



ENQUIRY

VOL. IV No. 22 | CLINTON, NY. WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5, 2017

A publication of the AHI Undergraduate Fellows // Free thought and discourse

① *Consolation*
#Consolation

② *Uber: Silicon Valley Darling*
#DarlingUber

③ *Trump on ISIS*
#TrumpOnISIS

Consolation

By **CLAIRE ANASTASIA KITZ**
STAFF WRITER

Consoling the sorrowful and broken-hearted looms as a daunting task for a true friend. The philosopher Iris Murdoch once wrote: "Bereavement is a darkness impenetrable to the imagination of the unbereaved." It is an aptitude, an art, and a challenge, then, to accompany and console the bereft. It is not for the unmoved, the self-absorbed, or the apathetic; it is heroic work to search and help rescue a grief-stricken friend in the churning seas that have sundered their little boat.

Johannes Brahms was such an exceptional friend. Born in Hamburg, he is known to the world as an accomplished 19th-century pianist and master composer of symphony orchestras, piano and organ music, and chamber ensembles.

"Friendship is a divinely inspired inoculation against loneliness and sadness. It can bring candor, wonder, patience, clarity, love, communion, affirmation, virtue, enchantment, mercy, and forgiveness to the fore."

His works, like those of Beethoven, Bach, and Haydn, influenced the 20th-century composers Schoenberg, Elgar, and Stravinsky. Unknown to most was his other role, as a life raft of sorts for the extraordinarily talented pianist Clara Schumann, wife of Robert Schumann.

Robert Schumann suffered from bouts of depression and delusions of persecution most of his adult life, culminating in a complete mental breakdown. After attempting suicide, he was committed to an insane asylum near Bonn in 1854, where he would die two years later from pneumonia, never having regained his mental abilities. Within this circle of despair, Brahms, a friend of both Robert and Clara, offered

his steadfast support. He visited Robert in the asylum and helped Clara to recover and support her seven children.

On her own, Clara was an accomplished composer and piano virtuoso and continued to tour throughout Europe after Robert's death. One can gain a glimpse of the profound importance of the relationship between Clara and Johannes through a letter she wrote to her children as adults: "You hardly knew your dear Father, you were still too young to feel deep grief, and thus in those terrible years you could give me no comfort. Hope, indeed, you could bring me, but it was not enough to support me through such agony. Then came Johannes Brahms. Your Father loved and admired him, as he did no man except Joachim," the father of Mary, Jesus's mother. "He came, like a true friend, to share all my sorrow; he strengthened the heart that threatened to break, he uplifted my mind, he cheered my spirit when- and where-ever he could; in short he was my friend in the fullest sense of the word."

She later wrote of Brahms: "I can truly say, my

continued on back page

Uber: Silicon Valley Darling

By **SAM BENEVELLI**
STAFF WRITER

Uber is at the center of renewed scandal after a flood of sexual harassment allegations revealed a widespread "bro culture" at the company. But it's not the only startup to suffer under the questionable leadership of a "CEBro," as Dan Lyons, a former senior editor for *Forbes Magazine*, recently called it in the *New York Times*. It is, actually, the latest in a long string of Silicon Valley darlings to come under increased scrutiny and criticism.

These 40ish man-child CEOs push a tech culture with campus-like headquarters instead of office buildings, nap lounges instead of cubicles, and company bars instead of water coolers. As Lyons argues, their offices "become corporate

UBER cont.

frat houses, where employees are chosen like pledges, based on 'culture fit' " instead of merit. This work environment tends to alienate women and minorities, even leading some to quit. Additionally, the relative immaturity of these so-called "CEBros" creates an environment in which reckless spending and excessive partying become the norm, and bad behavior is not just tolerated but encouraged. While

"How many times can a high-profile 'millennial' company be hit before it falls? Companies that are too reactive rather than proactive do not last long – if you don't see the storm coming, it may tear you down."

the executives of these companies appear – at least at the surface level – to have great people skills, they have no clue how to manage their employees or run an expanding multi-billion dollar company. They surround themselves with like-minded people and fail to understand how to build a stable corporate structure. This is what led to Uber's problems and ones

This Week's News in 140 Characters

EDITORIAL REPORT

- amy walter** @amyewalter · 2h
Less than 100 days in, Trump is following well-worn recipe for losing control of House in midterm.
cookpolitical.com/story/10296
- Steve Rosenberg** @BBCSteveR · 17m
Russia's General Prosecutor's office says the St Petetsburg metro explosion was terrorism; all metro stations in the city shut.
- Haley Byrd** @byrdinator · 5m
Sources tell me Trump called Ted Cruz on Friday to vent about AHCA. "He was not pleased," per source. "It was a long conversation."
- Austin Petersen** @AP4Liberty · Apr 2
Of course libertarians are concerned about monopolies. That's why we work so hard to limit government.
- Jonathan H. Adler** @jadler1969 · 2h
Reminder: There were no partisan filibusters of judicial nominations ever until 2003. They were effectively eliminated in 2013.

