Genocide in Darfur

By Frank Brancely

Human-rights students, activists, and other members of the Bard community were busy on campus during the last week in April when the Darfur Action Campaign (DAC)/Students Taking Action Now (STAND) devoted a week to organized events that included speakers, a fundraiser and documentary screenings, all focusing on the ongoing conflict in the Darfur region of Western Sudan where more than an estimated 400,000 innocent people have been killed.

Survivors and Darfur refugees shared their stories in “Darfur Diaries,” a documentary containing a plea of help, carefully constructed by a trio of filmmakers “All About Darfur,” another documentary, was shown on Thursday and followed Taghreed Elsanhouri (the director) a young female student traveling from the U.K. to her birthplace. Elsanhouri supplied a citizen’s account of the disaster by interviewing Darfurians from teashops to markets. After the screening John Ryle, Bard’s Legrand Ramsey Professor of Anthropology contributed insight from his own extensive knowledge on, and experience in, the region.

The academic highlight of the event was Sudan researcher and Smith College professor Eric Reeves who spoke on the topic “Genocide Olympics: Highlighting Chinas Role in Darfur.” Reeves, who was described by colleague John Ryle as being the foremost scholar on in addition to possessing a sharp mastery of the English language through his studies and teachings of Shakespeare. Reeves described the continuous deterioration of efforts to protect the Sudanese by citing the increased withdrawal of humanitarian organizations, in addition to a rapid growth in disease, malnutrition, rape, and murder. Reeves referred to the isolation of civilians from food and clean water as “genocide by attrition.” His essential line of advocacy concerned China and its unnecessarily malignant complicity in the genocide, explicitly highlighting its ongoing investment of hundreds of millions of dollars into the Sudanese government and its oil production one of the primary sources of military income. Reeves advocated that those conscious of Darfur place pressure on the Chinese government to realize the contradiction in its Olympic slogan “One World, One Dream” and its support of a government that has fueled brutal militias to ceaseless slaughter.

Actress Mia Farrow, the second-speaker of the week, drew an even greater crowd with her celebrity status and as mother of Bard alumnus Ronan Seamus Farrow (04). Farrow, whose activism brought her to Darfur and the surrounding region, presented a slide show of the souls she met and left there. Her presentation was dedicated to the extreme gravity of the situation, the potential consequences, and once more, the guilt of Communist China. Farrow was passionate, provocative, and sincere, urging Bard students to “talk to Leon and begin divestment,” an action that would withdraw college funds from Sudan-friendly companies, such as PetroChina (and those who buy its stock – i.e., Fidelity Investments), effectively minimizing potential harm to both Sudanese civilians and investment returns. Farrow received an immediate and loud ovation by students after concluding her remarks.

The Darfur Action Committee/STAND consists of a group of students/activists who meet weekly throughout the year and whose mission it has been to ultimately assist in ending the genocide. Darfur Peace and Development, the nonprofit organization where the weeklong proceeds were given, purchases two meals a day for Darfurian children.

Bloomberg Draws Student Criticism

By Jason Mastbaum

Only a day after the news release announcing that New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg would be the commencement speaker this May a number of Bard students started making their displeasure known. As these students wrote in a letter to the administration, “We are dismayed, disappointed, and outraged by this prospect.”

What caused such an immediate, inflammatory reaction? Issues cited by the upset students included Bloomberg is a Republican official who won’t take a stand on the Iraq war, his crackdown on GOP convention protesters when the Republican National Convention was held in New York City in 2004, and unanswered questions surrounding bribes and sex scandals granted the well-known political inclinations of the Bard College student body. It was perhaps to be expected that there would be a negative reception to a commencement speech given by a Republican mayor, even though many would probably consider Bloomberg to be a RINO—Republican In Name Only—because of the fact that he was a Democrat until running for mayor.

