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: that of 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: 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 (Socinus, 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 FALLACIES.

**Postpredicament** [Lat. postpredicamentum]: Ger. *Postpredicamentum*; Fr. *postprédicament*; It. *categorix postpone*. One of five relations which are considered by Aristotle in the book of Pradicamenta, or *Categories*, after he has disposed of the predicaments themselves. They are *opposita* (*absculmuca, in cap. x, xi*) of four kinds (see *opposition, in logic*), *prima* (*doredorj, in cap. xii*) of five kinds (see *prior*), *simul* (*dyu, in cap. xiii*) of two kinds, *motus* (*dyng, in cap. xiv*) of six kinds, and *habere* (*teve, 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-histories 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. *aparhuax*]: Ger. *Voraussetzung* (the German Postulat = Forderung is a very different idea from that properly expressed by
the French and English words); Fr. postulat; Ital. postulato. (1) The earliest definition we have of postulate, which was a technical term of Greek geometers, is by Aristotle. The passage has an appearance of incoherence; it is, however, plain that Aristotle makes a distinction between hypotheses and postulates which Euclid does not draw, and which is irrelevant. Omitting the distinction, the two have this in common—that they are propositions not necessarily true which are assumed as the bases of deductions.

If we turn to the first book of Euclid’s Elements, we observe, in the first place, that he calls axioms by the name of common notions, a deliberate choice by him, for Aristotle, before his day, had called them axioms, though Aristotle usually calls them ῥᾶ ῶνωά, nearly Euclid’s name. These matters of common knowledge, according to Euclid’s enumeration of them, are not specially geometrical, except that magnitudes superposable are equal (see the Cent. Dict., ‘Axiom’). On the other hand, the ‘postulates’ of Euclid are all geometrical. They are as follows (according to the best MS. and all the evidence):

(a) Between any two points a straight line can be drawn.
(b) Any terminated straight line can be prolonged at either end indefinitely.
(c) About any point in any plane as centre a circle may be described with any radius.
(d) All right angles are equal.
(e) If two straight lines in a plane are cut by a third, making the sum of the internal angles on one side less than two right angles, those two straight lines will meet if sufficiently produced.
(f) Two straight lines cannot enclose a space in a plane.

(2) Kant calls his principles of modality ‘postulates of empirical thought’ in the sense of judgments which are objectively analytical but subjectively synthetical. In fact, the principles as stated by him are not synthetical in any sense whatever, but are mere definitions.

Potency: see Potentiality, and Power.

Potential [Lat. potens, capable]: Ger. potentiell; Fr. potentiel; Ital. potenziale. The Potentiality (q.v.) of a thing is said to be potential or to exist potentially. (J.M.B.)

Potential (in physics): Ger. Potential, Potentialfunktion; Fr. potentiel; Ital. potenziale. A mathematical quantity or function whose value throughout any region of space in which given forces of attraction and repul-