

with his uniform tendency to do away with the merely or purely immediate, reduces 'positing' to a lower level. It is the UNDERSTANDING (q. v.) which posits; that is to say, positing is dogmatic, unquestioned assertion, which, however valuable and necessary for practical purposes (to get a firm and definite basis from which to proceed), is really a process of reflection. Thus it turns out to be really a supposition involving a presupposition (Voraussetzen). The search for this presupposition is therefore the real 'positing,' since it alone determines what the true being is (Hegel, *Werke*, iv. chap. i). Or, put more simply, it is only as a working datum—a starting-point—that we find anything prior to reflection, and thus can distinguish that which is immediately given from that which is thought. The process of reflection, while apparently merely about the given reality, in the end always decides for us what that reality is, so that the original 'fact' is displaced or transformed, instead of remaining as it was plus a number of new traits externally added to it by reflection. Thus the genuine process of positing is one of determining or defining through the whole system of thought. Cf. HEGEL'S TERMINOLOGY, V, f.

In English the terms posit and pose are rarely used, save to translate the German Setzen; since, however, we use the terms suppose and presuppose freely and in non-technical ways, it is a matter of regret that we have not, like the Greek (thesis and hypothesis) and the German (Setzung, Voraussetzung, Position), the correlates pose and position. (J.D.)

Position (consciousness of bodily): Ger. *Lage-empfindung*; Fr. *sensation de la position (du corps)*; Ital. *percezione di posizione (del corpo)*. The normal perception of bodily position is a complex of visual and tactual (skin, joint, muscle, tendon) factors. The most important of these are probably vision and articular sensation.

The point of reference for orientation is, in most cases, the head (eyes, eye-muscles, neck-muscles). In so far as the perception of position involves sensations of equilibrium or of change of position (progressive rectilinear movement or progressive rotation), the organ of the STATIC SENSE (q. v.) is probably concerned in it. See EQUILIBRIUM (sensation of), and ILLUSIONS OF MOTION. (E.B.T.)

Literature: WUNDT, *Physiol. Psychol.* (4th ed.), ii. 23 ff.; SANFORD, *Course in Exper. Psychol.*, expts. 45, 46; BLOCH, *C. R. de la*

Soc. de Biol. (1896), 81; FÉRÉ, *ibid.* 61; H. BEAUNIS, *Sensations internes*; MORSELLI, *Semej. mal. ment.*, i. (E.B.T.-L.M.)

Positive [Lat. *positum*, from *ponere*, to place]: Ger. *positiv*; Fr. *positif*; Ital. *positivo*. (1) Logical: as applied to judgments, affirmative or asserting, opposed to negative or denying. Applied to terms, referring to a quality which is inherent, while a negative term connotes absence or limitation.

(2) Social and practical: that which depends upon will or convention instead of upon the forces of nature irrespective of human intervention; e. g. positive law, rights, religion, morality, &c. It is opposed to NATURAL (q. v.).

(3) Philosophical: that which depends upon observation of phenomena, or facts in space and time, not upon a thought process: the scientifically verifiable. Opposed to the speculative. See POSITIVISM. According to Comte, mankind passes through the theological and metaphysical stages in arriving finally at the positive. (J.D.)

Positive attribute: an experientially definite attribute, or one which for some other reason appears more definite than its contrary.

Positive denial: an explicit denial, opposed to one which is virtually made by an omission to affirm.

Positive discrepancy: a disagreement between statements consisting in the one asserting what the other positively denies.

Positive distinction: a real distinction between two positively experimental objects, and not merely between an experience and the failure of it. There is a positive distinction between the odours of the rose and the orange-flower; a merely negative one between the perfume of the tea-rose and the want of perfume of the ordinary climber.

Positive idea: an idea due to a positive experience. Locke says: 'Concerning the simple ideas of sensation, it is to be considered that whatsoever is so constituted in nature as to be able, by affecting our senses, to cause any perception in the mind, doth thereby produce in the understanding a simple idea; which, whatever be the external cause of it, when it comes to be taken notice of by our discerning faculty, it is by the mind looked on and considered there to be a real positive idea in the understanding, as much as any other whatsoever: though perhaps the cause of it be but a privation in the subject' (*Essay concerning Human Understanding*, II. viii. 1).

