



The Internet Unconscious: On the Subject of Electronic Literature (International Texts in Critical Media Aesthetics)

Sandy Baldwin

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Winner of the N. Katherine Hayles Award for Criticism of Electronic Literature from the Electronic Literature Organization

There is electronic literature that consists of works, and the authors and communities and practices around such works. This is not a book about that electronic literature. It is not a book that charts histories or genres of this emerging field, not a book setting out methods of reading and understanding. *The Internet Unconscious* is a book on the poetics of net writing, or more precisely on the subject of writing the net. By 'writing the net', Sandy Baldwin proposes three ways of analysis: 1) an understanding of the net as a loosely linked collocation of inscriptions, of writing practices and materials ranging from fundamental TCP/IP protocols to CAPTCHA and Facebook; 2) as a discursive field that codifies and organizes these practices and materials into text (and into textual practices of reading, archiving, etc.), and into an aesthetic institution of 'electronic literature'; and 3) as a project engaged by a subject, a commitment of the writers' body to the work of the net.

The Internet Unconscious describes the poetics of the net's "becoming-literary,?? by employing concepts that are both technically-specific and poetically-charged, providing a coherent and persuasive theory. The incorporation and projection of sites and technical protocols produces an uncanny displacement of the writer's body onto diverse part objects, and in turn to an intense and real inhabitation of the net through writing. The fundamental poetic situation of net writing is the phenomenology of "as-if.?? Net writing involves construal of the world through the imaginary.

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