On the other side of the debate, senior Mark Day has illustrated, the liberal slant associated with Bard does not apply to the entire student body. Day is the creator of the Facebook group “WE WANT BLOOMBERG!” Asked what made him decide to create the “pro-Bloomberg” Facebook group, responded, “The anti-Bloomberg people really claimed that they were representing a majority of the student body which I don’t think is true.” The group membership numbers seem to offer some support for Day’s claim. As of Tuesday, May 8, 2007, there were 122 members of the anti-Bloomberg group, and 61 members of the pro-Bloomberg group. Day expressed his desire to see a civil dialogue about this issue that is not driven by emotions. Only—because of the fact that he was a Democrat until running for mayor—does Bloomberg stand to receive honorary degrees at the college as a result of being non-controversial,” continuing. “The only time people don’t object [to a commencement speaker] is when they don’t know who the person is.” Botstein stated that he would be more understanding of an uproar over inviting someone such as the current Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, which “would be seen as an invitation which is a kind of challenge to our student body.” He felt that Mayor Bloomberg is not such a speaker.

Later, when asked about his opinion on whether students should have input into the process of choosing commencement speakers, Botstein indicated that students are invited every
Recreyclemania Concludes

By Katy Kelleher

Bard has successfully completed its first year of Recyclemania. For those of you who haven’t been paying attention, Recyclemania is a 10-week long intercollegiate competition in which colleges and universities across the country compete in categories like Jars poured per capita, waste minimization and various target materials (including paper, cardboard and compost).

For our first year, Bard actually did pretty well. Although we did not win any of the categories, we also never came in last. Our best category was food service. In the second place, behind Rutgers. However, this is sort of a double-sided victory; a lot of compost means we are throwing away excessive amounts of uneaten food. Waste is always a bad thing, but at least we were composting it.

Of the most of the other categories, we ranked somewhere around the middle. In waste minimization, we came in 28th place with 87.92 cumulative lbs per person. This number includes both recyclables and trash. This winning university, University Texas at Austin, had 31.97 lbs per person. So we clearly have a long way to go. However, in the per capita classic (recycled lbs per person), we came in 53rd place (out of 175) with 24 lbs per person. So, although Bard is not the most recycle-friendly school in the nation, through participating in Recyclemania, and increasing awareness, we are at least trying to reduce our collective carbon footprint.

In my work for Recyclemania, I found that many students were aware of the link between recycling, global warming and the polar bear. This year, we chose the polar bear as our Recylcemania mascot because of its precarious position as a threatened species. Because of global warming, the polar ice caps are rapidly melting, which reduces the area on which bears can hunt. Polar bears hunt ringed seals from sea ice, but because global warming is shortening the sea ice season (by as much as three weeks in some areas), polar bears are returning to land in poor condition. A study by NASA found that over the last decade, there has been a 2.9% decline in total Artic sea ice. Basically the only way to save the polar bears is to help preserve their hunting ground by cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

Now, the link between recycling and global warming is actually quite direct. Waste reduction, like recycling, decreases greenhouse gas emissions associated with resource extraction, manufacturing, landfill disposal, and incineration. The total pounds recycled during RecycleMania 2007 decreased greenhouse gas emissions by 15,583 metric tons of CO2 equivalent (MTCE). This is equal to a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions approximately equivalent to taking 12,367 passenger cars off the road for a year, or saving 468 acres of forest from deforestation. The amount recycled at Bard alone decreased greenhouse gas emissions the same amount as turning off all the lights in Red Hook for an entire year.

Basically, by recycling, we can all help reduce the effects of global warming. Even though Recyclemania is over, it is still important to do whatever we can to reduce our carbon footprints.

Also, thank you to all the local business who participated and helped to support Recyclemania through their generous donations:

- Taste Budd’s chocolate & Coffee Café
- Village Diner
- Golden Wok
- Broadway Grille

Commencement Speaker

Continued from Page 1

RecycleMania CONGRATULATES THE WINNERS OF THE 2007 INTERCOLLEGIATE RECYCLING COMPETITION!

