeth by Chris Lyons, clockwise from top left: Rami Malek in "Bohemian Rhapsody," Meryl Streep in "Into the Woods," Tim Roth in "Youth Without Youth" and Tilda Swinton in "Snowpiercer."

And how do they fit on?

We don't use fixatives. They just go on the front of his teeth behind his lip. That's it. Because the minute you go over the biting surface of your teeth, it will affect the way you talk and you won't be able to close your mouth. Whereas Rami could close his mouth fully because none of my teeth were on the biting surface of his. They literally just clip in and out in seconds.

We did varying sizes going all the way up to Freddie-sized teeth. When we did the first big test and presented it to [the director] Bryan Singer, that's when we realized if we went for the full-sized teeth, they were going to be far too big on Rami because of his size. We scaled it down so that everything matched with Rami's face and features.

The teeth for this film are big, but you've made a wide range of tooth sizes throughout your career.

We can make teeth as thin as .1 of a millimeter, or fangs that are an inch thick. And we make gold teeth. Rami asked me to make a set of Freddie teeth in gold for him. I made him a little stand for them. He wanted to keep them at home, because it's not a common character to play.

What would you use the really thin teeth for?

If you're playing a character who's living in the wild or a vagrant or something like that, your oral hygiene is pretty bad. So instead of painting on your teeth, which would affect continuity, we can take a thin material, paint that up, you clip it in and suddenly your teeth are discolored. When we did Tilda Swinton in "Suspiria," she's got them in. She's one of my regular customers.

What kind of tooth work have you done that moviegoers wouldn't notice?

I've done all the new "Star Wars" and their spinoffs, and I haven't noticed one set of our teeth in any of the films yet.

What was one of your most difficult undertakings?

That would be on Tim Roth, for the film "Youth Without Youth." The shot was going to be, he's in hospital and the doctor was going to put his finger in his mouth. And they wanted every tooth in his head to be loose, like wobbling. It took me two months to work out how I was going to do it. We must have made four or five different sets before being happy enough with one we could present. I couldn't believe it worked in the film.

And what about a more inventive task?

We did teeth that were 30 times life size for the Björk music video "Mouth Mantra." They wanted to put a camera inside her mouth as if they were filming from inside outward. So it had to be her teeth, her gums, the roof and the floor of her mouth, 30 times life size. I was supplied with a cast of her mouth. It got digitally enlarged. Then we had to replicate it and get it in the same tooth and gum colors as her.

CULTURE

2018 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS; WEINSTEIN GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO

Above left, Leonor Fini's "Self-Portrait With Red Turban," from 1938, and right, the undated "Bust of a Woman." Below left, "The Alcove/Self-Portrait With Nico Papatakis," from 1941, and right, a 1934 portrait of the artist by an unknown photographer.

Sex, Surrealism and de Sade

The artist Leonor Fini is investigated in a major New York exhibition

BY DANIEL MCDERMON

2018 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS; WEINSTEIN GALLERY, SAN FRANCISCO

2018 ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK/ADAGP, PARIS; ESTATE OF LEONOR FINI, PARIS

The artist Leonor Fini worked tirelessly throughout most of the 20th century, often alongside universally acknowledged masters like Max Ernst, André Breton and George Balanchine. Her paintings and designs were shown in London, Paris and New York over decades. Portraits of her, an eccentric European artiste draped in wild costume at fancy masquerade balls, regularly appeared in magazines like Life.

Fini also had three works in the landmark 1936 exhibition "Fantastic Art, Dada, Surrealism" at the Museum of Modern Art, curated by the museum's founder, Alfred H. Barr Jr. But the museum owns none of her work, and she remains little known in the United States.

A new exhibition, at the Museum of Sex in New York through March 4, aims to remedy that. "Leonor Fini: Theater of Desire" is the first American retrospective devoted to her paintings, drawings and other objects, and it fills two floors of the museum.

