Article

Social Practices and Embubblement

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Abstract: The present contribution describes the nature of social practices based on habitual behavior. The first part concerns the notion of "habit" from a perspective that crosses philosophy and science. Habits structure our daily life and possess a social nature, as shown by informally shared habits and institutionalized rituals. After a brief reference to the philosophical debate, we point out the fundamental dimensions of habitual behavior, i.e., routine and goal-directed behavior. They also characterize shared social habits like rituals because we need to: (a) simply follow social institutional practices and (b) actively cooperate to reach a certain goal. Our descriptive strategy aims at promoting the aspect of "control" in habitual behavior, namely, the possibility of accepting or refusing to do something. This control does not work in many pathological cases and cases of auto-illusion. The second part of the article will illustrate the interesting but disregarded case of the epistemic and moral embubblement, explaining it as an individual cognitive process and as a specific social practice that once followed or institutionalized becomes a shared practice routinely performed. The main features of an epistemic bubble concern the widespread situation in which the cognitive agents always resolve the tension between their thinking that they know *P* and their knowing *P* in favor of knowing that *P*". The related case of the moral bubble indicates the situation in which agents are potentially or actually violent and unaware of it. This cognitive process expresses how difficulties in recognizing one's own violence leads to disregarding the possible or actual inflicted harm: in this case, a process of what can be called "autoimmunity" is at play. We will contend that the concept of moral bubble can provide an integrated and unified perspective able to interpret in a novel way many social practices in which morality and violence are intertwined.

Keywords: social practices; goal-directed behavior; moral bubbles; habits; rituals

1. Introduction

Social practices are the core of our human identity; they depart from a biological dimension that we share with non-human beings but appear to be very peculiar and complex. Standardly, we think social practices in terms of shared practices that once followed or institutionalized are routinely performed. They are characterized by the process of integration of different types of elements such as bodily and mental activity, material artifacts, knowledge, emotions, and skills [1]. It is interesting to also consider the phenomenon of embubblement that generates autoimmunity and violence.

The philosophical debate on the nature and function of social practices is very lively. It is the main topic of American Pragmatism (Dewey, James, Mead, Peirce), which is inherited from contemporary Analytic Pragmatism, that fruitfully rereads important ideas from analytic philosophy (Brandom). There are studies on the nature of experience that are different from classical empiricism and refer to processes that also characterize those human aspects in their continuous relationship with their natural and social environments. By following Dewey, we can say that human beings express their nature in social practices, namely, those practices that represent the main issue of the studies of "practice theory" (Shatzki and Reckwitz). It investigates the dimensions of our relationship with environment and the

aspects that become routinized: our social environment is routinely created using tools, languages, and bodily activities. Important studies focus on "Collective Intentionality" starting from the theories of Searle, Tuomela, Bratman, and Gilbert[1] [2,3]. Even though we have here explicit theorization of shared practices and the introduction of the term "Collective Intentionality" or We-Intentionality, there are historical sources in sociology and phenomenology that are largely recognized.

Social practices are worth investigating in a trans-disciplinary way because of the multiplicity of skills, capacities, and activities they involve. There exist interrelations between science, ethics, and social practices. Several studies establish fruitful connections between biological dimensions and social practices in their virtual environment. Moral reflection on social practices brings to the evaluation of AI and its applications, which appear to be crucial for our future [4].

Social practices are a crucial topic to understand human nature also in continuation with natural life. We think that habits and rituals are central notions for these investigations and, in this case, we need to propose theories that cross different disciplines. There are precise routines in the mechanisms underlying the cognitive dynamics of research routine. Referring to animal and human learning, we can observe value-based habitual and goal-directed systems in social learning that help the implementation in artificial agents [5]. Social practices are shaped as rituals especially if we consider the processes that lead to the creation and the stabilization of institutions. There are cognitive aspects of rituals that reveal human nature in its connection with communities and natural environment [6]. Social practices show the intertwining between knowledge and ignorance. We can integrate studies in sociology, psychology, and psychiatry to describe the phenomenon of "embubblement", which grounds autoimmunity and observe the relationship between morality and violence [7].

