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The face of noncompliance in family interaction

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Abstract: This article examines the co-construction of dispute in parent-child remedial interchanges, where preference for provocation rather than agreement exists. Employing methodologies of video ethnography, linguistic anthropology, and conversation analysis, we examine practices for dispute management in middle class Los Angeles families (1540 h of video across 32 US families were collected and examined between 2002 and 2005) as well as in (sub)-working-class families in the historic center neighborhood of the Quartieri Spagnoli in Napoli, Italy (120 h of video across six families were collected and examined between 2008 and 2010). We problematize the notion that preference structures featuring politeness and moves towards swift social equilibrium in remedial interchanges are the basic organizing principles used in family interaction. Our findings suggest that rather than quickly restoring ritual equilibrium, children can create their own “character contests” in which they compete with parents for control. In response to a child’s breach, noncompliance, or offensive action, the parents can sanction inappropriate behavior, and socialize the child into what counts, in the family culture, as morally appropriate behavior. Whereas in US middle class families, the parents pursue apologies, in Neapolitan (sub)-working-class families, the parents are more concerned about explanations and accounts for inappropriate desires and actions. There is no expectation that the children apologize for untoward behavior. Across culture and class, during adult-child socializing encounters, moral claims intersect with affective stances to develop and negotiate personhood, identity, and adherence to cultural norms.

Keywords: remedial interchanges, multimodality, affective stance, character contests, family interaction, conflict

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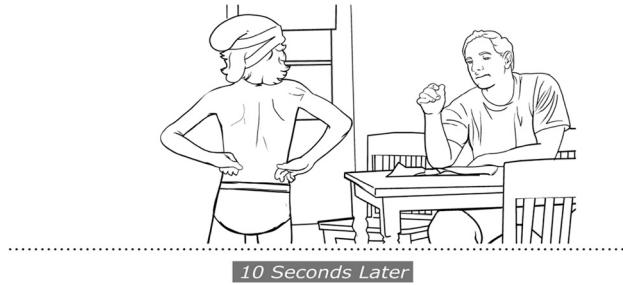
1 Introduction

Through an examination of parent-child remedial interchanges within middle-class Los Angeles and (sub)-working-class Neapolitan families, this paper explores the co-construction of dispute – through talk and the body – where preference for provocation rather than social equilibrium exists. We specifically investigate, across culture and class, alternative trajectories that remedial action (Goffman 1971) can take following a breach, offense, or face-threatening move. While parents may seek an apology, account, or compliance to restore social and moral order, children have available a range of moves to put off, problematize, or even defy the directives their parents deliver (Goodwin and Cekaite 2018: 83–104), explicitly challenging the moral trajectory their parents put into play. In addition, parents may leave ample room for noncompliance by their children within a remedial exchange, all the while, knowing the end goal is to instill moral accountability. We thus challenge the notions that orientation towards saving face (Brown and Levinson 1978), and moves towards swift ritual equilibrium (Goffman 1971) are the basic organizing principles used in remedial interchanges among family members. Within families, relations of intimacy create different sets of expectations and allow, and even call for, in some cases, the extension of conflict.

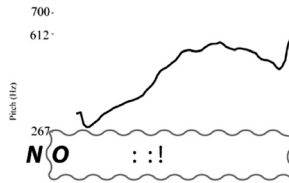
An important element in family interactions that we investigate is engaging in what Goffman (1967: 237–58) has defined as character contests: “moments of action [during which] the individual has the risk and opportunity of displaying to himself and sometimes to others his style of conduct” (Goffman 1967: 237). Symbolic challenges or “run-ins” (Goffman 1971:152–53) can occur if an offender who did an offensive deed does not provide the offended party a remedy, such as an account or an apology, with an appropriate affective stance. In fact, in middle class families studied by M. H. Goodwin (2006a; M. H. Goodwin and Cekaite 2018), it is not at all uncommon to use bald rather than mitigated initiating acts and to pursue rather than subdue conflict.

For example, in Example 1 from the US data which follows, when Father tells Jonah to go get a book for bedtime reading, Jonah replies “*Never*” and adopts an arms akimbo pose in opposition. Data are transcribed using the system developed by Gail Jefferson (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974: 731–733) with some modifications (see Appendix). Bold italics are used to indicate emphasis.

- (1) 1 Dad: **Go-** get a book.
 2 For yours-
 3 Jonah: ***Never.*** ((*defiant stance arms akimbo*))
 4 Dad: How long is ***never***.



- 5 Dad: **Listen.** You need to be in bed in 20 minutes
 6 Jonah:



- 7 Dad: If you're **not** in bed in 20 minutes
 8 1 will hunt down wherever your **gameboy** is
 9 And get it. (.) *h And it's be gone for the **week**.
 10 So **hurry** your harness.=okay?
 11 Go brush your **teeth**.

When Dad reinstates his imperative (line 5), without delay, Jonah produces a loud, unmitigated high-pitched “**NO**.” In both American and Neapolitan families, as in American (M. H. Goodwin 1990, 2006b) and Neapolitan (Loyd 2011, 2012) peer interaction, disagreement may be quite direct and arguments can be extensive rather than quickly terminated. It is through arguments, involving both moral and affective work, that children are socialized into proper ways of being and acting in the world (Duranti et al. 2011; M. H. Goodwin et al. 2012).

Through our video ethnography we investigate the artful and publicly visible everyday practices (Garfinkel 1967) through which family members work in concert with one another to carry out their routine activities. In particular, we examine diverse expectations for and trajectories of accounts (Sterponi 2003) in the midst of socializing encounters across class and cultural groups. Our analysis takes into account not only trajectories of action achieved through the in situ organization of talk, but also the body (M. H. Goodwin 2006a), and we have included frame grabs of video throughout to illustrate participants’ embodied actions. While we consider language absolutely central to investigating how families organize their everyday activities, we want to extend analysis beyond language itself to look at fully embodied practices, the learned “techniques of the body” (Mauss 1973).

