

## Crackpot Zeitgeist over-hyped dribble

THIS SATURDAY BRINGS A NUMBER OF THINGS to look forward to: sleeping in, a second “take-the-Internet-to-the-streets” Scientology protest, and a surprise party for a friend of mine who attends Grant MacEwan and thus hopefully won’t read this sentence before then. But it also brings something that I’m less than excited about: Z-day, or “Watch Zeitgeist” day.

For those of you who don’t know, *Zeitgeist* is a two-hour documentary that’s made a buzz for its dissection of religion, 9/11 theories, and the control that banks have over America. Unfortunately, it’s also a terribly cited, fact-warping tirade that basically amounts to three different sects of conspiracy theorists jerking each other off over their mutual mistrust of the American government. And yet so many people are still willing to just eat it all up without a second thought.

Before this week, there was simply the one version of the film, which cited few of its quotations and was an exercise in everything that makes your stereotypical conspiracy theory so darn kooky. But in preparation for Z-day, a remastered “final” version of the movie has been released that actually attributes its sources to names.

Now we know that *Zeitgeist* follows such vanguards of truth as Jordan Maxwell, the self-proclaimed researcher and independent scholar on the issue who failed to appear in court in 2004 for allegedly selling fake driver’s licenses. Sources in the first section include George Carlin and Bill Hicks. In other words, their experts are two stand-up comedians and a guy who’s happy to make you “McLovin” ID so that you can buy your underage friends booze if you’ll listen to his theories for a while.

Peter Joseph, the person whose name is attached to the film, is cocky enough to throw in little jabs like, “Oh, did I mention the sub-basement explosions [...] which occurred moments before the first plane hit?” and giving each of the film’s three sections cutesy *Frasier*-esque titles like “All the World’s a Stage” while cycling through his evidence.

The arguments he provides are wildly erratic, going from a few credible sources to purely anecdotal evidence, and even twisting a few facts for dramatic effect.

Still, Joseph has apparently managed to hit the right nerve: there’s enough mutual dislike of the US government to rally swarms of supporters, all eager to believe that George W Bush and his gang of cronies are the bad guys that they’ve always suspected them to be—even if the amounted evidence doesn’t quite fit the accusations.

The “Clarifications” section of the *Zeitgeist* website—which has, since the release of the remastered version, disappeared—also revealed some of the half-truths prevalent in the movie, but it has been replaced with a “Q&A,” which basically amounts to “fuck the haterz” without actually backing up the “evidence” the film has put forward.

Despite all of these flaws, the Facebook group boasts more than 10 000 members, and many more people will undoubtedly flock to the March 15th screenings to accept the whole thing as the unabashed truth.

Though *Zeitgeist* is flexing the newfound ability of the Internet to go viral and motivate thousands of people to get behind a cause, it’s also showing the critical problem with the Web: that anyone can throw information out there and find a fanbase who will gleefully believe without really examining the facts.

PAUL BLINOV  
Arts & Entertainment Editor

## Ye’ daft bloody eejets

Next Monday there will be folks  
who pretend to be good Irish blokes  
Though you won’t hear them admit  
that they’re chock full of shit  
Us Micks know they’re just blowing smoke

CONAL PIERSE  
You’re goddamn right I’m Irish



CONAL PIERSE

## LETTERS

### Things better in Alberta

Kristina De Guzman should be recognized as one of the most easily offended people in Alberta (re: “Stelmach’s joke still insensitive,” 11 March).

From what I gather, her bone of contention is that Stelmach had the audacity to imply that he prefers living in Alberta rather than in Argentina. Well, then I guess you better label me “culturally insensitive” too.

I mean what’s the issue? Isn’t it apparent that some countries have a lower quality of life than others? Is it wrong to simply state this fact? Is De Guzman asserting that anyone referencing that fact also must explain “the reasons why that is?” Aren’t we allowed to compare countries? How are we supposed to feel pride for our country or agree on areas that we need to improve without a basis of comparison?