GRAND CHAMPION: California State University Stan Marco
POT CUP CHAMPIONS: Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University
WASTE MINIMIZATION: University of Texas at Austin
GARBAGE PER PERSON: Rutgers University
TARGETED MATERIALS:
PAPER: Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory of Columbia University
CORRUGATED CARDBOARD: West Los Angeles Community College
BOTTLES & CANS: Fullamacco College
FOOD SERVICE ORGANIC: Rutgers University

Catch the Mania!

www.recyclemanias.org
www.myspace.com/recyclemania

The Bard Observer

News

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Y ork Mayor Michael Bloomberg as the police, with Bloomberg’s support and sanction, deprived countless Americans of their right to associate and dissent without state interference, as well as their protection against legal scrutiny in the absence of probable cause. While the immediate effects on political activism might be limited in this case, the actions of the police undoubtedly resonate with protest groups around the world, who now feel that they have no safe outlet for opposition. Worse yet, however, is the precedent this operation set, and it is imperative to not just let it slip out of our memory on commencement day.

While some may remain at ease just because the police did not do anything malfeasant with the records they collected on these protest groups, this gross misconduct should alarm anyone who desires a free, open society. We would do best to remember
As many theologians, such as Richard Hooker of Washington State University, suggest, ‘Christianity is transcendentalist.’

The term ‘Transcendentalism,’ derived from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, has profound moral implications, in short, all Abolism in moral philosophy. Kant, in his famous ‘transcendental analysis,’ argues that the ultimate source of moral truth is found in the moral law itself. Kant believed that moral laws are not just arbitrary conventions, but are instead necessary and universal. He argued that moral laws are ‘transcendental’ because they are not dependent on the particular circumstances of the individual, but are instead universal and binding on all people.

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Commentary

Nick McDonald's "Twelve as "preppsteromane" (Portrait of the Artist As a Young Prep) and/or/not/despite Twelve: A Brief Review

By Paris Ionescu

I wrote this piece in response to a blog entry called "Map of Misreading," written by Molly Young, a friend of a friend, who attends another university Never before happening upon her blog had I been ensorcelled of a colleague's (that is, a colleague of my own age) writing ability, or even thought their ability commensurate to my own. Her writing, however, is sweeter and more elegant than mine, her literary influences more honed, and she approaches with either I can at this moment (though I should say that writing and reading, which she appears to take quite seriously, have until recently been primarily perfunctory activities for me - that is, reading text, which is not to say that I've never met, saying something like, "Dear Eric. Please leave Molly alone. You make a very poor Charles Kinbote. Her best chum, Kate." Charles Kinbote, as the Wikipedia has since informed me, is a megalomaniacal, narcissistic, failed academic from Nabakov's Pale Fire. So. I am a better epigone of college brood poor children's crusade as the New York Times. Associating Vonnegut with the college aged, the obituaries portray him as a fringe writer, a portrayer substantiated by references to his work as science fiction and an assumption of the acceptance of the typecasting portrayed. Suggesting otherwise, college students connect with him thus marginalizes both parties. In Vonnegut's books there is oftentimes a character who comes to represent the viewpoint of society at large and the reader specifically. This character often enters, oftentimes unwillingly, a situation that forces them to confront a transient moment of crisis. In this way, Vonnegut forces his readers into a direct engagement with the themes of his work, a confrontation with the commentary. An example can be found in Sirens of Titan. The moment of text-reader transcendence occurs when the main character, Winston Niles Rumfoord, an American industrialist, representative of American industry and religious tendencies, is informed of the reason for human civilization by a Tralfamadorian alien. Salo tells Winston that human society existed only to erect monuments, such as the Great Wall of China and the Egyptian Pyramids, visible from space. These monuments comprise a communication between the Tralfamadorians and another alien species. The content of the communiqué: "Greetings. This type of event often occurs in Vonnegut's books, with the effect of subtly enforcing on the reader the adoption of a perspective radically different from, and critically radical of the perspective of normal society. Although it is not an uncommon practice, it is nonetheless improper to speak with reverence about a dead writer. To do so implies that with the death of the body, there is nothing left of the writer. This ignores or devalues the work they have produced. The purpose of this argument is not to be ardent about not saying nice things about a dead writer. There is however, no better way to memorialize one than to discuss the work they left behind. Had the media done so in any meaningful way, the uniformity of information in the obituaries about Kurt Vonnegut's death would have been annihilated in a free for all of thought. Kurt Vonnegut's body is kaput. His body of work is not to be adamant about not saying nice things about a dead writer. There is however, no better way to memorialize one than to discuss the work they left behind. Had the media done so in any meaningful way, the uniformity of information in the obituaries about Kurt Vonnegut's death would have been annihilated in a free for all of thought. Kurt Vonnegut's body is kaput. His body of work is not to be adamant about not saying nice things about a dead writer. There is however, no better way to memorialize one than to discuss the work they left behind. Had the media done so in any meaningful way, the uniformity of information in the obituaries about Kurt Vonnegut's death would have been annihilated in a free for all of thought. Kurt Vonnegut's body is kaput. His body of work is..." NOVELS:
COLLECTED SHORT FICTIONS:
Welcome to the Monkey House and Bagombo Snuff Box
PLAYS AND WORKS FOR TELEVISION:
PLAYS:
COLLECTED ESSAYS:
Pre-War, Post-War, and Granfaloonas. Palm Sunday, Nothing Is Lost Save Honor. Two Essays, Fates Worse Than Death. God Bless You, Dr. Kevorkian. Man Without a Country
Continued on Page 6