2. Social Practices as Social Habits

Practice theorists generally share a conception of social or cultural structures as existing only through their continued reproduction in practices, they differ extensively in the consideration of the degree of stability that practices can sustain. Bourdieu [8] investigates the conditioning associated with a particular class of conditions of existence that produces "habitus" that create systems for social stability and order. There are interesting perspectives on conformity to social norms (Haugeland, Dreyfus, Foucault, Schatzi, Brandom) that point to human learning. Some practice theorists (Bordieu, Dreyfus, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Todes) emphasize the role of bodily agency, intentionality, expressiveness, and affective responses and maintain that individual actions are shaped by social practices and the social norms they embody and often recognize the body as the primary target of social normalization and the exercise of power (Foucault).

Other authors investigate social practices starting from the role of language in social life and give rise to different perspectives (Austin, Foucault, Quine, Derrida, Taylor and Brandom). We can point out the role of substantive commitments shared by the scientific community (Kuhn, Toulon, Feyerabend, Polanyi). Differently, Steve Fuller supports the embodiment of knowledge in linguistic and other social practices that are reproduced from context to context through the continuous adaptation of knowledge to social circumstances with few systemic checks for mutual coherence. It is the very nature of this knowledge that prevents to accept the persistence of uniform patterns as a mindset, a worldview, or even a proposition through repeated transmissions in time and space.

Beyond the practice theory based on bodily skills and habits, Robert Brandom concentrates on the role of ordinary language to investigate the nature of human practices and their continuity and difference with non-human practices. By following Analytic Pragmatism (AP), ordinary language becomes the meta-vocabulary to grasp the norma-

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[1] On the debate about Collective Intentionality see [2,3].

tivity of human discursive practices, and this move is represented by the phenomenon of "bootstrapping" [9]:

[...] pragmatic metavocabularies exist that differ significantly in their expressive power from the vocabularies for the deployment of which they specify sufficient practices-or-abilities. I will call that phenomenon "pragmatic expressive bootstrapping".

Human discursive practices cannot be logically elaborated by the model of AP to be implemented in machines and they also differ from animal rationality. According to AP, there are two abilities typical of systems that can deploy an autonomous vocabulary: (1) the ability to respond differentially to some sentence-tokenings as expressing claims the system is disposed to assert as it recognizes the link between the expression and the object and (2) the ability to respond differentially to inferences that rely on sets of sentences in the form of premises and conclusions. If we want to sort inferences into good or bad, we must focus on the conditionals that are necessary to deploy an autonomous vocabulary describing human practices. What is the relationship between these abilities? By hypothesis, the system ought to show (a) the ability to differentially respond to the inference from p (premise) to q (conclusion) by accepting or rejecting it and (b) the ability to produce tokenings of p and q in the form of asserting [9] pp. 45–46:

Saying that if something is copper then it conducts electricity is a new way of doing—by saying—what one was doing before endorsing the material inference from "that is copper" to "That conducts electricity". Conditionals make explicit something that otherwise was implicit in the practical sorting of non-logical inferences into good and bad. Where before one could only in practice talk or treat inferences as good or bad, after the algorithmic introduction of conditionals one can endorse or reject the inference by explicitly saying something, by asserting or denying the corresponding conditionals. What the conditional says explicitly is what one endorsed by doing what one did.

Along the line of the Fregean semantics, conditionals represent the paradigm of the expressive logic of AP, but conditionals are to be investigated in ordinary language as they get their normativity through the use of concepts embedded in linguistic expressions. Consequently, the meaning-use analysis provides an account of conditionals that specifies the genus of which logical vocabulary is a species. This theoretical option is based on a notion of material inference that implies the fundamental primacy of the use of concepts embedded in linguistic expressions. When we learn a language, we begin to master the meaning of linguistic expressions and their inferential relations. Therefore, the universal language is represented by ordinary language instead of a purely logical one.

We want to highlight two characteristics Brandom ascribes to his own account: "semantic transparency" and "analytical efficacy". The "semantic transparency" is because we do not need to use notions such as definability, translatability, reducibility, supervenience, or whatever because our social practices are meaningful starting from inferential material commitments embedded in linguistic expressions and expressed in the use of conditionals. For example, there is no interest in the claim that culinary vocabulary supervenes on chemical vocabulary; on the contrary, it is important to know the moves to cook a typical dish and to have codified recipes to let other people know our culinary habits.

