Closure and (Against) Impurist Solution to the Threshold Problem

Abstract. Impurism is considered to offer a nice solution to the threshold problem that arises in the fallibilist account of knowledge, the problem of what fixes the threshold of justification required for knowledge. According to the impurist solution to the threshold problem, the minimum level of justification, or of probability, required for S to know that p is *that which is enough for her to properly act on her belief in her practical reasoning.* It will be shown that this impurist solution to the threshold problem is constituted by two impurist principles: (S) the size of stakes S's belief that p is associated with is determined by, so *is proportional to*, the amount of cost that would occur if S acted on p but if p was false; (KT) The knowledge-threshold for p, i.e., the minimum level of justification required for S to know that p, *is determined by,* so *is proportional to*, *the size of stakes* that her belief that p is associated with. In this paper, I argue against the impurist solution to the threshold problem. First, I show that the impurist solution violates a *desirable* version of Many-Premises Closure. Even though the standard formulation of Many-Premises Closure is thought to be a problematic (so, incorrect) principle because it is susceptible to what is called *the problem of accrued risk of error*, there is a version of Many-Premises Closure that is not susceptible to the problem of accrued risk of error. I argue that its immunity to the problem of accrued risk of error makes it a desirable knowledge closure principle. Second, I show that the impurist solution violates Single-Premise Closure which is widely considered a correct principle. These two points count against the impurist solution. (287 words)

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