Fini, who died in 1996 at 87, was close to many of the Surrealists, including Breton, and has frequently been grouped with them, but she always resisted labels, said Lissa Rivera, the curator of the exhibition.

"She was really not interested in contemporary movements," she said, adding, "Although she was included in shows on Surrealism, she didn't really want to be associated with that group because André Breton, she thought, was a misogynist."

Born in Argentina, Fini grew up in Trieste, Italy, and found her way to Paris as a young woman. She made a place for herself in the city's artistic circles but declined the roles (muse, lover, student) usually offered to young women.

"She already knew how to paint," Ms. Rivera said.

Her work in this period was fantastical, but it stands out from the Surrealists for its inversion of the usual gender roles. Fini painted a number of erotic male nudes that celebrate androgyny and feminine qualities in their subjects.

Like the Surrealists, she had muses, but her depictions are tender and affectionate, often rooted in her personal connection to her subjects, including her two lifelong partners, Stanislao Lepri and Constantin Jelenski.

Fini was successful enough in the '30s to get a show at the gallery of Julien Levy, the New York dealer who helped introduce artists like Man Ray, Henri Cartier-Bresson and Salvador Dalí to America. A rather condescending review of that show in The New York Times dings Fini's work for showing too much skin in a self-portrait: "In one picture, called 'The Miracle That Sweeps,' the 'costume' pantaloons worn by our miraculous heroine have just about dropped off."

"She lived every aspect of her life creatively, as a form of investigation in the human psyche," said Ms. Rivera, "and for her, gender and sexuality were the greatest ways to perform those kind of experiments, both on the canvas and in real time."

Fini also illustrated about 50 books in her life, choosing authors and titles that fit her own interests, including "Satyricon" and works by Jean Genet and Charles Baudelaire. Some of her best-known works in this area are her drawings for a 1944 edition of the Marquis de Sade's "Juliette."

After World War II, Fini's work grew somewhat darker and more abstract, although it remained deeply focused on the corporeality of the body, as in "The Angel of Anatomy," depicting a stern-looking winged figure stripped of skin. It fixes a steady gaze on the viewer, a memento mori stuck somewhere between life and death.

Fini herself chose to live as something of a recluse, although she loved to make brief, shocking appearances at formal events, dressed in elaborate costumes of her own design.

"She always liked to have center stage," Ms. Rivera said. "She wasn't afraid to be seen as a narcissist; she just was herself completely and didn't feel any sense of questioning or shame."

One of her costumes, including an owl mask, inspired the final scene in the erotic novel "The Story of O," which Fini would later illustrate.

Well into the 1980s, she worked tirelessly, often on theatrical sets and costume designs. But she continued painting as well, with her output evolving toward a more dreamlike style, but always with a strong current of sexual energy.

"She always felt that identity was just a mask," Ms. Rivera said. "So the masks that she chose to wear were more true than her biological face."

Sinister doings at a luxury spa

BOOK REVIEW

Nine Perfect Strangers
By Liane Moriarty. *453 pp. Flatiron Books. $28.99.*

BY JANET MASLIN

At least Liane Moriarty's new novel pampers her fans with its escapist premise. Wouldn't it be nice to spend 10 days deliquescing at a spa named Tranquillum House, which sounds like a flower crossed with a state of bliss? That's what the "Nine Perfect Strangers" of her latest book do, oblivious to even the most obvious warning signs.

So what if Tranquillum House has a grand staircase just like the one on the Titanic? So what if its proprietress is a little severe? The break with ordinary life promises to be refreshingly complete. The staff is spookily attentive and has aloe vera right at hand to treat even the visiting romance writer's paper cut.

The writer, a gimlet-eyed blonde named Frances Welty, has fallen for the same pitch that lured the other eight: How about an "exclusive 10-Day Mind and Body Total Transformation Retreat"? Moriarty's fans, who must have noticed Agatha Christie's influence on her work by now, will realize that these strangers are agreeing to be locked up together, à la the crew in Christie's "And Then There Were None." At the very least, they will experience the alarm and sadism that Moriarty manages to combine with creature comforts.