The second criterium is the "analytical efficacy" of expressive logic. Logic establishes the semantic relation between vocabularies, and we have, according to Brandom, a much more powerful "glue" available to stock together and articulate what is expressed by the target vocabulary. Logic has an expressive task: to show the inferential relations entailed by the use of concepts used in the vocabulary we are considering. AP implies that inferential practices are necessary to deploy every vocabulary we use in our ordinary life. We ought to follow conditionals governed by material inference such as "If Vic is a dog then Vic is a mammal" or "If this ball is red then it is not green". The validity of a material inference is given by the correct use of concepts such as "dog" and "mammal" not just by the use of the logical form "If...then...". An example of conditional applied to the religious practice is "if you are a good Christian then you ought to go to Mass". It entails a material inference embedded in a social norm like the inferential pattern "If I am a bank employee I ought to

wear a necktie" (because "Bank employees are obliged [required] to wear neckties" is a social norm).

Steven Levine [10] points out the limits of the Brandomian model to grasp the nature of human behavior in the social context and proposes to start from a deep analysis of the notion of "habit" as proposed by Bordieu. However, we can look at a more powerful account based on the Aristotelian study on the dimensions of habitual behavior. This account can be considered in continuity with human behavior in social practices where agents cooperate in the construction of cultural and institutional contexts. Goal-directed behavior is observable in humans and other animals. Recent studies from cognitive neuroscience, biology, and psychology share theoretical assumptions on the description of goal-directed i.e., intentional action in terms of (brain, computational) structures and mechanisms. They conclude that several cognitive capabilities across the individual and social domains, including action planning and execution, understanding others' intentions, cooperation, and imitation are essentially goal-directed [11].

To form habits, we need goal representations both in individual and social contexts. They have the function to plan and control action. Action understanding and imitation are performed on the goal level rather than on the movement one. Many studies indicate a close link between (socio)cognitive abilities and situated action and elucidate their neural support and mechanisms based on the motor system that is highly engaged in anticipatory, simulative, and generative processes. We can extend this view to propose an interesting speculative perspective on this predictive mechanism that could provide both a "linkage with the future" required for taking goal-directed action and a "linkage with others" required to act socially. We observe that recent studies invite to a profound rethinking of basic concepts of cognitive and behavioral sciences because there is convergence on a motor-based (or action-based) view of cognition across disciplines. They describe the abilities of action execution, its planning and understanding of others' intentions as essentially goal-directed and served by the same representations, which are action-oriented and deeply involve the motor apparatus.

From a philosophical perspective, we can try to intend social practices as routines and goal-directed behavior characterizing dimensions of collective intentionality. The debate on we-intentionality started from the brilliant works of John Searle, Raimo Tuomela, Margareth Gilbert, Michael Bratman, and Philip Pettit in the field of social ontology. The so-called "central problem" resides in a plausible account of we-intentionality in its relationship with individual intentionality and gives rise to different solutions (reductionism vs. anti-reductionism). We suggest a possible solution by investigating the dimensions of the notion of habit and its extension to the social context if we intend social practices as routines and goal-directed behaviors.

We can also observe collective intentionality in non-human animals, but human beings possess a different form of we-intentionality as the research conducted by the anthropologist Tomasello clearly shows. Moreover, humans need conventional devices that are mutually recognized in ordinary life. Social practices find their social representation in shared routines that entail the dimensions investigated by interesting philosophical studies on habits [12]. Habits in their social aspect can be simply informally shared or institutionalized in rituals that have the important function to create social spaces in which individuals can share emotions, experiences, values, norms, and knowledge [6,13,14]. The function to share experiences is fulfilled when there exists a social space created by cooperation for reaching a certain goal. In this context, cooperation is a kind of intersubjectivity typical of human beings who, differently from apes, can have "collective intentionality", i.e., the basic intention to cooperate and therefore to reach together a certain goal. If we want to get a positive result about the extension of habits in the social dimension we need to move from a sort of goal-directed activity that we can perform together.

We need to organize our life through our own habits in our ordinary life and through shared habits and rituals in social contexts. This is a basic function that we can observe also in the life of non-human animals. Human beings (but also other species) can impose

a function on an object so that the object acquires a function dependent on the particular scope of the agent. The continuity between individual habits and rituals (social habits) is thus showed by the fact that humans create these "agentive functions" (in Searle's terminology) in a wide variety of situations. Also, non-human animals have their form of creating functions for objects but there is a fundamental difference in the concept of "function" in the human case as we normally ascribe positive values to biological life that depends on biological functions of our body.

To describe social habits in the form of rituals we refer to the notion of "status function", i.e., a peculiar kind of function from which we create the social world. The formation of rituals requires intentionality-relative functions that possess two special features: (a) shared intentionality namely "collective intentionality" and (b) collective imposition and recognition of status.

