

Review of
***SOLVABILITY, PROVABILITY, DEFINABILITY:
THE COLLECTED WORKS OF EMIL L. POST,***
MARTIN DAVIS (ED.)

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After Tarski's *Collected Papers* (1986), the same publisher produced a volume with all the works of Emil Post, another giant of modern logic. The volume contains, besides an introduction by Martin Davis, Post's mathematical as well as logical papers. His mathematical papers clearly show that he was not only a logician (more precisely: a mathematical logician) but also a creative mathematician. In fact, his first research did not concern logic. Post's mathematical papers are these: The generalized gamma functions (1918); Discussion of problem 433 [on the fractional differential equations] (1919); General differentiation (1924); Polyadic groups (1940). Moreover, he published several abstracts of which two are philosophically relevant: Visual intuition in Lobachevsky space (1923); Visual intuition on spherical and elliptic space: Einstein's finite universe (1923).

However, Post's fame as a scholar is mainly connected with his seminal logical achievements. The volume contains: Introduction to a general theory of elementary propositions (1921); Finite combinatory processes - formulation I (1936); The two-valued iterative systems of mathematical logic (1941); Absolutely unsolvable problems and relatively undecidable propositions - account of an anticipation (written in 1941, published in 1965); Formal reductions of the general combinatorial decision problem (1943); Recursively enumerable sets of positive integers and their decision problems (1944); A variant on a recursively unsolvable problem (1946); Recursive unsolvability of a problem of Thue (1947).

Post also published several abstracts on logical matters. One of them has significance for general discussions on conceptual foundations for metamathematics. In "Solvability, definability, provability; history of an error" (1953), Post proposes to add definability to other absolute