

The power of language

Read 'The Scarlatti Tilt' by Richard Brautigan (available here: <http://brautigan.cyberneticmeadows.net/tiki-index.php?page=The%20Scarlatti%20Tilt>)

What is your reaction to the story?  
 What, if anything, makes the story funny?

Now re-write the story on the following cards, using the scenarios given:

<p>A woman is playing the violin and a man has the revolver.</p>	<p>A woman is learning to tap dance and a woman has the revolver.</p>
<p>A man is learning to tap dance and a man has the revolver.</p>	<p>A baby will not stop crying and a woman has the revolver.</p>
<p>A baby will not stop crying and a man has the revolver.</p>	<p>A woman has burnt the dinner and a man has the revolver.</p>

<p>A man has burnt the dinner and a woman has the revolver.</p>	<p>A man is unsuccessfully putting up shelves and a woman has the revolver.</p>
<p>A woman is unsuccessfully putting up shelves and a man has the revolver.</p>	<p>A man is playing violent computer games and a woman has the revolver.</p>
<p>A woman is playing violent computer games and a man has the revolver.</p>	<p>A child will not share a toy and another child has the revolver.</p>

How do you react to each of these stories?

What is it that makes each one humorous or horrifying?

Discuss as a group what it is that makes some situations socially acceptable and some not. How does our society construct our cultural norms? How does our language shape us?