The "constitutive rule" is essential to the process of constitution of institutions in general. The canonical form introduced by Searle [15] is:

$$\text{Status Function} = \text{X counts as Y in C}$$

For instance, a certain expression could count as a promise in a certain context C. Consequently, it is fundamental to assign functions to objects and persons. We use ordinary language to represent a state of affairs and norms, namely, to understand what the conditions of satisfaction of different speech acts are (assertions, commands, promises, etc.). Ordinary language is characterized by the classical dimensions of syntax, compositionality, and generativity. However, we can also observe a fundamental dimension that generates public norms i.e., "deontology", that reveals itself in the performance of the speech act of "declaration". For example, if we say, "This is my car" or "This is my husband", beyond the mere representation of a state of affairs, we give rise to a certain deontology that entails rights, obligations, and duties as well as in the acceptation of the corresponding speech acts from the part of the interlocutors. This process creates a public deontology and, consequently, public reasons for acting that are desire independent. Language not only possesses a descriptive function but also a constitutive function in virtue of the nature of the speech act of declaration. Representations that are partially constitutive of institutional reality, the reality of government, private property, money, universities, and cocktail parties, are essentially linguistic. What must be clarified is the sense of this partial constitution of social world. Language use works based on a prelinguistic dimension which embeds background capacities such as the capacity to cooperate, to act as a "We". Moreover, this very capacity is fundamental to share and constitute rituals.

We pointed out the fundamental process of assigning functions to objects or to some non-physical entities, which is a form of symbolization aiming at creating institutional reality. This process is at the basis of the institutionalization of rituals and works in every community even though social practices in general are culturally characterized. Status Function apart, there are two other basic notions that occur in the explanation of a successful functioning and stability of social institutions. The first is "cooperation" as a "strong" form of collective intentionality and the second is "collective recognition" as a "weak form" of it. These two forms of intentionality correspond to the notion of "flexibility", which implies the voluntary control over our actions, and to the notion of "rigidity", which characterizes the mere following rules in the sense of routine behavior. For example, in a formal ceremony like marriage, we observe a weak form of we-intentionality expressed by the recognition of the institutional process characterizing the ritual and a strong form of we-intentionality that express our will to create a new social context.

3. Epistemic and Moral Bubbles

We have illustrated above that, standardly, we in general think social practices in terms of shared practices that once followed or institutionalized are routinely performed. They are characterized by processes of integration of different kinds of components such as "embodied" and "mental" activities, material artifacts, knowledge, emotions, and skills. This section will describe the case of epistemic and moral bubbles, which is particularly

interesting as a special type of individual practice that often becomes a collective one. Reciprocally, when the bubble behavior is collectively available, it can influence individual cognitive performances. Researchers in cognitive science have variously stressed that in situations of poor and fragmentary given knowledge, "belief" (without reference to the more or less reliability of its basis) seems adequate for human social collectives to live and prosper. Indeed, belief is cognitively more economical than knowledge and the reason is simple: belief is a kind of simulation of knowledge but of course is always inclined to "secrete" mistakes.

The naturalistic and anti-technical understanding of logic proposed by Woods' agent-based perspective is clearly represented by the Proposition 8 (Epistemic Bubbles): "A cognitive agent X occupies an epistemic bubble precisely when he is unable to command the distinction between his thinking that he knows P and his knowing P", and also by its Corollary 8a: "When in an epistemic bubble, cognitive agents always resolve the tension between their thinking that they know P and their knowing P in favour of knowing that P" [16]. Consequently, a typical situation that characterizes human individuals and collectives is that we know lesser than we think we do. Furthermore, when we face a modification or substitution of our epistemic bubbles, the difference between trivial exterior correction and authentical effective correction goes beyond the agent's control. Hence, the cognitive agent (or agents), from her/their own first-person perspective, is/are stimulated to think that what occurred was a truly sound and reliable correction. One could object: if bubbles are epistemic, how can they be causally effective? We can answer by indicating that the adjective "epistemic" is here synonymous of "cognitive", as it happens in many disciplines such as informal logic, semiotics and cognitive science: consequently, in this case, the adjective does not carry the received meaning that regards scientific theories and reasoning, so they are simply "cognitively" causally effective at the level of the human cognitive systems.