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within the Thomist tradition, which is where the Vatican is right now, someone operating within that tradition, including Ratzinger, is extremely aware of the difference between the two. And that’s why Ratzinger himself is changeable. You know, ask him a week before he traveled to Turkey, should Turkey be admitted to the EU? he would have said No. Ask him in Turkey, after he had insulted the memory of Mohammed, he said Yes. How would you defend that? It’s not hypocrisy. It’s the difference in his mind between substance and accidents.

This was wonderful. I could hear Kant cheering in the background. To give a taste of some of the technical terminology of Kantian doctrine. St. Thomas’ ‘accidents’ are identical to what Kant calls ‘the concepts of experience’, the structure of the ‘accidents/concepts of experience’ in time involves wholly different circumstances; and the infinitely relative moral significance of these ‘accidents’ involves what Kant calls ‘content’. In St. Thomas, ‘substance’ (i.e. love) is the only absolute; this is Kant’s ‘content’. But enough technicality.

BC (continued): From the point of view of Thomas Aquinas, substance is something that you can initially know intellectually by what Kant would call ‘reason’ and what Thomas Aquinas would call ‘intellect’, and that included the use of ‘intellect’ on ‘accidents’. That is, it’s possible for you to look at the accidental world, in which we live, and understand, from that, intellectual principles that lead you into the world of substance. He sees faith as being the ultimate completion of ‘reason’. That is, reason gets you to a certain point in the understanding of the true substance behind the world, the world of the divine, and faith serves as the completion of reason. So that there is always a symbiosis between the two such that reason without faith is lacking but it is definitely moved in the direction of faith.

BB: That’s right.

BB: That’s right, Thomas tradition.

BB: Thomas tradition is substituting, almost, or, Kant is substituting…that it’s interchangeable with the Kantian notion that one must appeal to an inner God, if you will, for moral certitude (the Kantian God).

BB: So, just to be clear, on what grounds do you take issue with equating oneself to God?

BC: I think experimentally the 20th century shows that’s a bad idea. I think the tendency of people to idolize themselves and to put themselves at the center of the universe has obvious ethical outcomes that should have told us that was not the way to go. Quite aside from the philosophical problem, ethically that’s really a cracked idea. There are times that history does teach us things, not too many times, but this is one of them. However, in terms of an experience that is going to have some kind of trajectory and be something more than a, ‘Oh wow, I’m one with everything’ experience, which is, indeed, very nice but that’s… you know, it doesn’t last but that long, and it doesn’t take you too far. If you’re in fact going to develop and allow that experience to become a part of your identity then an acknowledgement that ‘this is not all in my control, this is not simply me’ that kind of modesty, I think, is just necessary to a life that actually participates in spirit over the long term.