What I find most “laughable” about De Guzman’s article is her ridiculous belief that Alberta’s electoral system is as corrupt as and maybe even worse than “third world” countries. Equating difficulties with the Elections Alberta website and phone lines with third-world corruption is the worst form of moral equivalence.

What’s with the quotations around “third world” anyway? Does De Guzman not believe in third world countries? Does she also not believe in “poor,” “oppressed,” “corrupt,” and “rigged elections?” Well others do—including Transparency International, which ranks Argentina 105th on its corruption scale. To gain some perspective, Argentina is tied

with Bolivia and ranked significantly worse than Bosnia.

By the way, Canada is eighth—oops, there I go comparing again. Stelmach’s joke was a bland attempt at humour from a bland politician, but I agree with him. I feel extraordinarily blessed to be Canadian, and I know this from seeing what life could be like in other countries.

ADAM HARRISON  
Graduate Studies

### Gift horse has a mouth full of razorblades

All of this week, there’ll be a booth in HUB distributing Goddess-Grams in “support” of International Women’s Week. Exchange an old razor handle or give a \$2 donation, and your significant-female-other will receive a new \$15, five-blade, top-of-the-line Venus razor. Best of all, the proceeds go to support a women’s scholarship. Sweet deal, huh?

Perhaps for you, but especially for the company. No old razor plus a new Venus equals you having to buy Venus blades from now on. A scholarship funded by generous customers that is sure to bear the Venus brand name also equals free (or at least subsidized) advertising.

But there’s nothing wrong (or rather, nothing new) with a company exploiting a social cause—it’s just smart business, and it’s something that we all just seem to accept.

Unfortunately for everyone—including even those who turn a profit by facilitating the hygienic “needs” of women—this marketing ploy is a clear instance of female subjugation under the guises of progress and efforts toward social equality. It’s funny to think that a company whose

business depends on women feeling pressured to conform to a particular, freshly shaven body image would profess to help women by further entrenching such superficial social ideals, isn’t it?

Want to help women? Then sure, get one of those razors if you want—a scholarship is still a scholarship. No one can think poorly of you if that’s really your choice and you’ve considered the underlying message of “what it really means to be a female” that is being forced upon you—err, I mean, that comes free with your new razor. Just remember that contrary to what corporations such as Venus would like to have us believe, appealing to ultra-heterosexual, ultra-feminine, ultra-consumerist, ultra-unrealistic, “goddess-like” expectations of the female figure does not equal being a woman and almost certainly hinders women more than it helps anyone.

BRIAN CROUTZE  
Science III

### Non-PC votes don’t count

There has been a lot of talk recently regarding voter apathy during the provincial elections on Monday. While most people are indignant at this display of indifference, I for one can understand where the apathetic ones are coming from because I’m starting to wonder whether casting my vote was worth my time.

I have nothing against democracy itself—god knows that everyone wants to have a say in how their country is run. But the fact is, despite many people casting a ballot for the party of their choice, only a select few will go home satisfied. I personally voted Liberal, and several other people I have talked to did likewise,

yet somehow, despite widespread liberal desires, the Liberals actually lost representation to the Conservatives. So while I voted in a system that supposedly will represent my interests, my vote more or less counted for nothing.

I’m not going to get the Liberal voice in the government that I wanted, and neither will all the other Liberal supporters, simply because they lived in areas where there were more Conservative voters. Why should the voters’ opinion be silenced just because they don’t live amongst others of the same opinion?

And what of those who voted for the NDP and Green Party? There’s quite a few supporters of them, yet whenever they vote for the party they believe in, it’s almost akin to throwing a vote away. They’ll never have their voices heard even though they live in the great democracy.

So really, until our democratic system is fixed so that all votes actually count, the apathetic ones might as well stay at home.

RORY FIDLER  
Arts I

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