POSITIVE LAW (q. v.): a law laid down, a statute. 'I would not here be mistaken, as if, because I deny an innate law, I thought there were none but positive laws' (Locke, *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, I. iii. 13).

Positive philosophy (see **POSITIVISM**, also (3) above): the system of philosophy of Auguste Comte; so called by him as composed of definite experiential results of science.

Positive proof or evidence: proof or evidence of a definite experience of the fact concluded. Positive proof is not necessarily more certain than negative proof. Thus, if a man comes home from business and finds all the portable valuables and his wife's best clothes gone, the wife having herself disappeared, this negative evidence that she took them is stronger than if a witness of suspicious character were to testify that she did so. Nor is positive proof or evidence the same as direct proof or evidence, as Kant and other writers say; for the fact that a man was in the utmost distress for want of money just after the robbery of a bank would be positive, yet indirect, evidence that he did not commit the robbery.

Positive proposition, judgment, or enunciation: a proposition more experientially definite in its assertion than its negative. An affirmative proposition is one which has the grammatical form of a positive proposition. But the present definition can only be regarded as tentative, since there has been no thorough investigation of the logical nature of the positiveness of propositions.

Positive whole: a whole made up of parts, in contradistinction to a whole indivisible even in thought, such as a person. (C.S.P.)

Positive Law [Lat. *positivus*]: Ger. *positive Recht, Satzungsrecht*; Fr. *droit positif*; Ital. *diritto positivo*. Law imposed and enforceable in any community by the sovereign political authority. See Holland, *Jurisprudence*, chap. iv. It is therefore a different thing from natural law, though it may in a particular case reaffirm a rule of natural law, and supply a sanction. Cf. **POSITIVE**.

If it contravenes fundamental principles of natural law, there are authorities of weight which declare it to be void, under a system of free, constitutional government. See *Loan Association v. Topeka*, 20 Wallace's United States Law Reports, 655.

Literature: WOLFF, *Inst. of the Law of Nature and Nations*, i. chap. ii. 39; MONTESQUIEU, *Esprit des Lois*, Liv. I. chap. iii. (S.E.B.)

Positive Theology: Ger. *positive Theologie*; Fr. *théologie positive*; Ital. *teologia positiva*. The system of doctrine which arises from the application of positive categories to the Divine nature; to be distinguished from negative theology, in which the divine nature is symbolized under negative categories.

The distinction between negative and positive theology is of Neo-Platonic origin, and was introduced into Christian thought in the 5th century by the Pseudo-Dionysius, whose work on mystical theology is the classic on this theme. In his representation, God in his essential nature wholly transcends human conceptions, and can be only negatively conceived. The sum of these negative conceptions constitutes negative theology, and is higher than positive theology, which occupies a purely relative place, and arises out of the application of inadequate categories to the divine nature.

Literature: works of DIONYSIUS; MIGNE, *Patrology*; McCLINTOCK and STRONG, *Cyclopedia of Bibl. Knowledge*, Pt. IV. (A.T.O.)

Positivism: Ger. *Positivismus*; Fr. *positivisme*; Ital. *positivismo*. (1) The assertion of what is instituted in any sphere, as distinct from what is natural; revealed religion, for example. This use is rare.

(2) **DOGMATISM** (q. v.); assurance in holding or asserting philosophic tenets; the antithesis to scepticism, nihilism, negativism. This is also rare.

(3) The name applied by Comte to his own philosophy, and characterizing, negatively, its freedom from all speculative elements; and, affirmatively, its basis in the methods and results of the hierarchy of positive sciences; i. e. mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and sociology. It is allied to **AGNOSTICISM** (q. v., also **UNKNOWNABLE**) in its denial of the possibility of knowledge of reality in itself, whether of mind, matter, force; it is allied to **PHENOMENALISM** (q. v.) in its denial of capacity to know either efficient or final causation, or anything except the relations of coexistence and sequence in which sensible phenomena present themselves. It differs, however, in insisting upon (a) the possibility and necessity of a relative synthesis or organization of the data of all the sciences; (b) the value of science for prevision and practical control; and (c) its availability, when thus organized and applied, for moral guidance and spiritual support and consolation. See **RELIGION OF HUMANITY**.

(4) The term is used more loosely to denote