Kant calls this confrontation with the objective world the sublime experience. Realizing that there is an objective world, the mind of God (or however one chooses to think about it), is the foundation of his endeavor to employ ‘practical reason’ in the world of Thomas’s ‘accidents’, for the purpose of realizing certain ends. According to Kant, one is free to choose these ends and, with happiness as one’s ultimate end, one ought to believe that she is free to do so. In that sense, we are all Gods. But while we are free to imagine, to define, to realize love and beauty within ourselves as we wish… free to decide what is morally right, we are not free to leave our own minds and shape the mind of the Other (whether that other be God or another human being). One can merely manifest one’s will by means of physical actions in an objective world that’s physical rules no man had any choice in making (that was/is the place of ‘God, our father’). Gravitational force exists according to the rule of the inverse squares, that’s a rule that God imagined in existence and that no man can imagine out of experience as he confronts the objective world (neglecting the extremely psychotic), but we are free to dance as we will within that confrontation and in that’s practical endeavor. That’s what puts bread on our tables.
**Arts + Entertainment**

**Summer Escape: The Movies**

By Tom Houseman

**Paprika** May 25th

If you want something a little bit less mind-numbing than the usual Pixar and Dreamworks drive-in, then this anime film is exactly what you're looking for. Satoshi Kon is known best for Tokyo Godfathers and Millennium Actress, but this looks to be his best film yet. It's about a psychotherapist and her alter-ego, Paprika, who can enter people's dreams and blow action sequences and incredibly complex plot development. Rent Night Watch and then catch this awesome fantasy film, the only sequel actually worth seeing this summer.

**Day Watch** June 1st

Last spring, Russia's first big hit since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Night Watch, took Europe by storm. Unfortunately, it made less than $2 million in the US, but that was America's loss, as Night Watch was one of the best movies of 2004. Now we're getting the sequel, and it looks even better, as it picks up the story of the battle between Light and Dark a few years after the end of the first film. The concept is simple, but that just leaves room for more amazing animation. Rent Day Watch and check, as we shall see. White Mike, it must be noted, is dead. Add to this his father's constant prolix collection of words – not having read much at the time, as I was saying, I could not summon a word of eloquence. I must, therefore, put off to another time. But let it be said, on Young's behalf, on Bloom's, and of one's contemporaries. Herein, I am citing what puts it more elegantly than I could:

I grow tired of Nick McDonell's Twelve, as the clock nears that hour. There is much more going on in Young's work, than Young's own, and necessarily with the intent of self-mythologizing. To bring his own life experiences, that of the prep into the literary canon. Furthermore, he must want to show the world that he has crossed paths with the real White Mike, understood his theory, and written a book of legend. My theory can appear thwarted by the book's Acknowledgements, wherein McDonell states, 'I have never met him, but whose brilliant name I have used,' seemingly putting objective distance between him and White Mike. I have not yet proof to inoculate this evidence against my theory. Twelve succeeds when McDonell's young White Mike, I am sure that he was encouraged to disassociate himself with the real character.

**Sicko** June 29th

This movie has been a while since Michael Moore stuck it to the man with Fahrenheit 9/11, but the man has been busy. He's been making this attack on the American healthcare system, and it looks to be every bit as angry and bitter as his previous efforts. Just thinking about Michael Moore makes almost every Bardin cream him or herself, and the idea of another hilarious and horrifyingly truthful liberal rant is almost too much to handle. But if you have a chance, you must see Sicko. It's gonna be awesome.

**Rescue Dawn** July 4th

Why would you pass up a chance to see a Werner Herzog film? The man is a genius; whether he's doing narrative or documentary, and his films can be terrifying. Rescue Dawn is Herzog's follow-up to Grizzly Man, and is a fictional narrative based on his own experience in the war. Rent this film and find out why Herzog is one of the leading figures in the independent film world. It's been a while since Young's Michelle Obama's book, the one's that most of America probably hasn't heard of, for Amadeus, The People vs. Larry Flynt, and Man on a Leon. If you are interested in writing the definitive Prep experience. The resulting novels constitute their own canon.

