

Hintikka and Chisholm on Moore's  
Paradox and Knowing that one Believes

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In this paper I shall consider Chisholm's comments, in his "The Logic of Knowing" (pp. 201-204), on Hintikka's analysis, in his Knowledge and Belief, of Moore's paradox and the problem of knowing that one believes. I shall outline Chisholm's attack on Hintikka's treatment of Moore's paradox, and then sketch out Chisholm's critique of Hintikka's analysis of knowing that one believes. The aim of my rehash of this debate is to show that Chisholm's criticisms rest on misunderstandings of the notions of indefensibility and self-illumination.

1. According to Hintikka, sentences of the form "p but I do not believe that p" are not in themselves logically inconsistent or even indefensible, but rest on a presumption, of the form "I believe that the case is as follows: p but I do not believe that p," that is indefensible. Similarly, sentences of the form "p but a does not believe that p" are not in themselves indefensible, but rest on a presumption, of the form "a believes that the case is as follows: p but a does not believe that p," that is indefensible. The indefensibility of the presumption in either case violates a general presumption that the speaker (either a or myself) believes what he says. This general presumption thus renders doxastically indefensible certain sentences that are in themselves not indefensible simpliciter. That is, "doxastically indefensible sentences are not so much wrong per se as self-defeating for anybody to utter." (p. 77)

Chisholm directs his criticism not at the general presumption<sup>ci</sup> on which doxastic defensibility or indefensibility rests, but upon a model of thinking which, for Hintikka, this presumption could be said to govern. If one's thinking is, as Hintikka claims, "a

conversation of the soul with herself" (why herself?), then one's beliefs, as soon as one begins to inspect them, are bound by all the rules and conditions governing doxastic defensibility. Chisholm argues, however, that we need not be committed to what we believe, ✓ or to the general presumption governing doxastic defensibility, as a result of the fact that our thinking is a kind of "saying." We could, rather, be committed to what we believe and what we say we believe because we can know, directly or with a little bit of thought, ~~what~~ we believe. For Chisholm, our statements that we believe something is true are doxastically defensible, if this expression has any meaning at all, in virtue of the direct access, through introspection, that we have to our beliefs (we can come to know that we believe). For Hintikka, our statements that we believe something is true are doxastically defensible if our believing them meets the requirements of conversational or performatory implicatoriness (if we <sup>SAY WE</sup> believe something, we had better be able to believe that we believe it). Since Chisholm's criticism of Hintikka's analysis of Moore's paradox rests in part on the assumption that if one believes something, then one can know that one believes it, I shall defer my assessment of the relative plausibility of their views to the next section.

2. As Chisholm says, it is the view of Prichard and other "introspectionists" that if one believes a proposition to be true, then one can immediately, or with a little bit of thought, come to know that one believes the proposition is true. Chisholm charges that Hintikka rejects this contention, because of some absurd consequences of the kind of introspection on which the

contention rests. That Hintikka does not without qualification reject "knowing that one believes something" is clear, however, from what he says in 4.15 (pp. 84-88). There he argues that while neither "I believe that p" nor "a believes that p" virtually implies "I know that I believe that p" or "a knows that he believes that p," the sentence "I believe that p" does at least epistemically imply the sentence "I know that I believe that p." An epistemic implication is a function of the peculiar relation between first-person sentences, as opposed to relations between second or third-person sentences. Hintikka even goes so far as to claim that Prichard and the "introspectionists" might only be confused when they assert that "a believes that p" somehow implies "a knows that he believes that p": what they are really talking about is that "I believe that p" epistemically implies "I know that I believe that p." (p. 110)

If Hintikka's distinction between virtual implication and epistemic implication holds up, then the introspectionist foundations of the general presumption governing doxastic defensibility seem to be undercut, except perhaps for that of the doxastic defensibility of first-person sentences. At any rate, the fact that Hintikka at least admits the validity of a form of "knowing that one believes" renders Chisholm's objection a bit unfair. But what sense can one make of Hintikka's two senses of implication? Why does the introspectionist case hold only for first-person sentences?

I think that Hintikka would argue that the introspectionists cannot get what they want even from an implication holding between first-person sentences. If first-person sentences about believing

and about knowing that one believes are related only by epistemic implication, the introspectionist cannot, with this alone, provide the basis of the general presumption governing doxastic defensibility. For "I believe that p" would have to virtually imply "I know that I believe that p," in order to serve as a foundation for the general presumption governing doxastic defensibility. As Hintikka has shown, doxastic defensibility depends on the relation of virtual implication between, in the case of first-person sentences as well as in any other case, "I believe that p" and "I believe that I believe that p."

If Hintikka's views on Moore's paradox and knowing that one believes are to be preferred to Chisholm's, why are Chisholm and the introspectionists mistaken about the relation between self-illumination and defensibility or virtual implication? The answer seems to me to be long and involved, but it ultimately depends on the model of thinking that one adopts. The misleading peculiarity of first-person sentences for the introspectionists is best summed up in Hintikka's paraphrasing of Wittgenstein:

My relation to my words is different from other people's relation to them. I do not have to listen to my voice in order to know what I am saying. (p. 94)

That is, when I am thinking, I do not have to listen to my inner voice in order for my believing epistemically to imply that I know that I believe. But I do, when I am thinking, have to listen to my inner voice in order to believe defensibly that I believe.