Critical to developing sequences of interaction is the way in which the mutual elaboration of different types of phenomena implicated in the co-operative organization of action (C. Goodwin 2018) lead to organized change in the action itself as it unfolds through time.

The paper is organized as follows. We first address the theoretical perspectives regarding politeness theory and remedial exchanges we aim to problematize through our analysis. Next, we briefly review moves in Goffman's notion of remedial interchange, as well as outline his multimodal understanding of human interaction that guides the present study. We then provide an overview of the data from which our examples are drawn. A brief example from American data is provided to display the features of embodied interaction with which we are concerned, and then we turn to special exemplars of remedial exchanges across American and Neapolitan data sets to illustrate how culture can impact trajectories of remedial interchanges.

2 Literature review

2.1 Politeness, preference, and remedial interchanges

Politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1978: 74) has been implicit in discussions of moral accountability. Aspects of face —the desire to be ratified, understood, approved of, liked or admired —are treated as basic wants. Affronts to someone's face (Goffman 1967), through disagreement, contradiction, complaints, criticism, accusations, or disapproval are considered “face threatening acts” (Brown and Levinson 1978: 74). When one's face is threatened, an offended party can publicly acknowledge the affront by indicating that s/he thinks the other is wrong or misguided about some issue.

The offended may then initiate a “remedial interchange” (Goffman 1971: 95–187), restoring the ritual order (Goffman 1971: 119). Within Goffman's model of remedial interchange, both offended and offending parties are oriented towards a form of relatively quick closure to the series of face-threatening acts in progress. Goffman (1971: 100) in his discussion of how people in interaction orient towards the moral accountability of their actions in public life, proposes that following the infraction of a norm, the offending party is obligated to make amends for his offense and show proper regard for the process of correcting the offensive action towards the offended party, or claimant. In the face of problematic situations, where conduct threatens to disrupt joint action, *aligning actions* (Stokes and Hewitt 1976: 838, 843) restore meaningful interaction. *Accounts* (Scott and Lyman 1968:

46) may be sought or offered as a way for a social actor to explain unanticipated or untoward behavior when a breach of norms occurs.

Goffman and Brown and Levinson's notions of face have been influential in Conversation Analysis (Clayman and Heritage 2014). Conversation analysts have found that one of the enduring or implicit principles towards which participants in interaction orient is preference (Pomerantz and Heritage 2012). Disagreement is argued to be dispreferred. Thus, in responses to request sequences, rejections should be minimized. If disagreements, disconfirmations, or rejections occur, they are frequently said to be performed with delays, and mitigations (Pomerantz and Heritage 2012: 217; Schegloff et al. 1977).

As researchers of family interaction have noted (Blum-Kulka 1997; Ervin-Tripp et al. 1984; Millar et al. 1984; Varenne 1992: 76; Watts 1991: 145), parents maintain rights of high entitlement (Craven and Potter 2010; Curl and Drew 2008) vis-a-vis their children, although cultures vary with respect to the exact nature and forms of social control (Shohet 2013; Tulviste et al. 2002). Parents have the right to receive verbal deference from others, while they initiate bald control moves, without offering deference to those deemed lower in esteem (Ervin-Tripp et al. 1984:118). Blum-Kulka (1997:150) states that in the family, "unmodified directness is neutral or unmarked in regard to politeness." As argued by Craven and Potter (2010:425), asymmetry in the roles of child and parent may account for the lack of formal features of dispreference. The directness with which family members interact provides evidence of both power and connection (Tannen 2007). As Tannen (2007: 30) argues, "the relationship between power (or hierarchy) and solidarity (or connection) is not a single dimension but a multidimensional grid. We find "unmodified directness" in both the US and Italian families examined here. While parents can and often do issue bald commands, their children often challenge their parents' control moves through their own moves that escalate disagreement instead of quickly resolving it.

Goffman (1971: 119–20) provides a model for what is at stake in remedial interchanges. Goffman interprets the "ceremony" of the remedial interchange as "something closer to a minuet than a conversation." Arguing that gestures or embodied nonvocal actions are as communicative as verbal interaction, he (1971: 149) states that "we are dealing not with statements but with moves or stands or alignments that individuals take in regard to moral judgments that can be made in the situation."

Rather than focusing on a monomodal model of talk-in-interaction (Hazel et al. 2014: 3), Goffman instead invokes the image of a fully embodied person performing the remedial exchange. Such a perspective is in line with work by Kendon (2009: 363) who, in his discussion of "language's matrix," asserts:

"Every single utterance using speech employs, in a completely integrated fashion, patterns of voicing and intonation, pausing and rhythmicities, which are manifested not only audibly, but kinesically as well."

Yet while Goffman (1971: 143) provided the broad outlines of a series of moves — Deed/Remedy/Relief/Appreciation/Minimization —he did not empirically investigate the embodied actions entailed in such a project.

Through analyzing trajectories (M. H. Goodwin 2006a) of action, as well as affective stance (M. H. Goodwin et al. 2012) following a breach, in what follows we document the actual process through which children and parents argue about what constitutes transgression and/or appropriate behavior; we also document practices for making amends. In investigating forms of accountability (Sterponi 2009:442) within argument sequences, we are particularly concerned with (1) how references to moral behavior are made explicit by parents, as well as (2) how, through their affective stance, children demonstrate their attunement with the call to examine and realign their behavior.

