

# Keen on 2.0

The Amateurs are Coming!

PLA 2008

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**SEDUCTIVE!**

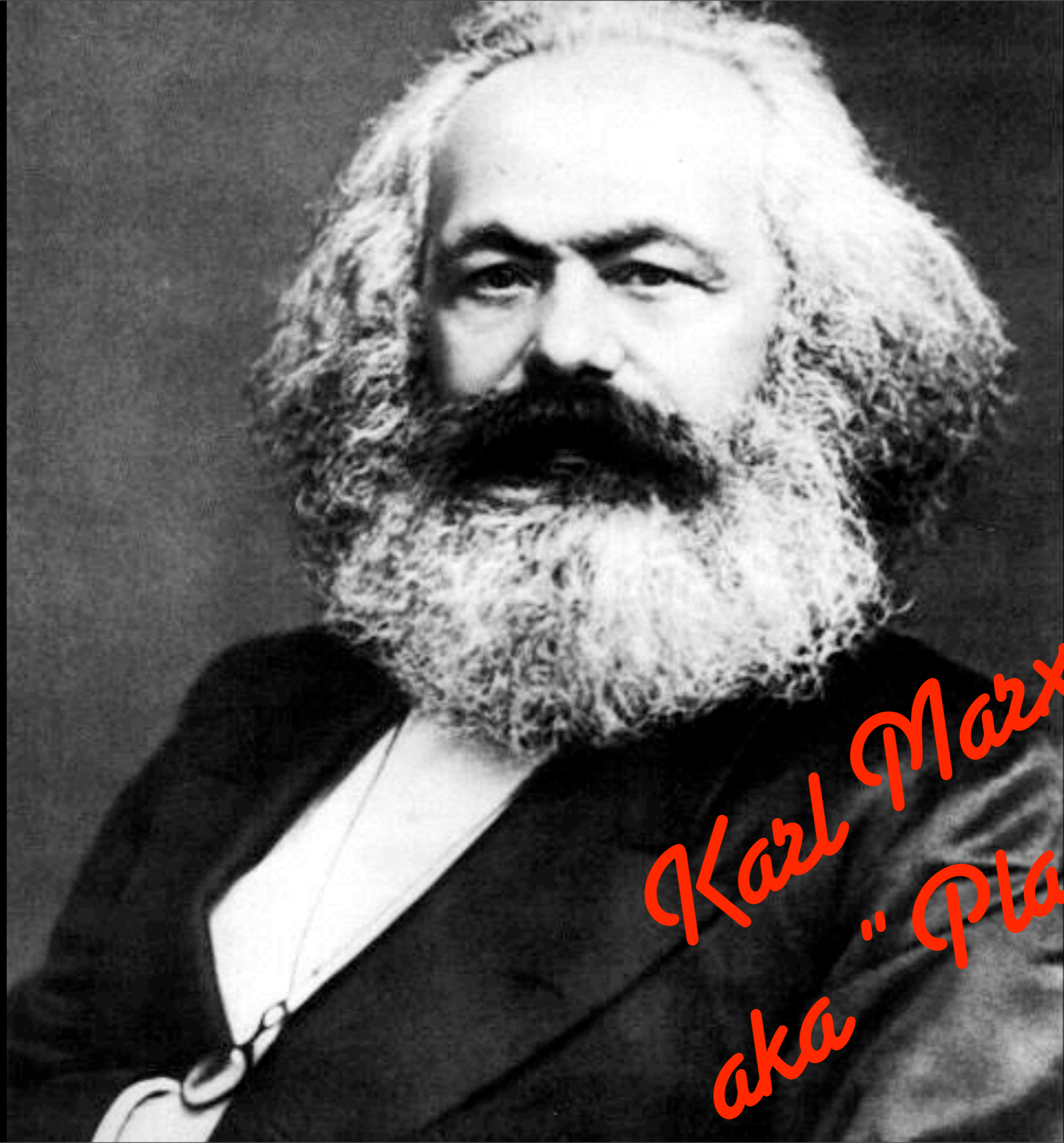
Wait, you guys ought to Flickr this...



Andrew Keen's  
The Great Seduction:  
Eleven Unfashionable Thoughts About Digital Utopianism

(his blog can be found at [andrewkeen.typepad.com](http://andrewkeen.typepad.com))

“There is something of the philosophical assumptions of early Marx and Rousseau in the digital utopian movement, particularly in its holy trinity of online community, individual creativity and common intellectual property ownership. Most of all, it’s in the marriage of abstract theory and absolute faith in the virtue of human nature that lends the digital utopians their intellectual debt to intellectual Casanovas like young Marx and Rousseau.”



Karl Marx  
aka "Playa"



“The cult of the amateur is digital utopianism’s most seductive delusion. This cult promises that the latest media technology -- in the form of blogs, wikis and podcasts -- will enable everyone to become widely read writers, journalists, movie directors and music artists. It suggests, mistakenly, that everyone has something interesting to say.”

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‘Good taste’ is, as Adorno never tired of telling us, undemocratic. Taste must reside with an elite (‘truth makers’) of historically progressive cultural critics able to determine, on behalf of the public, the value of a work-of-art. The digital utopia seeks to flatten this elite into an ochlocracy. The danger, therefore, is that the future will be tasteless.”

“Unchecked technology threatens to undermine reality and turn media into a rival version of life, a 21st century version of ‘The Castle’ or ‘The Library of Babel’. This might make a fantastic movie or short piece of fiction. But real life, like art, shouldn’t be fantasy; it shouldn’t be fiction.”

“Big media is not bad media. The big media engine of the Hollywood studios, the major record labels and publishing houses has discovered and branded great 20th century popular artists of such as Alfred Hitchcock, Bono and W.G. Sebald (the ‘Vertigo’ three). It is most unlikely that citizen media will have the marketing skills to discover and brand creative artists of equivalent prodigy.”





William 翔  
Hung

William  
Hung

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“Let’s think differently about George Orwell. Apple’s iconic 1984 Super Bowl commercial is true: 1984 will not be like Nineteen Eighty-Four the message went. Yes, the ‘truth’ about the digital future will be the absence of the Orwellian Big Brother and the Ministry of Truth. Orwell’s dystopia is the dictatorship of the State; the Web 2.0 dystopia is the dictatorship of the author. In the digital future, everyone will think they are Orwell (the movie might be called: Being George Orwell).”





“Anderson’s ‘Long Tail’ is really a long tale. The real economic future is something akin to Google -- a vertiginous media world in which content and advertising become so indistinguishable that they become one and the same”

“As always, today’s pornography reveals tomorrow’s media...the convergence of self-authored shamelessness, narcissism and vulgarity -- a self-argument in favor of censorship. As Adorno liked to remind us, we have a responsibility to protect people from their worst impulses. If people aren’t able to censor their worst instincts, then they need to be censored by others wiser and more disciplined than themselves.”



“How to resist digital utopianism? Orwell’s focus on language is the most effective antidote. The digital utopians needs to be fought word-for-word, phrase-by-phrase, delusion-by-delusion. As an opening gambit, let’s focus on the meaning of four key words in the digital utopian lexicon:  
a) author b) audience c) community d) elitism.”

“The cultural consequence of uncontrolled digital development will be social vertigo. Culture will be spinning and whirling and in continual flux. Everything will be in motion; everything will be opinion. This social vertigo of ubiquitous opinion was recognized by Plato. That’s why he was of the opinion that opinionated artists should be banned from his Republic.”

the  
cult of the  
amateur

how today's internet is  
killing our culture

andrew keen

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**Thank-you!**

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