

defined as non-repugnancy to existence. Kant defines it as that which satisfies the formal conditions of experience (*Krit. d. reinen Vernunft*, 1st ed., 218, 234).

The possible proposition, or problematic judgment, as it is called by German logicians, is said by many logicians, especially Sigwart, not to be any proposition at all, because it does not draw a sharp line between truth and falsity. It seems to be necessary to distinguish between a proposition which asserts that under such and such general conditions a certain thing is possible, of which an example is the proposition that of any two collections one is not greater than the other, and a proposition which pretends to be no more than a conjecture. If a conjecture can be absolutely baseless, which may be doubted, a proposition which pretended to be no more than that may be said to be no proposition at all. But it can hardly be maintained that when Poincaré says that there is no physical law whatever which will not be rendered more certain by every new confirmatory experiment, he is depriving those laws of all meaning as propositions.

*Logical possibility*: that of a hypothesis not involving any self-contradiction.

*Mere possibility*: that of a state of things which might come to pass, but, in point of fact, never will. In common language, exaggerated to the 'merest possibility.'

*Metaphysical possibility* ought to mean a possibility of existence, nearly a potentiality; but the phrase does not seem to be used in that sense, but rather in the sense of possibility by supernatural power.

*Moral possibility* one might expect should be the opposite of moral impossibility, meaning, therefore, something reasonably free from extreme improbability. But, in fact, it seems to be used to mean what is morally permissible.

*Physical possibility*: (1) that which a knowledge of the laws of nature would not enable a person to be sure was not true; (2) that which might be brought about if psychological and spiritual conditions did not prevent, such as the Pope's pronouncing *ex cathedra* as an article of faith the fallibility of all his own utterances.

*Practical possibility*: that which lies within the power of a person or combination of persons under external conditions likely to be fulfilled, and questionable chiefly because internal conditions may not be fulfilled.

*Proximate possibility*. It is very difficult

to make out what is meant by this; but the phrase is evidently modelled on *potentia proxima*, which is a state of high preparedness for existence; so that proximate possibility would be a high grade of possibility in a proposition amounting almost to positive assertion.

*Real possibility* is possibility in the thing, as contradistinguished from mere logical possibility (Scotus, *Opus Oxon.*, I. ii. 7, *Ad secundam probationem maioris*).

*Remote possibility*: the possibility of a proposition which is far from being positively asserted. Also used in common speech.

*Substantive possibility*: the admissibility of a pure hypothesis (as illustrated above). (C.S.P.)

**Post hoc, ergo propter hoc** [Lat.]: see FALLACY.

**Postpredicament** [Lat. *postpraedicamentum*]: Ger. *Postprädicament*; Fr. *postprédicament*; Ital. *categorie postume*. One of five relations which are considered by Aristotle in the book of *Praedicamenta*, or *Categories*, after he has disposed of the predicaments themselves. They are *opposita* (*ἀντικείμενα*, in cap. x, xi) of four kinds (see OPPOSITION, in logic), *prius* (*πρότερον*, in cap. xii) of five kinds (see PRIOR), *simul* (*ἄμα*, in cap. xiii) of two kinds, *motus* (*κίνησις*, in cap. xiv) of six kinds, and *habere* (*ἔχειν*, in cap. xv) of eight kinds (see POSSESSION).

Abelard gave a special meaning to this word (for which see Frantl, *Gesch. d. Logik*, ii. 169), and also added Antepredicament. (C.S.P.)

**Post-selection** [Lat. *post + selectus*, chosen]: foreign equivalents are not in use. Natural selection of a structure, function, habit, or instinct, effected at a period in the life-history of the individual subsequent to the period when the character selected appears or takes place.

Suggested by Minot. A structure appears in an embryo; but, not benefiting the embryo, selection cannot act until a later stage, in which further development has rendered the structure useful. A parasitic wasp lays an egg in a larva, but without benefit to herself; but the benefit by which selection acts appears in the life of the offspring. These illustrations make the term clearer. Most natural selection is post-selection.

*Literature*: MINOT, *Biol. Centralbl.*, xv. (1895) 584 (trans. in *Amer. Natural.*, 1895); CH. DARWIN, *Origin of Species* (1859). (C.S.M.)

**Postulate** [Lat. *postulatum*, begged, used to translate Gr. *αἴτημα*]: Ger. *Voraussetzung* (the German *Postulat* = *Forderung* is a very different idea from that properly expressed by