2.2 Socialization into becoming a member of culture in Neapolitan and American families

Becoming a member and interlocutor in any community entails monitoring and understanding others' affective displays (M. H. Goodwin and C. Goodwin 2000; Ochs and Schieffelin 1989). At the earliest stages of language development, children learn to display competence in using affective terms and grammatical constructions to express feelings, moods, dispositions, and attitudes (Ochs and Schieffelin 1989). Expressive and referential functions of language are acquired in an integrated fashion.

Within Neapolitan families it is of utmost importance to be able to show that one can display emotion and be affected by others. One shows membership in the "affective community" (Pine 2008) by being skilled in the art of persuasion through quick-wittedness, appealing to people's emotions, and by using the appropriate affective displays, such as dramatic pitch contours, vowel lengthening, raised volume, and corporeally, by employing an expansive Neapolitan vocabulary of gesture, eye gaze, and body orientation. It is not only what one says during a verbal performance, but *how* one says it; in essence, the performance of one's claims becomes a moral act in and of itself. As Corsaro and Rizzo (1988) state in their work on Italian '*discussione*,' often the quality of the performance is more important than the actual outcome.

The Los Angeles families we studied differed widely with respect to how they engaged in remedial action and negotiation with their children. Lareau (2003) argues that American middle-class families cultivate extensive negotiation about all matters of life, with the exclusion of health and safety (2002:763). Fostering such discursive forms prepares children for interaction with adults within institutional frameworks beyond the family, and is thought to “maximize a child’s potential as a human being” (Lareau 2003: 120). While most CELF families did cultivate extensive (and at times playful) negotiation, some valued children’s ready compliance with parental directives without extensive debate (Fasulo et al. 2007: 23–28). As such, children’s responses to remedial action also varied. In a Japanese American family, Dad’s pointing out lack of attention to the feelings of others resulted in stances of shame on the part of his children. In other families, children defiantly and gleefully insulted their parents when parents made moves to control children’s inappropriate behavior. In these families, children’s feelings of entitlement and more equality with parents provoked acrimonious and hurtful interaction.

3 Data

The Los Angeles middle class family data are drawn from video archives of the Center for Everyday Lives of Families (CELf); CELf researchers collected between 30 and 40 h of videotape for each of the participating 32 families between 2002 and 2005 (Ochs and Kremer-Sadlik 2013). Both M. H. Goodwin and Loyd participated in the fieldwork and filming for this data base. The Neapolitan data (over 120 h of family interaction) are drawn from fieldwork conducted by Loyd (2011) over the course of 16 months in the historic center neighborhood of the Quartieri Spagnoli between 2008 and 2010. Making use of C. Goodwin’s notion of “contextual configurations” (2000), we examine how different kinds of sign phenomena in diverse semiotic fields, including speech, the body, and socially sedimented structure in the environment mutually elaborate each other during moves in remedial exchanges.

In our analysis we look first at American examples in which apologies are called for in remedial interchanges. We then turn to Neapolitan examples in which we find that “the run-in is the ritual.”

4 Analysis

4.1 Calling for an apology in American families

In the performance of remedial interchanges in the family, participants make visible their affective stance (M. H. Goodwin et al. 2012) through the use of a range of laminated multimodal resources, including posture, facial expressions, modulated features of voice (increased amplitude and higher pitch), and touch, in addition to talk. In the following sequence, when a seven-year old child makes aggressive moves, such as intentionally stepping on his mother's foot as she is tying his shoe, Mom calls for an "apology" (Example 2, line 9).

- (2) 1 Mike: ((*steps on his mother's foot as she is tying shoe*))
 2 Mom: **Ow**. Be **careful** (please.)
 3 Mike: Does it hurt?
 4 Mom: Were you trying to hurt me?
 5 Mike: No. **I** was just **trying**- to see if that **hurt**.
 6 Mom: **Why** would you need to **know** if that hurts
 7 Unless you're **trying** to **hurt** me.
 8 Mike: () ((*looks away briefly*))
 9 Mom: You **owe** me an **apology** for that.
 10 Mike: [**Sorry**.
 11 Mom: [For s- **doing** that.
 12 Mike: °Here.
 13 ((*hugs Mom while she ties her shoe,*
 14 *pats Mom's back 7 times,*
 15 *re-sits on table*))
 16 Mom: Okay. **Let's** get going,
 17 **Tha(h)nk** you. Okay?



When Mike steps on Mom's foot, she marks that an offense has occurred with (1) a response cry, "**Ow**," followed by (2) a caution to her son Mike to "be **careful**" (line 2). When Mike next asks if it hurt his mom when he stepped on her foot (line 3), she responds by asking Mike if the intent of his action (line 4) had been to hurt her. This

question provides a move priming for an apology, as it references an offense. Mike's statement that he had simply been trying to see if it hurt when he stepped on Mom's foot is found worthy of Mom's challenge: "Why would you need to **know** if it hurts unless you were **trying** to **hurt** me" (lines 6–7). With this move Mom clearly defines Mike as the offending party and herself as the offended. Mike provides no audible next move, but looks away briefly (line 8). At this point Mom (line 9) explicitly labels her move a call for an apology: "You **owe** me an **apology** for that." In his next move in response, not only does Mike say "**Sorry**," but he also provides several comforting tactile (as opposed to verbal) moves displaying his alignment of "being sorry": a hug and a series of body taps (lines 13–14). Acknowledging the offense, he thus provides closure to the sequence.