As the author ticks off a chapter for each character, there is the dread that "Nine Perfect Strangers" will unfold methodically and not all that excitingly. The daily meditation, diet and exercise routines are chronicled down to each mandatory smoothie. The proprietress's grandiose ideas about what she will do for her guests take up significant space, too. People duck one another at first, then begin talking way too much about the problems that brought them to Tranquillum — and

RACHEL KARA ASHTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Liane Moriarty.

there is no limit to the number of subplots Moriarty is eager to cram into a single book. Some of the problems are tragic (lost children; yes, that's plural). Others (an addiction to cosmetic surgery, the miseries of winning the lottery) are silly beyond belief.

But there's more going on here than just confessional chatter. Moriarty has tapped into a trendy therapeutic topic that gives her book its novelty. It should stimulate her fan base's curiosity, and it gives this otherwise bland book an excuse to go way off the deep end. And it brings out the most extreme behavior in everyone present, especially Masha, the proprietress, who was none too stable to begin with. Not even the Buddha gets out of "Nine Perfect Strangers" without sounding slightly menacing once the book hits its temporary insanity phase. ("Ardently do today what must be done. Who knows? Tomorrow death comes.")

At least Moriarty quickly abandons her slow rollout of characters and days and lets the scene at Tranquillum begin to jell on its own. Frances is by far the best of the bunch, even if at 52 she thinks about menopausal hot flashes a lot. Her career writing bodice-rippers began with something called "Nathaniel's Kiss," its hero "a heady mix of Mr. Rochester and Rob Lowe." Somehow, she got away with that for a long time. But two husbands and a lot of books later, she's washed up and at an impasse. Still, she has a writer's gift for bestowing colorful nicknames on all this story's other characters and deeming herself the central figure.

"It's all about me," she says at one very odd moment. "I'm just not sure of my love interest yet."

Rest assured that there are candidates for that honor. Moriarty didn't put this book together to send her cast home as unfulfilled and wretched as they started. Each person reveals why he or she is so enraged, vain, sulky, frustrated, disappointed and so on. And if all it took were the Titanic staircase and a few stiff hikes to turn lives around, what an inspiring story this would be. Unfortunately, Moriarty is so wildly out of control that the same book that emphasizes wellness also includes one character's healthy smack at another with an antique candelabra.

After the huge success of "Big Little Lies," Moriarty has become a Hollywood darling despite the uneven caliber of her earlier work, and Nicole Kidman is already involved in a film version of "Nine Perfect Strangers." She fits the physical description of the exotically beautiful six-foot Masha, but it will be interesting to see if she wants to play anyone quite so . . . challenging. In any case, this book won't lend itself as easily to screen adaptation, since such odd things happen to such fundamentally uninteresting people. Moriarty's books are usually more firmly anchored in the tangible world.

In the early scenes at Tranquillum, the inmates — that is, the guests — are taught how to do things mindfully. Nothing new here, but Moriarty duly explains it all to the nonmindful among us. They must cut their food into tiny bites and chew those bites repeatedly. They must walk slowly and thoughtfully. And you need to read these pages slowly and repeatedly, though not by design. Unlike most of her other books, this one struggles to get any momentum going, to the point where you may glaze over instead of eagerly leaping in.

That's not like Liane Moriarty. She can usually be counted on for a seductive, gossipy, insightful story without the contrivances that keep "Nine Perfect Strangers" so flabby and unwell.

TRAVEL

Paradise threatened

The destruction of coral and rising sea levels are among Fiji's challenges

BY KEN BELSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Left, villagers from Rukua crossed exposed sand at low tide, carrying mangrove plants on the island of Beqa. Above, at the Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort, guests help maintain a "coral garden" that the hotel built with the help of a Japanese aid organization.