Let us consider the case of fallacies, generically considered as arguments that carry bad cognitive results, as it is well-known: epistemic bubbles are still at play, indeed diagnosis of errors does not erase the fact that fallacies appear to be good. The spontaneous falling under the effect of epistemic bubbles is socially distributed and extremely fruitful, because of the relatively inexpensive way of managing cognition: belief, as we have already stressed, is a low-cost procedure of thinking, it can be formed relatively easy, without the excessive costs related for example to various processes of confirmation and falsification, and of checking of knowledge contents. We are dealing in this case with a kind of Humean skepticism that presents the extreme fragility of the humans' "cognitive" Dasein, which characterizes current people. In summary, the concept of epistemic bubble is also fruitful when we analyze the role played by fallacies in human collectives because, also thanks to the bubbles, fallacies are preserved and not recognized as such. Let us illustrate the fallacious reasoning taking advantage of an imaginary example: when you are "committing" the fallacy called ad verecundiam, you say that a certain Biden's statement carries an important truth (even if this is not the case, for example, for trivial empirical reasons) you are in a bubble: you think you "know" a truth but you do not know it, you simply believe you know the truth, but you are simply a Biden's fan, because Biden could have carried the truth, but not necessarily. Below we will also provide another example regarding Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen.

Woods defines a fallacy an error in reasoning, an error which is occurring with some frequency in actual argumentations and which is peculiarly deceptive [16]. Fallacies are stable and basically incorrigible, and the epistemic bubble reinforces this aspect. Indeed, they are characterized when acting in real human settings as errors, and as attractive and seductive, but also universal, because humans are prone to commit them and, finally, "standardly" incorrigible, because also the possible detection of their incorrectness does not erase the fact that they present themselves as correct.

Fallacies do not always carry wrong argumentations and so mistakes of reasoning. A simple imaginary example can be of help. When I say that a piece of information is

true because was uttered by Ursula Gertrud von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, I am committing the fallacy called an argument from authority, also said "appeal to authority", or argumentum ad verecundiam. The smart listener will immediately judge that information as plausibly false because not based on an appeal to authority: the problem is that what Ms. Ursula said might be instead true, notwithstanding the fact most people expect from politicians a lot of falsities and bad propaganda. When a fallacious argument carries truth, we can say that a case of "material validity" is at play, typical—in general—of arguments that do not respect the formality of deductive schemes, and nevertheless are valid, that is transfer truth from premises to the conclusion.

When trapped in an epistemic bubble, human agents face the following consequences. First, they do not distinguish between apparent truth and effective truth from the point of view of the first-person awareness, and only taking advantage of appropriate learned information derived from collective cognitive processes the difference can be caught. Secondly, when in an epistemic bubble, in case of ambiguities in judging some ideas as apparently true or truly true, beings-like-us always opt for the second case. Finally, Woods' Corollary 12a [16] stresses the Peircean emphasis on the role of belief as the sole function of thought: when humans reach a belief, the cognitive result is retained as satisfactory and stopped in a very natural way and its capacity to stall thinking represents a huge economic gain: we already said that human cognition is always occurring in presence of poor resource. Belief is a sort of stability that is maintained until disrupted by doubt. It is uncertainty and doubt that characterizes the Peircean subject. Belief is maintained from expedience, but the purpose of thought is more than to establish belief, it is also to doubt said stable states, through this process "fixing" belief.

Hence, Woods also appropriately says that truth is "fugitive": we never reach it without considering that we have done so. Unfortunately, just considering that we have reached the truth is not equivalent to actually reaching it, so that human cognition is trapped in a situation characterized by the impossibility of distinguishing between subjective and objective (so to speak) truth-apprehension: we cannot have a reason for believing P in absence of thinking we do; however, considering that we have a reason to believe P is not having a reason to believe P". This cognitive situation is coherent with fallibilism, which always emphasizes the human inclination to generate hypotheses (and consequently to trigger abductive cognition)[2] [17].

Hence, we can underline that the fugitive nature of truth and, in general, the cases of embubblement, are related to the exquisite epistemological problem of corrigibility: indeed, embubblement presents a situation of non-corrigibility, unless an individual abandons a bubble and enters a novel one. Also, the case of de-biasing is related to incorrigibility, and no policies are available to correct the errors that eventually result from this process too. Only in recent years the processes of decision-making that involve embubblement and de-biasing have attracted the attention of logicians and cognitive scientists. Perhaps some strategies will be further investigated and illustrated, able to clarify the many functions of epistemic bubbles, also taking into account their social effects and the collective possibility of positively managing them [18].