Thus, in response to the child's inappropriate act of stepping on his mother's foot, Mom attempts to socialize her child into appropriate behavior in what resembles the prototypical remedial exchange described by Goffman (1971: 95–187). Following an offensive move, the offended party requests an account or an apology to remedy the breach. In this sequence, Mike (as offender) acknowledges the breach with his move in line 10, "**Sorry**," as well as affiliative pats on his mom's back. With her "okay," Mom accepts the apology and closes off the sequence by launching a new trajectory stating "**Let's** get going." Mom provides an appreciation for the apology, ("Tha(h)nk you") for which she requests confirmation with "Okay?" Ritual order has been restored in the canonical sequence of moves: Offense, Priming move for an apology, Apology, Acceptance of the apology.

4.2 Priming for an apology

Goffman (1983: 4) argues that within a social situation, in another person's immediate presence, "individuals will necessarily be faced with personal-territory contingencies" as we bring our bodies along with us into social situations. Not only are we vulnerable to forms of "coercive exchange" or physical violence; as he states, "Similarly, in the presence of others we become vulnerable through their words and gesticulation to the penetration of our psychic preserves, and to the breaching of the expressive order we expect will be maintained in our presence" (Goffman 1983:4). Such is the case in the following example.

In Example 2, an apology from the child was forthcoming relatively quickly following a breach. However, in the next example, there is the need to prime for remedial action over several turns. In Example 3a, seven-year old Dan and Mom collide in the kitchen, as neither is looking where they are going.

(3a) ((Dan and Mom collide))

- 1 Mom: Uhm! Sorry!
- 2 Dan: BE **QUIET!**
- 3 (0.8)
- 4 Mom: **Sorry.**
- 5 (1.0)



When Dan and his mother collide in the kitchen, Mom immediately provides an apology with her statement “Sorry.” In response to Mom’s apology, rather than accepting it, Dan instead issues a bald imperative, screams to his mother to “BE **QUIET!**” (line 2, Example 3a). Mom repeats her “**Sorry**” apology (line 3). However, her move receives no acceptance in return, as in canonical remedial exchange forms (Goffman 1971: 143) and the sequence does not reach closure.

In fact, a moment later (Example 3b, lines 1 and 2), in a move of moral outrage, the sequence escalates, as Dan loudly and defiantly accuses his mother of hitting him in the eye.

- (3b)
- 1 Dan: LOTS OF PEOPLE HIT ME IN MY **EYE**.
 - 2 NOW IT'S **YOU**.
 - 3 Mom: **EXCUSE** ME? Who are **YOU** talking to.
 - 4 I know you might be **mad**. =
 - 5 **Mommy** didn't do it on **purpose**.
 - 6 So don't **talk** to me like that.
 - 8 It's not **okay**.
 - 9 Y'jus- (.) Got it?
 - 10 Okay? That's not **nice**.
 - 11 (1.2)
 - 13 Okay? Mom didn't do it on **purpose**.
 - 12 Dan: ((stamps feet as leaves the room))



Mom immediately responds that Dan’s angry action was inappropriate (“**EXCUSE** ME? Who are **YOU** talking to.”) (line 3, Example 3b). She explicitly challenges him on his manner of talking to her, categorizing his act as outside the bounds of the

way a child should address his mother. The directness and anger of her reprimand mirrors the directness and indignation in Dan's accusation. Both parties treat the other as the offending party.

Dan displays indifference as he looks down at the counter, ignoring his mother's gaze. In the absence of a move by Dan accounting for his behavior, Mom provides a move that categorizes Dan's affective alignment as being "mad" at her. Subsequently she provides a justification for her own actions, stating that her collision with him was not intentional: "**Mommy** didn't do it on **purpose**."

Within remedial exchanges, the offending party is obligated to provide a move which displays appropriate affective alignment towards the offense. In the absence of any upcoming move towards apology from Dan, Mom upgrades her reprimands, intensifying the coerciveness of her actions. She not only recycles her directive (line 6) but also categorizes his actions as outside the bounds of acceptable behavior, with two assessments of his behavior, stating "It's not **okay**." (line 8) and "That's not **nice**." (line 10). She further insists on confirmation (and participation in the sequence) from Dan with "Got it?" (line 9) and "**Okay**?" (lines 10 and 13). Mom also uses embodied actions to further intensify the seriousness of her actions by moving closer to Dan, positioning her face on the same level as his, while putting her arm around Dan's waist (see line 10). However, Dan ignores all of his mom's upgraded priming moves, and in response, angrily stomps his feet loudly as he leaves the room (line 12).

When Dan returns several minutes later (Example 3c), Mom, once again, actively pursues an explicit affective stance from Dan towards the offense:

- (3c) 1 Mom: Here. (1.0) H- ((*hands waffle to Daniel*))
 2 Daniel: °Thank you **so: much**.=
 3 Mom: You're **welcome**.
 4 Mom: And you owe me an **apology**
 5 for **talking** to me like that.
 6 (2.5)
 7 Mom: **Look** at my **eyes**.=
 8 Daniel: This is **my** syrup.
 9 Mom: °uh Daniel.
 10 Daniel: This is [**my** syrup.
 11 Mom: [Nuh uh:: **I'll** make you another one.=**Listen**.
 12 Mom: **You** owe me- **Look** at me. (0.5)
 13 You owe me an **apology** for **talking** to me like that.



With the extension of the remedial exchange in Example 3c we witness an explicit invocation of a norm about appropriate affective behavior —that a child should not

talk with anger or disrespect to his mother. Mom calls for a particular participation framework and facing formation (Kendon 1985) within which the remedial action should occur as she says “**Look** at my **eyes**.” (line 7) and “**Look** at me” (line 12). She further demands an appropriate affective stance by recycling her request for an apology (line 4) once more (line 13): “You owe me an **apology** for **talking** to me like that.” Through her actions Mom explicitly socializes an apology that is an affectively- and bodily-appropriate interactional move. Dan does eventually weakly acknowledge that an apology is owed with “I know” (line 14, Example 3d).