Between the international airport in Nadi, Fiji, and the capital city of Suva, the coastal road on the island of Viti Levu is lined with resorts and clogged with tour buses. It's a route I took several times this spring when I visited friends in Suva, a bustling port city where cruise ships drop anchor year-round and deposit thousands of tourists.

The steady stream of hulking ships is emblematic of Fiji's popularity, and a major source of income. But the country's reliance on tourism, combined with vigorous development and the effects of rising global temperatures, have conspired against Fiji's fragile environment.

The country now faces major environmental challenges, including deforestation, unsustainable fishing practices and the introduction of invasive species, such as the crown-of-thorns starfish, that have led to the destruction of coral reefs. Rising seas have led to the erosion of Fiji's coastal areas, and the intrusion of saltwater has destroyed farmland and forced residents to move to safer ground.

Before I arrived, I had read that Pacific Island nations were threatened by rising temperatures and sea levels, but it wasn't until my fifth day there, when my friends and I flew 45 minutes on a small prop plane to the island of Kadavu, that the threat came into full view.

Outside the shack that doubled as the terminal, we climbed into a pickup truck for the bumpy ride to a boat landing. There, we boarded a banana boat for a one-hour ride past shallow reefs and gumdrop specks of land until we reached a lagoon and Matava, a minimalist resort where we planned to stay two nights.

Walking around the grounds, which were built on a steep hill, the damage from Tropical Cyclone Keni, which had swept through the islands in mid-April, three weeks before our arrival, was obvious. Boats in the lagoon were out of commission. A pool that was under construction was a mess. A tree had fallen on top of the dive shop and hit one of the compressors. A path to a nearby village had disappeared in a landslide.

The storm had packed winds of more than 75 miles per hour and dropped nearly a foot of rain on Viti Levu. Kadavu was more directly in the storm's path, and more than 800 homes were damaged. The storm came just a week after another cyclone, Josie.

Keni and Josie were not as strong as the fierce Winston cyclone, which hit Fiji in 2016. But what surprised islanders was that the storms arrived weeks after the cyclone season was supposed to have ended. Although there is still much scientific debate about the impact of climate change on tropical cyclones, to many islanders the timing of the storms is evidence that warming temperatures are leading to shifting weather patterns and leaving the island increasingly vulnerable.

"We literally said, 'Let's build the pool because the cyclone season is over,' and then we got hit," Luke Kercheval, one of the owners of Matava, told me, adding that the storms had scared off visitors. "We got more rain in a week than some countries get in a year. That's not normal."

"Donald Trump might not agree, but it's 100 percent about climate change," he added. "I don't need to be a scientist to figure this out."

The topic of climate change was everywhere in Fiji, even at the airport in Nadi, where a billboard read, "Airports Addressing Climate Change." Fiji's prime minister, Frank Bainimarama, is the current president of COP23, the United Nations Climate Change conference. In November, he took two Fijian children with him to a conference in Bonn, Germany, to remind delegates that the future of Fiji depends on action against the effects of climate change. Already, one-quarter of the country's bird species and two-thirds of amphibians are threatened or endangered because of rising sea temperatures and overfishing.

A billboard I spotted captured the mood well: "We are all in the same canoe rising up against climate change."

The ever-present discussion about Fiji's fate gave me pause. Would Fiji's stunning islands look the same in a decade or two? The soft breezes and gentle sunsets and crystal blue water at Matava made it hard to muster alarm. It also made me recall a conversation I had a few days before with Dick Watling, the founder of Nature Fiji, an environmental conservation group.

Mr. Watling arrived in Fiji about 35 years ago and was an astute observer of local politics and the issue of climate change. Over coffee at Cappuccino Republic in Suva, Mr. Watling said that Fiji's leaders, like those elsewhere in the Pacific region, have become expert at extracting donations from wealthier nations. So he was not surprised that many of Fiji's problems were being blamed on climate change because it might help attract foreign aid, while also letting lawmakers sidestep thornier issues like unbridled development and lax environmental regulations.