Trump on ISIS

By **MORGAN WALSH**
STAFF WRITER

In just over two months, President Trump has faced numerous obstacles. One of those involves the war in the Middle East, which he has not handled responsibly.

While campaigning, Trump reiterated his desire to defeat the Islamic State (ISIS). In a speech last August, he stated: "my administration will aggressively pursue joint and coalition military operations to crush and destroy ISIS, international cooperation to cut off their funding, expanded intelligence sharing, and cyber-warfare to disrupt and disable their propaganda and recruiting." Though most of this cannot feasibly be accomplished in just two months, or even in a year, Trump has yet to put forth a preliminary formal plan in regard to ISIS while in office.

Americans should have been wary of Trump's ability to defeat ISIS when he was unable to reveal his plan for doing so during his campaign, despite constant reassurances that he had one. When questioned more recently as to why he would not describe this grand plan, the president simply said that he did have one but the

children, that I never loved any friend as I did him – it is an exquisite harmony of soul. I love his freshness of mind, his wonderfully gifted nature, his noble heart, which I have learned to know in the course of years, as others cannot.” Clara and Johannes remained close friends for the rest of their lives. They never married, nor did they marry other people. They died nine months apart, Clara in 1896 and Johannes in 1897.

In their relationship, one sees the illustration of an essential theme: that friendships are critical to human happiness, to creative and psychological flourishing, and in some cases to human survival. No human life is without loss or suffering. We do not get to pick what poisons our daily existence, but we do get to choose the medicine. Friendship is a divinely inspired inoculation against loneliness and sadness. It can bring candor, wonder, patience, clarity, love, communion, affirmation, virtue, enchantment, mercy, and forgiveness to the fore. Greek philosophers were sophisticated in their understanding of love and taught about the rarity of the deepest kind of friendship, which they called *philia*. It was not defined by sexual or romantic passion, but by a quite different distinguishing characteristic. *Philia* would be analogous to two people walking side-by-side on life’s journey, not possessive of the other, but in communion, souls made out of the same cloth.

Countless brilliant writers, playwrights, and poets have commented on the nature and necessity of deep friendships, of *philia*, such as that of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms. The Bard, Shakespeare himself in *Hamlet*, commanded: “Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried, Grapple them unto thy soul with hoops of steel.” Though he may have intended to indicate a cliché, he nonetheless describes with brilliance the strong friendship so many hold dear. The philosopher, scientist, and statesman Francis Bacon wrote that friendship “makes daylight in the understanding, out of darkness, and confusion of thoughts.” The 19th-century poet Emily Dickinson lamented: “Till the first friend dies, we think our ecstasy impersonal, but then discover he was the cup from which we drank it ...”

Friendships like that of Clara Schumann and Johannes Brahms are unusual in their intensity; they were given a special gift. The world can seem

insubstantial, pitiless, or hollow when we suffer grief or loss, and deep friendships are a welcome lifeline helping one to gain calm, bearings, and perspective. They help to reinforce or awaken the best version of ourselves, even when all seems confused and chaotic. These relationships are intellectually transformative and spiritually illuminating, and, in the end, make our hearts sing – which is a rare thing indeed.

UBER cont.

that plague similar startups.

Consider everyone’s favorite startup – Facebook. We got a dramatized look into its founding through “The Social Network,” but this is apparently only the tip of the iceberg. The company culture at Uber sounds more like “Wolf of Wall Street” than “The Office.” Top executives are little more than hustlers, winning over investors like Goldman Sachs and Merrill Lynch, who hold stakes of more than \$1 billion each.

With man-children at the helm, the “bro culture” at Uber is not confined to the workplace’s physical aspects; it permeates the manner in which the company is run and expands. Initially, Uber dealt with customer safety problems after several women came forward about being sexually assaulted by their drivers. It then weathered corporate espionage lawsuits from Google, related to the development of self-driving cars. Sexual harassment allegations from their employees are only the latest problem. How many times can a high-profile “millennial” company be hit before it falls? Companies that are too reactive rather than proactive do not last long – if you don’t see the storm coming, it may tear you down. Startups like Uber have seemed to be the exception, but probably aren’t.