- (3d) 14 Daniel: I know.
 15 Mom: Okay. Look at me in the **eye** and say it.
 16 (5.0)
 17 Mom: **Look** at me. **You** can to it.
 18 Say “I’m sorry Mom.”
 19 (3.0)
 20 Daniel: **Sorry**.
 21 Mom: Okay. I don’t **like** that.
 22 (1.8)
 23 Mom: Okay? Thank you.



In Example 3d, though Dan acknowledges that an apology is owed, he does not produce an apology. Mom once more recycles her demand for a particular posture and facing formation from her son (lines 15, 17); she asks that he look her directly in the eye. Mom then prompts her son, even providing the exact words with which to execute his apology: “Say ‘I’m sorry Mom’” (line 18). He eventually does respond to her multiple primings and the explicit prompt with a weak “**Sorry**” (line 20) though not in a way that displays full engagement. Mom next explicitly tells Dan that she does not like this form of behavior (line 21). Such a move socializes the child into knowing how their actions affect the parent.

In this sequence we witness the escalation of a character contest in which Dan refuses to accept his mother’s apology, and instead yells an abrasive command. The raised volume and high pitch of Dan’s talk is matched by Mother’s return action. Eventually Dan stalked out of the encounter in a huff, a form of embodied action through which Dan can construct himself as the offended party (Goffman 1971: 152). Brown and Levinson (1978) argue that actions such as orders, threats, or criticisms are considered face-threatening, in that they neither protect one’s positive face (the desire to be approved of) or negative face (the desire to be unimpeded). Here both actors interpreted the scene as one in which one’s face was threatened, and the sequence was extended for some time before an apology from Dan was forthcoming.

Thus, a range of possibilities occur following a breach in American families. In Example 1 we witnessed an orientation towards rather quick restoration of the ritual order. Alternatively, in Examples 2 and 3 we found children creating their own extended “character contests” (Goffman 1967: 237–58) in which they compete with parents over who is in control, displaying strong affective stance. While remedial exchanges are intended to transform what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable (Goffman 1971: 109), an alternative “moral game” (Goffman 1967: 240) one may play allows the individual to assert strong character. Such “border disputes” can be “bought out and indulged in (often with glee) as a means of establishing where one’s boundaries are” (Goffman 1967: 241).

Similar forms of extended disputes, in which strong character is displayed, occur in the Neapolitan context, to which we turn next.

4.3 The run-in *is* the ritual: Neapolitan examples

Among (sub)-working-class families in the historic center of Napoli, Italy, as in the middle-class American families discussed above, children’s protests are common moves during remedial interchanges. There is not, however, the same expectation that a child should speak respectfully to a parent; nor is there an expectation that the child should apologize. In stark contrast to Goffman’s (1971) position that run-ins are the exception in everyday interaction, among the Neapolitan *quartieran*’ (ordinary inhabitants of the Quartieri Spagnoli), both in the family and the wider community, there is actually a *preference* to engage in run-ins, even in situations that are associated with remedial interchanges. Family members draw from a deep pool of linguistic (e.g. directives, threats, accusations, insults, justifications, rhetorical questions, joking, metaphors, wit, irony) and paralinguistic devices (e.g. vowel lengthening, prosody, and a Neapolitan vocabulary of gestures) to question and challenge one another, call each other out for their mistakes and character flaws, and hold one another morally accountable for their actions. This often occurs through quick-witted comebacks – all part and parcel of the family “interaction ritual.”

In these Neapolitan families, run-ins create moral spaces for family members to problem solve, debate, convince, and be fully involved in what Pine (2008: 217) calls the “affective community,” a community based on “the rush of affect that pulls individuals towards one another.” In Pine’s (2008: 217) discussion of *sceneggiata* – a Neapolitan practice defined as a “hyperbolically emotional display intended to garner sympathy, persuade or distract” – emotional spectacles, full of irony and melodrama, are the “operational aesthetic” where pleasure is derived from attempting to distinguish fraud from “truth.” That is, individuals can

appreciate a good performance, be moved by it, and then agree to be persuaded by it. Pine argues that it is not actual words that matter in a narrative performance, but *how* the performance is done and how that performance *affects* the addressee. In the end, Neapolitans want to be emotionally moved in some way, in any way. As such, these so-called disruptive run-ins are the ritual in *quartieran'* families.

The excerpts below highlight a few minutes of a 56-minute run-in between the mother and the daughter of the Esposito family, where we see how, exactly, *quartieran'* family members hold one another morally accountable through use of their affectively charged voices and bodies. Included is a tremendous amount of improvisational creativity where the mother and the daughter engage in interplay with one another (Sawyer 2001) before an equilibrium of social and moral order is achieved. Instead of using simple negations through dismissals and denials, they often employ “yes and” quick-witted comebacks, in which they accept the validity of the other’s logic but then throw that very logic back at their interlocutor to ‘one-up’ them, prolonging the conflict routine. In addition, we will see that Mom does not shut her daughter down immediately to get her on task. Instead, Mom allows a lengthy disagreement to occur that includes such strategies as affectively charged justifications, response cries, and negative person descriptors. In addition, she uses indirect strategies, such as rhetorical questions, sarcasm, and third person reference to address her interlocutor, as well as a range of clever comebacks to shift blame when trying to achieve her daughter’s compliance within the remedial interchange.

The run-in begins when 12-year-old Anna tells her mother that she no longer wants to wash Lucky, the family dog, after previously having agreed to wash him. Instead of taking steps towards remedial moves, Anna simply objects to the task. In Example 4a, Mom is trying to figure out why Anna has changed her mind, and asks Anna repeatedly for an account (the transcription convention, “~~”, denotes sing-song voice).