Some of these strategies involve: (1) motivation and prescriptions to favor a preemptive self-amendment; (2) cognitive endorsement of habits that are cognitively stronger from the perspective of their power of carrying truths (for example looking at the opposite, being sensitive to withdrawing beliefs when in front of falsifications, training deontic rules related to excellent standards of cognition); (3) machine-based strategies devoted to producing "prostheses" that can improve human cognitive capacities (decision support systems). The concept of epistemic bubble is not directly concerned with the possibility of "control". As already pointed out embubblement presents a situation of non-corrigibility unless an individual abandons a bubble and enters a novel one. When you are in an epistemic bubble (or in a moral bubble, see below) you do not have any direct possibility

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[2]   Abductive cognition classically characterizes, following Peirce, reasoning to explanatory hypotheses [17].

of controlling it. If you are not in an epistemic bubble, it is not because you have purified the previous one that entrapped you, simply let us repeat that you are not in a bubble. It is instead patent that to favor improvements of the management of epistemic bubbles only a virtuous intertwining between social and individual practices can help: the control of epistemic bubbles is not a mere question of individuals' will and control, but a problem that fundamentally exhibits a "systemic" character, which consequently practically involves a considerable quantity of social practices.

The case of tunnel vision is particularly striking [19,20] and illustrates the collective components of fallacious or biased decision-making situations. Tunnel vision is related to a group of amazing fallacies and biases that can regard many aspects of the justice system, such as the ones regarding investigators, prosecutors, judges, and defense people. Tunnel vision is exploited to explain and possibly prevent mistaken convictions/beliefs, due for example to bad filtering out important information, wrong managing of evidence as confirmatory, bandwagon effect, etc.

Moreover, as illustrated in a book regarding violence [20] tunnel vision can certainly be considered as referred to a group of situations to be amended, looking at the celebration of the virtuosity of "truth" but, it also magnificently expresses a form of what in the book is called—following René Thom [21]—"military intelligence," intended as cognitively distributed, in which the mistaken—not corrected—aspects connected to the criminal justice system de facto present themselves as operative in various—real—"violent" effects, and not only the ones legitimately derived from the monopoly of violence of modern constitutional democracies.

3.1. Morality and Moral Bubbles: Validating and Disguising Violence

A fundamental character of human fallacious exploitation of natural language, when "military"—and, obviously, at the same time "social"—results are concerned (that is the outputs that are related to the distribution of good and evil effects, see the previous section) is the tenderness and kindliness exhibited by the intrinsic ability of linguistic fallacies to hide mistakes—particularly in the case of the abductive generation of hypothesis. Being structurally and trivially ignorant of our mistakes is frequently linked to the subjective self-persuasion that we are not at all violent and offensive in our speeches and communication (and so in the related possible consequent actions) [7]. In this perspective, fallacies are always useful because they involve in positive vital way moral and violent features: consequently, if they are so eco-cognitively efficient, we cannot consider them fallacies anymore, at least not in the standard depreciatory fashion. We are dealing with a process that can be characterized as a kind of self-persuasion of the goodness of our reasoning that, anyway, is occurring in a complete unconscious way. It has indeed been contended that violence carried by fallacies has remarkably suggested the existence of something equivalent to a moral bubble (ibid.), classified as homomorphic to the epistemic bubble, that "enchains" human individuals. A moral bubble refers to the widespread behavior (in both speech and actions) of individuals—but also of collectives—in which we see that:

- the lack of awareness of our errors is frequently coupled with absence of awareness regarding the fraudulent/offensive character of our speech (and behavior).

Moral bubbles, which do not have to be considered the opposite of epistemic bubbles, can instead be ontologically considered a subclass of epistemic bubbles: they deal with the specific cases in which the lack of knowledge regards important moral aspects. Moral bubbles force us to believe we act morally and protect us from "knowing" the potential or actual violence perpetrated because of our moral convictions. It is in this sense that we can say the cognitive/moral agent who is in a moral bubble is immunized (see below for further details) with respect his/her own potential or actual violence.

Moreover, this behavior not only regards fallacies but argumentations of various kind, always when they carry moral convictions and values, which can easily involve punishment and more or less strong conflict with different views, and so "violent" acts, that are usually and potentially perceived as such only by the targeted individual because

still considered as "moral" acts in the subjective perspective of the actor. Both epistemic and moral bubbles involve a process of immunization, also in the extreme case of the subjective awareness of the bubbles themselves. Even when an agent X is in a cognitive situation S in which he is convinced that he clearly knows the bubble process to be true, S is immune to it as long as it is effective for X. So to speak, errors are ineluctable just inasmuch their proper essence is constitutively generated by their concealment.

