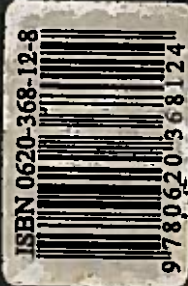


THE LAUGH II OFF
ANNUAL
VOLUME 3

The Laugh II Off Annual



MANIFESTO OF AMATEURISM

by Anton Krueger

preamble

...as everyone has by now, surely, become aware, the word "amateur" arises from the holy name of amaterasu — the japanese goddess of the sun who was born from the left eye of izanagi...it is to her alone that all true amateurs turn for benedictions of light and love...

aligning the field: amateurism & professionalism

ONE

...every action (drama/karma) is a creative gesture, because every action continuously creates consequences...

...if there is to be a division, then let it not fall between "bad" and "good" or "good" and "better", but between action and non-action...

...amateurism is about action — praxis, rather than spectatorship...so the first thing to do is to GET OUT OF THE GRANDSTAND...

TWO

...the crime of specialisation is that it inhibits and prevents people from acting, because if only some can be masters, then the rest must become audience...

...professionalism thrives on expanding a passive audience...so professionalism can inhibit personal creative expression by threatening the would-be amateur's confidence and enthusiasm...

THREE

...professionalism involves the deliberate commodification of creative produce...

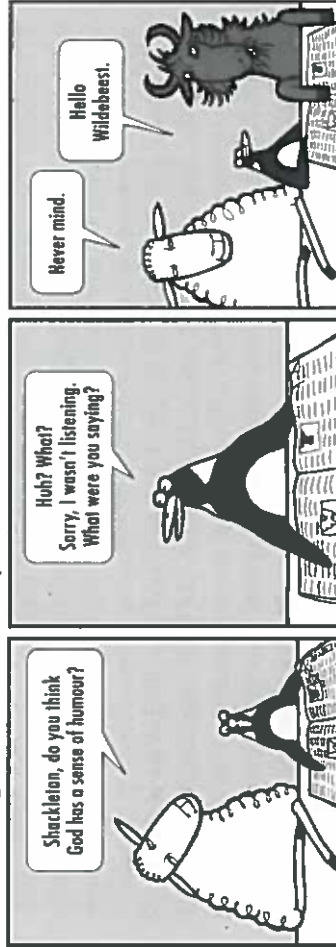
...in its desire to maximise the distribution and consumability of creative products, professionalism caters towards the mass production of objects most easily accessible to the largest audience by means of the largest common denominator...

...the curse of professionalism is that it is inevitably group-driven and committee-sponsored, that it defines humanity as swarm, as colony to be controlled...

He thus started formulating an interrogative hypothesis to structure his current quandary. Was the psychosis index for his sleepy little town somewhat higher than the popular conception, and were a number of people thus suffering from similar delusions? Or, was the mere presence of a high level of psychosis in fact a 'doorway' that allowed the perpetually vigilant inanimate objects to enter mainstream consciousness, thus putting them in a position to devour human flesh/reverse their role with humans, whichever was in fact their focus within this alternate existence? Oswald began to glow yet again with self-appreciation for the advanced state of mental functioning that had produced this corollary conjecture to his initial hypothesis. He even managed to get as far as the title to his doctoral thesis before his self-absorbed conceit began to cannibalise itself. If widespread psychosis was the correct interpretation of the current situation then he in fact was not 'the weakest in the herd' and did not have to suffer the humiliation and indignation of suspect physical prowess. Then again, if the psychosis was the vehicle to allow entry for the inanimate objects into conscious reality, he was still being targeted — only now it was due to being the most mentally rather than physically suspect individual in the territory of the park benches. On thorough contemplation of this turn of events, Oswald concluded he was much happier with this version as he knew there were a number of really hot chicks that were into guys who were a bit mental. And by simple extrapolation of the logic, if he was the biggest maniac — he was the hottest.

At this point Oswald looked away from the park benches and the little lawn, and the parachute pantie on the line, down to the neat and ordered figures on the page on his desk. Accounting 202 1995 Model Solution was the title to the page, a paper he had written and failed a year ago. Oswald wasn't sure if he was going to pass the exam the next day, but the more he thought about it, in fact the more he just thought — the more he began to suspect that a commerce degree was not his true calling.

The Ponderings of Ernest H. Sheep. By Patrick and Alex Laimier



FOUR

...the amateurist is interested in singularity, not in mass reproduction...
...the amateurist manoeuvres with complete impunity towards any notions of success which might be measurable in terms of quantity...
...in whichever plain the amateurist plays, he always operates with total individual freedom...

corollaries

a) amateur science
...since science became a profession at the tail end of the nineteenth century, and as it has become more and more professional during the course of the twentieth, the value of the knowledge it contributes to society has become most important as a saleable commodity, (a situation predicted by Lyotard)...consequently, common curiosity seems to be on the decline, and many have willingly had their sense of wonder lobotomised...also, the would-be amateurist scientist is now co-erced into aligning his interests with areas of research which are most heavily subsidised by corporate funding...so there's less open, naive, guileless exploration of what is...

b) amateur sports

...the professional sportsman seduces the would-be amateurist and hypnotises him with symbolic victories and illusory triumphs, keeping him firmly fastened to his couch while his belly bellows and his legs wither out from under him...

c) amateur arts

...when art becomes work, it stops being playful, and play is an essential ingredient of the artistic enterprise...the professionalisation of the arts has also led to the packaging of arts as a means and not an end, which has managed to empty the artistic gesture itself of all inherent value...when art facilitates processes of reification and commoditisation, then it can turn deadly – then it can become advertising, education, propaganda, pornography...

d) amateur music

...since the reproduction of sound, domestic music making has been on the decline...the domination of a network which feeds the market it has created for itself with carefully packaged stars can easily terrorize the casual player into a mood of inadequacy...but playing music and hearing it are different experiences...nobody can play like you...

e) amateur academics: the case for lazy scholarship

...if one is too career-orientated, if one is too much of a busybody, if one has read too many books, if one has been too diligent, then one is simply going to regurgitate the

mechanisms of the apparatus into which one has willingly sunk one's self...one will have become bound by one's books...

...thinking requires grandiloquent moments...to be beavered away at facts and dates and entire branches of interpretations is stultifying...for new ideas to breathe one needs the freedom to explore...as Nietzsche said – one cannot call oneself a thinker unless one spends at least third of one's time away from the company of people and books...

the bottom line

...the amateurist realises the futility of everything the media machine manufactures...

...the amateurist doesn't play the numbers game...

...the amateurist shuns the commodification of creativity...

...the amateurist never does anything he doesn't want to do...

...the amateurist is free...

...long live amateur, long live...

footnote

...after Krueger's momentous declaration of amateurism, we managed to track him down to put a few questions to him...we first raised the issue of the almost deafening silence which had hitherto greeted his proposal, speculating as to whether or not the almost total media black out of the event might have had something to do with the fact that the only person he'd shown the manifesto to was his wife, Louise, (who thought it sounded "very nice")...but he seemed put out by the question and referred us to "the bottom line", repeating that "the amateurist doesn't play the numbers game"...

...we then asked Krueger whether he preferred to call himself an "amateurist" simply in order to justify the fact that he was making desperately little money out of his creative gestures...this question seemed to unsettle him, and he brought the interview to a rather abrupt end, murmuring "long live amateur, long live", before disappearing into the gloaming...