(4a) Mom (46), Anna (12), and Lucky, the dog.

1. Anna: Nun ‘o vogl’ lavà.
I don’t want to wash him.
2. Mom: Over’? E p’cché?
Oh really? And why (not)?
3. Anna: Eh. Nun ‘o vogl’ lavà.
Yes (really). I don’t want to wash him.
4. Mom: E p’**cché**?
And **why**?
5. Anna: P’cché nun ‘o vogl’ lavà.
Because I don’t want to wash him.

6. Mom: Eh no jà, rici perché, mo' t'vatt' proprio.
No, come on, say why now [or] I'll really punish you.
7. Anna: P'cché nun 'o vogl' lavà. M'appuzz' l'ntisc'.
Because I don't want to wash him. He'll stink me up.
8. Mom: We, jà muovati **SCE'**
Jeez, let's go, move yourself, **SILLY/IDIOT!**
9. Anna: ~~NO ↑MA! A' **CH↑I::?**~~
~~NO ↑MOM! NO W↑A::Y!~~

In a tone of confidence, and without any apology, Anna tells Mom she does not want to wash the dog (line 1). Mom takes up a stance of resistance through her deep, authoritative tone of voice, while simultaneously allowing room for her daughter's reasoning. By utilizing the "interrogative challenge" (Goffman 1971: 154) "Oh really?", Mom's "Why not?" demands an account, since Anna does not offer any excuse as to why she has changed her mind (line 2).

After Mom asks her daughter why she does not want to wash Lucky, Anna recycles her previous reasoning with no explanation or account. She employs what Piaget (1926:66) would deem a 'primitive argument,' stating she simply does not want to wash him (line 3). Key to moral accountability among family members in Napoli, similar to other Italian communities (Sterponi 2009), is securing an account for the offender's untoward behavior. As such, Mom asks Anna "And *why?*". However, Anna continues with her circular argument (line 5). Mom, not accepting the response, demands an answer using a conditional threat of punishment (Van Rooij and Franke 2012), upgrading the force of her directive to coerce Anna to answer her ("No, come on, say why now, [or] I'll really punish you"). The affective upgrade is successful, and Anna finally offers *an* account (with absolutely no remorse) for why she does not want to wash the dog: the dog's stink will migrate to her body if she touches him (line 7). As such, Anna finally accepts responsibility for the broken promise but claims that she would be the victim here and the dog the offender.

Mom challenges her daughter's logic through a response cry ("Jeez") and the issuing of two directives ("let's go, move yourself"), to get her moving on the task. Mom then deploys an affectively charged negative person descriptor commonly used in the community ("**SILLY/IDIOT**"), which simultaneously opposes Anna's prior action and negatively evaluates her behavior (line 8) (M. H. Goodwin 1990, 2006b). Anna, recognizing that Mom is not accepting "no" for an answer, challenges Mom through a strong affective stance, including raised volume, vowel

lengthening, and a high-pitch, sing-songy, lamenting voice to scream “~~NO MOM! NO **WA::Y!** ~~”

At this point, Mom shifts strategies. In Example 4b, she turns to grammatical indirection by employing a rhetorical question in the third person (“But is this one an *idiot?*”), a tactic used among the *quartieran’* to persuade others to modify their behavior (Loyd 2011). A rhetorical question is a figure of speech in the form of a (sarcastic) question posed for its persuasive effect without an expectation of a reply (Ilie 1994). It is a grammatically indirect strategy, yet so culturally conventionalized that, pragmatically, it is very direct.

- (4b)
1. Mom: ((*Mom walks towards Anna*)) Ma è **scem’** chest’?
But is this one an *idiot?*
 2. Anna: Nun ‘o vogl’ lavà. Mi sfaster’.
I don’t want to wash him! Don’t feel like it.
 3. Mom: Eh, sì.
Of course [you don’t]. ((*Sarcastic tone*))
 4. Anna: Doj’ or’ for’ e manc’ tras’.
Two hours outside and he still hasn’t come in.
 5. Mom: Eh sì, sa p’cche tu c’hai fatto capì ca l’he a lavà, p’cciò.
Of course he knows because you let him know that you had to wash him, that’s why.

While making an “off record” Face Threatening Act (Brown and Levinson 1978: 211) through grammatical indirection of a rhetorical question (line 1, “But is this one an *idiot?*”), Mom also switches the participation framework (C. Goodwin and M. H. Goodwin 2004) by complaining about her daughter in the third person, ostensibly addressing an audience. This is done while walking towards Anna, leaving it up to Anna to decide how to interpret it. And by uttering the demonstrative pronoun “this one,” Mom adds an extra layer of negative affect to the statement, as demonstrative pronouns in Neapolitan, as well as Italian, index distance and a lack of empathy (Duranti 1984). Anna interprets that she is the target of all of Mom’s grammatical indirection and answers back immediately: “I don’t want to wash him! Don’t feel like it” (line 2, Example 4b). “Don’t feel like it” (“*Mi sfaster*”) is an auto-response account used by *quartieran’* whenever they do not want to do something. It is an excuse based on one’s own personal desires rather than on an account that addresses the needs of the situation at hand. Mom responds to this uninspired account with an annoyed, sarcastic tone: “Of course (you don’t).”

It is here that Anna provides another piece of the puzzle: it is not her fault but the dog’s fault, as he has been outside running around for two hours and has not come in yet. Anna shifts the blame to the dog, stating her case that she should not

be held accountable (line 4, Example 4b). Mom actually accepts this logic at base, and responds to her daughter's account by giving intentionality to the dog, claiming that he has not come home because Anna has let him know that she needed to wash him (line 5, Example 4b). Instead of simply negating Anna's statement, Mom makes a quick comeback harder to achieve by skillfully validating and then transforming Anna's logic to shift the blame back to Anna.