3.2. The "Banality" of Moral Bubbles

The concept of moral "viscosity" might be of further help in explaining the generation of a moral bubble. Lahti and Weinstein [22] describe viscosity as related to the explanation of the spread between the radical dogmatism of morality and the fact—that everybody can see—that moral principles and rules are frequently disregarded without serious consequences neither for the stability of the entire moral system nor for the individual who commits the violations. Morality is viscous in so far as it is—so to speak—glue-like, can be slightly modified, stressed, temporarily forgotten, and subsequently reconstituted without having as a consequence an injury to its own stableness and possible regeneration. This is occurring both at the individual and collective level in so far as ethical axiologies are preserved notwithstanding violations, free-riders' behaviors, etc.

Moreover, viscosity explains the moral inclination of an individual to cheat and at the same time still considering cheating to be morally bad, or of an individual who is violent and yet provides lessons about non-violence as the limpid root to happiness and salvation. In these cases, we are not simply dealing with hypocrisy, but with something constitutive of the conditions of possibility of the reproduction and continued existence of the morality exactly thanks to the moral bubbles, whose function consists in concealing the cognitive inconsistency that would patently and empirically present the gap between individuals (or collectives') behaviors and their moral convictions. We can say that concealing is patent when we see the bubble from a third-person perspective, but embubblement is basically a natural phenomenon that serves a protective, defensive, or aggressive purpose.

It can be further observed, according to Burton, that all beliefs (and thus moral beliefs) are characterized by some inertial features, which can be still explained by taking advantage of the spread between the bare belief and actual knowledge, that we know is peculiar of the moral bubble: "The more committed we are to a belief, the harder it is to relinquish, even in the face of overwhelming contradictory evidence. Instead of acknowledging an error in judgment and abandoning the opinion, we tend to develop a new attitude or belief that will justify retaining it" [23].

In a moral bubble, we are often completely aware of selecting a false belief because it seems and feels momentarily right even when we "know" much more, also in the moral sense: basically, we face a spread between the particular feeling of considering something to be just and actually "knowing" it to be right. We are in front of a kind of paradox: we adopt and rely upon a belief even if we possess a clear knowledge that contradicts it. Analogously—when trapped in our moral bubbles—we adopt an axiological judgment or rule (and we accord our behavior to it) even if we know it is possible, or actual violent outcomes disappear from our sight. Paraphrasing Hannah Arendt, we could speak in this case of a "banality" of moral bubbles.

3.3. When Social Practices Are Affected by Collective Moral Embubblements

Let us better focus on the social practices that are affected by collective-epistemic and moral-embubblements (more details are illustrated in [7] chapter three): We can surely say an already packaged epistemic of moral embubblement is something available "out there", available to be adopted or "picked up", because embedded in external entities, tools, and supports (other people, books, media, etc. where embubblement is already at work), belonging to a certain social group. People readily adopt external embubblement "tools"—as intertwined with practices—of this type, then re-use them internally so participating to a social shared practice. Indeed, we can discover how thinking about the social dimension

of embubblement favors the conviction that it is reinforced by itself and empowers the practices of those who already are entrapped in it: A successful kind of embubblement is the same for every individual, making every subject feel similar, both from the exterior and psychological point of view. In sum, a social "moral" embubblement could be considered a highly stable cognitive niche[3] [24,25]. When you subscribe to an accepted (and morally embubbled) social practice and punish some boys, or when you negatively comment on your spouse's behavior, even when you criticize a strange (for you . . .) religious behavior, you do not surely think you are committing any violence. Moral embubblement socially shared in common practices establishes a kind of cognitive "orthodoxy" and acts as an immunizing constituent with respect to violence.

The case of ideologies is particularly interesting. Often, especially the stability of totalitarian ideologies (but in general the stability of all kinds of ideologies) is favored by embubblements (by making me ignorant of the constitutive violence of my absence of knowledge and of my actions, supposed to be "moral" by me). Embubblements are not only an individual phenomenon but are based on the reciprocal reinforcement of beliefs. "Uniformed" individuals (the oxymoron is very significant) share common practices, each in their own individual embubblement, act all together and mix their almost similar embubbled beliefs in a collective epistemic (and/or moral) bubble, which strongly increases its standard processes who nurture efficient social practices. This collective bubble aims at systematically defusing all potential doubts, adding the action of one individual upon another in the process of self-immunization with respect to more reliable knowledge and reliable actions. When entrapped in a social embubblement, the cognitive agent further considers his beliefs as a positive, genuine truth. Ideologies constitute a strong coalition state, in which each embubbled individual reinforces and confirms the beliefs of the others and their consequent practices. The whole ideology-projected collective becomes unaware of its own embubblement and it is capable of responding to cases of doubt with the synchronism of one organism and the strongness of several.