"Donald Trump might not agree, but it's 100 percent about climate change. I don't need to be a scientist to figure this out."

"The government sees this as a major opportunity," Mr. Watling said. "COP23 is the best tourism marketing program we have ever produced by a country mile."

Signs of eco-tourism were certainly evident in Fiji. At Matava, solar panels generated most of the electricity, including for the lights and fans in our huts. The fruit and vegetables we ate were grown locally and the fish was caught nearby. The eggs came from the chickens at the resort. Bottles, cans and other recyclables were sent back to Viti Levu.

Living off the land did little to protect against Cyclone Keni, though. One of the resort's boats had flipped upside down and its outboard motors were damaged. The chickens were swept away and the vegetable gardens were destroyed. Several workers at the resort lost their homes. The damage to the reefs made finding fish harder.

I chatted with Maika O'Conna, a boat captain who grew up on Kadavu who said traditional fishing grounds were under attack from poachers, too.

Overfishing and the destruction of the reefs was something I heard discussed back on Viti Levu. One day, I took a trip with my friend Sharon to the Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort, about a two-hour drive from Suva. There, the reef had been damaged by repeated storms and polluted runoff from a nearby stream. With the help of a Japanese aid organization, the hotel built coral gardens that its guests help maintain.

The gardens consist of large metal grates, or propagation racks, placed in the water about 100 feet from the shore. Jonacani Masi, one of the hotel workers, took us out to see them. He brought a dozen cones made of sand mixed with concrete that were the size of my hand. When we reached the grates, he dove underwater and returned with a healthy piece of brown spiky coral that looked like a deer antler. He broke it into smaller, finger-length pieces, and placed each one in a cone packed with quick-drying cement.

Snorkels and masks on, we swam down to the grates and placed the cones in the openings. We saw dozens of other cones with healthy-looking coral stems already there.

Together, they created a small reef where none had existed. Fish nipped at my legs, protective of their newly claimed territory. When the coral fingerlings were big enough, they were replanted in the natural reef elsewhere.

The next day we set off for Beqa, an island six nautical miles offshore, to meet Sefano Katz. An Israeli by way of Australia, Mr. Katz is a marine biologist and an expert in coral ecosystems. He arrived in Fiji three years ago with the nonprofit group Pacific Blue Foundation to help the locals on Beqa preserve their

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reef, which is 10 miles wide and one of the largest in Fiji.

He lives in a village of about 200, where he teaches children about composting and restoring mangrove forests, which help protect the coastline from erosion caused by storm surge. He works with the elders to improve the sewage treatment so that polluted water doesn't seep into the ocean. Villagers are also removing the crown-of-thorns starfish, which eat coral, from the reef.

Mr. Katz said he focuses on steps the villagers can take on their own rather than broad concepts like fighting climate change. He pointed to a study that showed that 48 percent of the damage to the Great Barrier Reef in Australia was from tropical storms and cyclones, and another 42 percent from crown-of-thorns starfish, whose population has exploded because of an increase in phosphorus runoff from sewage, and other issues. This, he said, was similar in Fiji.

"People protect what they understand," he said. "That's the way to make change."

Mr. Katz took us to meet Filipe Kirikirikula, the 60-year-old head of the council of elders. We sat outside his home in the middle of the well-kept village by the beach. He supported Mr. Katz's mission, which he said required changing age-old habits. "Most of the people just abuse the environment," he said. "It's quite difficult to teach them about conservation. People here have their own freedom."

The days of going out on the reef with a spear to catch dinner were disappearing, he said. So he supported a plan to create an area to raise clams and fish that would be protected from poachers. It would also repopulate the reefs, which in turn would attract more divers who could be charged a fee, he said.

Ethan Aceni, a hotel worker at the Matava resort, picking basil leaves on Kadavu island in Fiji.