In Example 4c, line 1 below, Mom utters "Just wait" and appears to threaten Anna. (Unfortunately, the TV volume is loud while Mom whispers this utterance, making the rest of the utterance unintelligible.) In line 2, in a dramatic, embodied affective stance, Anna turns toward Mom, raises her voice, and angrily yells in a sing-song cadence "~~BUT I DON'T WANT TO WASH HIM, WHAT DO I CARE IF HE **STINKS**?~~" accompanied by a 'grappolo' finger bunch gesture, signifying "What are you talking about?" (de Jorio 1832; Kendon 2004).

(4c)



1. Mom: Mo aspé (())
Just wait (())
2. Anna: ((Turns toward Mom with furrowed brow))
~~MA I' NUN 'O VOGL' LAVÀ! MA CH' M' N' FOTT' A ME CH'
FET?~~
~~BUT I DON'T WANT TO WASH HIM! WHAT DO I CARE
IF HE **STINKS**?~~
3. Anna: T' PIAC' RO FA ASCÌ!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO LIKES HIM TO GO OUT!

- Anna: 4. ((*Bratty tone and disinterested stance*)) I' nun t' 'o
vogl' lavà.
I don't want to wash him for you.



5. Mom: ((*Looks at Anna*)) ~~E **guà**! Bell' e buon'!~~
~~And **look at her**! All of a sudden [she changed her
mind]!~~
6. Mom: ~~Fin' e mo' 'o vuleva lava!~~
~~Up until now she wanted to wash him!~~
7. Anna: M' sfaster' fet', fet'.
Don't feel like it. He stinks. He stinks.

After Anna yells that she does not want to wash the dog (line 2, Example 4c), she uses a rhetorical question and sing-song cadence to claim that it is not her problem that Lucky stinks (“~~WHAT DO I CARE IF HE **STINKS**?~~”). This sing-song cadence is a Neapolitan rhetorical strategy that connotes an oppositional stance, used to open up an argument and immediately shut it down. The switching of frames makes it harder for her interlocutor to provide a comeback. In line 3, Anna then utilizes a different strategy to defeat her mother in this character contest; she blames Mom herself for letting the dog roam the streets and get stinky in the first place. In doing so, Anna is claiming no responsibility for the dirty dog, and therefore should not be held accountable to wash it. In line 4, she goes even a step further by stating, “I don’t want to wash him for you.” Up until now, Anna has only stated that she does not want to wash Lucky. Through this grammatical choice, Anna orients to the task as doing a favor for her mother, obviously something she is not interested in doing. By issuing this blame at Mom, Anna now makes Mom the offender, and Anna the victim, being forced to do Mom’s dirty work.

In response to Anna's accusation, Mom simultaneously looks at Anna and says, “~~And **look at her!**~~”, thus negatively evaluating her daughter's shameful behavior. Again, Mom uses third person indirection, layered with a sing-song cadence, which displays a strong oppositional stance and imbues the statement with negative moral undertones. Mom then adds, “~~All of a sudden [she changed her mind]! Up until now she wanted to wash him!~~” (lines 5 and 6, Example 4c), insinuating that Anna has gone against her word. In doing so, Mom is trying to hold her daughter morally accountable for the wrongdoing and persuade her to change her mind.

Mom is once again unsuccessful, and Anna offers one last justification as to why she will not wash the dog; she thinks that it is enough responsibility that she washes herself and should not be held accountable for another's body.

- (4d)
1. Anna: Basta ch' m' lav' ij.
It's enough that I wash myself.
 2. Mom: E 'mbe? T' appuzzulia ccà dint.'
And so? [Even if you wash yourself,] you'll stink up again
here in the house [because the dog is not washed].

When Anna states, “It's enough that I wash myself,” Mom, once again, accepts her daughter's logic at base, but uses the opportunity to teach Anna about moral responsibility of the self and others. Mom notes that there will be implications for being selfish, as Lucky's stink will affect Anna's body if she were to only take care of herself. With this utterance, Mom uses a piece of Anna's prior logic about stink migration against her. Within this remedial interchange, Mom teaches her daughter that even if she thinks of herself as a bounded individual who only needs to be responsible for herself, she is not sheltered from the world that will always affect her. In the end, Anna does end up washing (and blow drying) Lucky with great care and concern, and social and moral equilibrium is indeed restored.

4.4 Leaving room for a run-in

The above run-in during a remedial interchange demonstrates the cultural norm of extended adult-child conflicts with dramatic affective stances and persuasive techniques in the development of moral personhood in Napoli. Counter to what Goffman (1971) claims, in the Quartieri Spagnoli, run-ins are not exceptions to the rule or “disruptive” to the ritual work of everyday interaction and remedial interchanges. Rather, challenges, counter-attacks, and the escalation of negative affect are expected and preferred during adult-child socialization encounters.

Participating in theatrical, aggravated encounters, or a more intense version of what Corsaro and Rizzo (1988) would call '*discussione*,' allows for individual creativity, and is a valued, essential part of family communication. It indexes that one has an intimate bond. When one does not care to argue or challenge, it signals that they do not care enough about the other person to even bother engaging with them. One finds solidarity in the production of disagreement (M. H. and C. Goodwin 1987, M. H. Goodwin 1990) rather than in apologies or in minimizing offenses. These performances often endure for long periods of time and include a multitude of rhetorical strategies, including dramatic affective stances. The game is to persuade. Even when remedial work is finally carried out between social un-equals within a defined power structure, such as between a mother and a daughter, with the mother ultimately having the final say, considerable space is left open for the ritual dance of a run-in.