Despite their cultural and structural flaws, startups like Uber still have great potential for making a positive impact on society as a whole. In identifying unmet problems in major areas of life, such as transportation or housing, these companies can revolutionize services in ways that make them more accessible or affordable. They can also pivot significantly faster than industrial giants, like Google or Unilever, because of their narrow, efficient focus. Moreover, these companies contribute to more than just app development. Uber, for example, is running a large behavioral science study to examine the motivation among independent contractors to maximize revenue for themselves and the corporations they work for. Companies across Silicon Valley are taking up new initiatives to contribute to scientific

research and maximize profits.

It is my hope that potential founders see the failures in some of the successful tech-bubble companies and can modify the startup culture so it doesn’t produce toxic work environments. The experience of ventures that have been more successful in these respects can be taught to young founders, just as the Wharton School teaches the structures of the mainstream business community. They will see the storms coming and will be prepared with a sturdy foundation rather than a rickety fence.

TRUMP cont.

enemy shouldn’t know what it was, and would know if he made it public. These empty reassurances made it easier for millions of Americans to put their faith in Trump during the campaign.

Trump has openly criticized the ongoing offensive against Mosul, a city in Iraq that ISIS seized two years ago. Shortly before the election, he went so far as to say that it was an international conspiracy

“Though taking the city proved difficult – and for many soldiers, deadly – it is important to recognize that substantial progress against the Islamic State had been made in doing so.”

aimed at aiding Hillary Clinton’s campaign. The then-candidate also called the Mosul offensive a “total disaster” that makes the United States look “dumb.” Such strong words indicate that Trump likely did not understand the gains made, primarily by Iraqi troops, in countering ISIS in and around Mosul. Though taking the city

proved difficult – and for many soldiers, deadly – it is important to recognize that substantial progress against the Islamic State has been made in doing so.

Parts of Mosul, however, remain uncaptured and under siege. ISIS currently has roughly 400,000 civilians in these areas that it plans to use as human shields. Despite these potential setbacks, the Iraqi army, working with U.S. forces, expects to retake the entire city. Given this positive outlook, it seems strange that Donald Trump would publicly criticize the offensive. His criticism is even more odd when one takes into account his stance on veterans during his campaign. Some of his remarks about the offensive for Mosul seemed disrespectful to the families of soldiers killed in it. Despite Trump’s criticisms, he has continued to provide U.S. troops to fight in Mosul.

Some actions for which Trump bears some responsibility have proved disastrous for the people in Mosul. Currently the U.S. and Iraq are investigating whether an American-led coalition air strike caused the deaths of more than 100 there on March 17. If the U.S. is responsible, this will be one of the greatest losses of civilian lives since coalition airstrikes began in 2014. By killing civilians, even if by accident, Trump’s military decisions are likely aiding the process of radicalization among Iraqis more than effectively fighting global terrorism. Some of Trump’s actions against the Islamic State, and his attitude toward our current military offensive, have served to reinforce the belief that he is unlikely to follow through on many of his campaign promises and the fear that he is unfit for the role of Commander in Chief.

<p>vol. IV</p> <h1>ENQUIRY</h1> <p>Elizabeth Barry <i>Editor in Chief</i></p> <p>Will Utzschneider Andrew Juchno <i>Associate Editors</i></p> <p>Helen Sternberg <i>Layout Editor</i></p>							
<p>STAFF WRITERS</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Alex Klosner</td> <td>Amy Elinski</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sam Benevelli</td> <td>Allison Zuckerman</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Claire Anastasia Kitz</td> <td>Fred Pollevick</td> </tr> </table>		Alex Klosner	Amy Elinski	Sam Benevelli	Allison Zuckerman	Claire Anastasia Kitz	Fred Pollevick
Alex Klosner	Amy Elinski						
Sam Benevelli	Allison Zuckerman						
Claire Anastasia Kitz	Fred Pollevick						
<p><i>The opinions expressed in these articles are the views of their authors and do not represent the views of Enquiry or the Alexander Hamilton Institute.</i></p>							
<p>Enquiry accepts articles of 500 to 800 words at ebarry@hamilton.edu and madamo@hamilton.edu. Please be aware that we do not accept anonymous submissions.</p>							