Let consider the case of particularly violent practices based on ideologies: they exhibit the typical serenity that those cognitive/epistemic or moral beliefs permit. A violent outburst is not felt as such by the individual who performs it, because it is secreted by the unquestioned awareness of the righteousness of his own cognitive convictions. Embubblements, indeed, are inclined to create conflicts: that is why—in the case of moral embubblement—we are clearly aware of other agents' violence (because they contrast our own bubble) but we are practically immunized to our own, especially when the embubblement is shared in common practices. In the extreme cases, when it is impossible to eliminate the corrupting belief, the solution can be based on the (also physical but usually metaphorical) murder of the corrupted believer.

To make an example of the moral embubblement that characterizes the so-called Fascist state of mind ([7] chapter five), which very easily acquires a social and practical dimension, as it is well-known that doubts are eliminated because they promptly reverberate fragility of spirit and all fragilities are considered as something extremely negative. A "unique" mind is constructed, and any other external counterviews are totally neglected and attacked. Slogans, rhetoric, propaganda, violent fallacious arguments, icons, and so on, substantiate (also suitably embedded in external material representations) the strong unity of the ideology/morality at play.

We can also consider an opposite extreme, one which is characterized by a social practice (for example in political groups) informed by a continuous instability maintained in the accommodation of different voices, radical changes in world, situation, worldview (a person that obviously sees the fascist state of the mind as extremely violent). So, rather than violence and militarized intelligence strengthening the bubble by silencing the critics,

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[3]　Representational delegations are those cognitive actions that change the natural environment into a cognitive one. They are cognitive delegations to the external world that the human brains themselves have realized throughout history by establishing the cognitive niches. Human beings have built huge cognitive niches, highly enriched with informational, cognitive, and, more recently, computational qualities, as clearly described by recent studies in the are of evolutionary theories by Odling-Smee, Laland, and Feldman [24]. Cf. also [25], chapter 8.

this de-biasing, self-dis-embubbling agent begins with self-doubt in equilibrating between situational, often political pressures, and what is personal habitual and perhaps most comfortable or effective. Unfortunately, this implies another kind of bubble: Perhaps some dis-embubbling agency can of course become unhealthy; perhaps one can be too empathetic or hold one's self to unrealistic standards of duty. This, first of all, can resort to a kind of internalized violence, when one takes on the disorder of the world to order it somehow in understanding. But we can also resort-out there in the social arena-to potential violent conflicts: In the interplay between moralities entertained by different individual or groups, the excess in conciliation and equilibration of views and related social practices is "seen" as something violent, as an attitude that "violates" the right of a "truth" (for example, the one promoted by a person that is in that "fascist state of the mind", we have quoted above).

4. Conclusions

In the first part of the article, we have described the notion of "habit" from a perspective that crosses philosophy and science, also dealing with its composition in our daily life and its social nature showed by informally shared structures and institutionalized rituals. We have also illustrated the basic, fundamental aspects of habitual behavior, i.e., routine and goal-directed behavior, and the fact that shared social habits like rituals are related to the need (a) to simply follow social institutional practices and (b) to actively cooperate to reach a certain goal. We have further illustrated the role of control in habitual behavior, namely the possibility of accepting or refusing to do something and the fact that this control does not work in many pathological cases and cases of auto-illusion. In the second part of the article, we have illustrated fundamental case of the epistemic and moral embubblement, in which control is given up, and some individual cognitive processes become social practices that once followed or institutionalized becomes a shared practice routinely performed. We have described that an epistemic bubble concerns the case in which the cognitive agents always resolve the tension between their thinking that they know P and their knowing P in favor of knowing that P". Moreover, the moral bubble indicates the case in which "moral" agents are potentially or actually violent and unaware of it. This cognitive process expresses how difficulties in knowing one's own violence leads to neglect the inflicted harm: in this case a process of what can be called "autoimmunity" is at play.

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