In addition, Anna is not only being socialized into the appropriateness of using a rich repertoire of rhetorical strategies to influence others' behavior and attitudes, (showing a range of emotion from anger to disinterest), but also into participating in logic games. Anna is given plenty of space to state her case through argumentation – incorporating many accounts and excuses, many of which are taken up as valid at base. As such, in this run-in, we do not see a preference to remedy the situation quickly so that equilibrium can be restored immediately. Nor do we see a request for an apology from Anna, or a demand to be more polite. What we see is Mom and Anna deploying a feast of strategies to display strong affective stances – directives, threats, rhetorical questions, negative person descriptors, accusations, dramatic cadence, raised volume, and gesture – all layered with sarcasm and indirection to frame for one another their affective intentions and to state their case. In the Quartieri Spagnoli, children are left ample opportunity to develop virtuosity in character contests, crafty comebacks, and blame games that build upon the logic of their interlocutors. Despite being given considerable room for a battle of stance within remedial interchanges, in the end, children are held accountable and are taught what is morally acceptable in the family and beyond.

5 Conclusion

Our analysis challenges basic notions about an orientation towards face-saving and mitigating disagreement in everyday conversation that have dominated work in conversation analysis for some time. Pomerantz (1984), in her analysis of assessments, found that disagreement was a dispreferred activity; its occurrence was minimized through use for phenomena such as (1) delays before the production of a disagreement and (2) prefaces that mitigate the disagreement. By way of contrast,

in our analysis of disputes and remedial interchanges in families in the USA and in Napoli, we do not find such delays before the production of oppositional moves to directives. Disagreement is highlighted rather than mitigated. While some disputes end quickly, others are quite extended, with escalating volume, pitch, and forms of embodied opposition. In the co-construction of character contests in parent-child dispute we find ample evidence of a preference for provocation rather than for agreement. Aggravated affective stances within adult-child encounters can serve as critical tools to extend argument, rather than quickly resolve remedial work or achieve social equilibrium, for the purpose of teaching moral accountability and developing moral personhood.

Parents and children create environments for each other (McDermott 1976) in the midst of trajectories of remedial interchanges. These vary in terms of family culture. US middle class parents pursue apologies. In (sub)-working-class families in Napoli, parents are more concerned about explanations and accounts for inappropriate desires and actions. They tend to not request or expect apologies from children during remedial exchanges. Through embodied practices (i.e. hugs that signal reconciliation, foot stomps, arms akimbo, ‘grappolo’ finger bunch gestures, elevated pitch and volume that display righteous indignation and defiance, body alignment that shows indifference and distancing), children and parents negotiate and socialize one another into different interaction orders, ones in which the face of the other can either be protected or, alternatively, defied. These interaction orders are characterized by different forms of emotion regulation (Mesquita and Albert 2007; Thompson and Meyer 2007), resulting from the sequencing of actions as well as display of affect. These disputes provide engrossment through the wit and strategy required to sustain them. And, most importantly, they are aligned with diverse language games which socialize children into culturally appropriate forms of human sociality and moral behavior, ways of being and dwelling in the world.

Appendix

Transcription conventions

Data are generally transcribed according to the system developed by Jefferson and described in Sacks et al. (1974: 731–733). The following are the features most relevant to the present analysis.

1. Low Volume: A degree sign indicates that talk it precedes is low in volume (°word°)

2. High Volume: Capital letters indicate speech is produced loudly in comparison to other talk (WORD)
3. Bold Italics: Italics indicate some form of emphasis, which may be signaled by changes in pitch and/or amplitude (**word**)
4. Cut-off: A dash marks a sudden cut-off of the current sound (wor-)
5. Overlap Bracket: A left bracket marks the point at which the current talk is overlapped by other talk. Two speakers beginning to speak simultaneously are shown by a left bracket at the beginning of a line ([Word])
6. Lengthening: Colons indicate that the sound immediately preceding has been noticeably lengthened (wo:::rd)
7. Intonation: Punctuation symbols are used to mark intonation changes rather than as grammatical symbols:
 - A period indicates a falling contour (word.)
 - A question mark indicates a rising contour (word?)
 - A comma indicates a falling-rising contour (word,)
 - An exclamation point indicates that the utterance is delivered emphatically (word!)
8. Latching: The equal signs indicate 'latching'; there is no interval between the end of a prior turn and the start of a next piece of talk (=word)
9. Inbreath: A series of h's preceded by an asterisk marks an inbreath (*hhh) Without the asterisk the h's mark an outbreath (hhh)
10. Comments: Double parentheses enclose material that is not part of the talk being transcribed: for example, a comment by the transcriber if the talk was spoken in some special way, an action of a participant, or a particular embodied stance ((word))
11. Silence: Numbers in parentheses mark silences in seconds and tenths of seconds. A micro-pause is indicated with a period inside parentheses: (.)
12. Increased pitch: An arrow at the beginning of a word indicates increased pitch on a particular syllable. (↑word)
13. Problematic Hearing: Material in parentheses indicates a hearing that the transcriber was uncertain about (word)
14. Breathiness, Laughter: An h in parentheses indicates plosive aspiration, which could result from events such as breathiness, laughter, or crying. (W(h)ord)
15. Sing-song: Tildes indicate sing-song voice (~~ word~~)
16. Pitch tracks are utilized so that changes in the pitch of speaker can be visualized with respect to hertz. Wavy lines around part of an utterance underneath the pitch track indicate a part of the utterance to which reader should pay particular attention

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