



## NATALIE BOOKCHIN

*The Intruder*, web game, <<http://www.calarts.edu/~bookchin/intruder>>, 1999 (© Natalie Bookchin). *The Intruder* borrows from one of the most popular forms of entertainment consumed on computers, the game, to tell an unpopular story of unresolved gender-based conflicts. An experimental adaptation of a short story of the same name by Jorge Luis Borges, *The Intruder* is a hybrid form that exists on the border of computer and video arcade games and literature. Players move forward through a linear narrative only by shooting, fighting, catching or colliding with a character. Instead of winning a point, a player is rewarded with a piece of the narrative. At times the logic of games is subverted and the player must lose or receive a penalty in order to continue the story. Playing transforms former readers into participants who are placed inside of and implicated in the story—Borges's short tale of a tragic love triangle. Throughout the game, players' subject positions shift, and they must play on different and opposing sides in the same story, paralleling the less-than-firm roles often performed in such real-life conflicts. The story is told in 10 separate game scenarios that together present a loose parallel narrative of a history of computer games. *The Intruder* begins with a reconstructed version of one of the earliest computer games, Pong, and ends with a war game that, like its real-life counterpart, serves simultaneously to reinforce and abstract violence—in this instance, the narrative's violent end. Clockwise from top left: screen shots from games 1, 9, 4, 3, 10, 8 and 2 of *The Intruder*.

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