**The Bard Observer**

**The King of Kong** August 17th

There have been plenty of movies based on videogames lately, but none have a twist to it, in that it's about people playing videogames. The film is about two men, Bill Mitchell, who in 1983 proved to be the best player in the world on Ms. Pacman, and Steve Wiebe, who twenty years later trumped Mitchell by scoring an even million. This led to a face off between these two and something beyond it, and something huge. It's a whole thing. This documentary, in the same vein as last year's Wordplay, looks like a whole lot of fun. If you want to have a good time and still seem pretentious by having gone to see a documentary, check out The King of Kong.

**Wristcutters: A Love Story** August 31st

This one has built up a lot of buzz, helped by an Independent Spirit nomination last year, and with a title that sounds like it might be good. It stars Patrick Fugit, who has grown up since Almost Famous, as a man who commits suicide. A true story, it's a story that many people would like to try to get to the fortress of the messiah. If this doesn't already have you desperate to see this movie, it might help to know that Tom Waits also stars in the film. Are you excited yet? I sure as hell am.
that from 1956 to 1971, the FBI, under COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program), systematically spied on, infiltrated, and disrupted protest groups, some noxious, such as the Ku Klux Klan, and others righteous, such as Martin Luther King Jr.’s Southern Christian Leadership Conference. This initiative resulted in unwarranted loss of privacy, liberty, sanity, and even life, as the FBI did everything from wiretapping activists to literally assaulting people in order to provoke criminal responses.

Granted, the RNC surveillance operation does not approach the level of egregiousness of COINTELPRO, but it fosters a culture of disregard for civil liberties where excesses of power take root. At first it begins with just a file on a peaceful protestors, but with the wrong mix of access to information and corrupt motives, surveillance becomes an unbeatable mechanism of suppression. It is not unprecedented for officials to mysteriously taint dossiers on peaceful Americans with distortions and outright fabrications about their lives, lies to strategically use against them at a later date. Village Voice columnist and longtime activist, Nat Hentoff recalled in a recent editorial that his own FBI file contained falsified facts, such as a trip to a “radical” meeting in North Africa, a region (and continent) he had never visited. It also exaggerated and omitted activities in his life to make a man who was actually a virulent anti-Communist appear otherwise.

But then again, it should not take a wet-blanket liberal like me to worry about the potential for such abuse, or other similar corruption. The Founding Fathers feared it and attempted to check against it themselves in the Constitution. What the NYPD committed, and what Bloomberg has consistently supported in the name of security concerns, is an offense to the founding principles of this country, and the fundamentals of a liberal democracy. The Mayor’s complicity marks him as not a competent leader but one ethically feeble man in a long succession of similar cowards who curtail liberty for unworthy ends.

Yet, as he tends to do, Mayor Bloomberg distracts people with his money. Bard is no different, apparently. In exchange for his monetary and administrative assistance in the construction of a new Bard Early High School, the powers that be have decided to give him an honorary doctorate of “human letters” and the privilege of addressing the graduating class of 2007. They commend him even though he plants trees in Manhattan, while donating thousands of dollars to a Republican Party establishment that undermines environmentalism nationwide; even though he issued vile, dehumanizing smears against the transit workers union; even though he effectively used the Bill of Rights as cheap toilet paper. I came to Bard under the belief that it was an institution of strong character. I now get to leave with no such misconceptions.

Losing Faith, Continued from Page 2

Recent Music Moderation Show

The Staff

Editors: michael BROWN frank BRANCELY fiona COOK grace DWYER edward HALL mekko HARJO justin LEIGH genevieve LYNCH jason MASTBAUM rachel MEADE michael NEWTON elvia PYBURN-WILK ted QUINLAN
Contributors: noah WESTON ben BLIUMUS tom HOUSEMAN paris IONESCU katy KELLEHER marli KOZICHAROW
COMIX

ANIMALS THAT SIT!

Cats

No way

Sheep!

Monkeys (wow)

Even monkeys