

On the Shoulders of Ludwik Fleck? On the Bilingual Philosophical Legacy of Ludwik Fleck and its Polish, German and English Translations

Paweł Jarnicki

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Abstract. *This paper discusses the language problems resulting from translations of the bilingual philosophical legacy of Ludwik Fleck (1896–1961). Since Fleck wrote in both Polish and German, some specific problems can be encountered which no single source can resolve as both the Polish and German texts are of equal value and it is impossible to say whether his theory was formulated in one of these languages first. To solve this problem, this paper suggests that we assume that the level of equivalency of the original sources is at the level of concepts. The case of ‘communication’ is analyzed in detail in accordance with the frequency of certain expressions and the context behind them. Fleck used derivatives of ‘communication’ in Polish only twice, yet in English translations there are fifty-one uses of it. Most of the uses in the English translations come from the Polish ‘porozumieć’ and the German ‘Verkehr’ – expressions that have different meanings. The conclusion to this paper argues that all of the translations should be revised. Some recommendations are formulated, especially in regard to the krażenie myśli / Denkverkehr / ‘circulation of thought’ expressions that differ in lexical meaning but denote the same concept devised by Fleck.*

Keywords. Ludwik Fleck, bilingual legacy, self-translation, communication of thought/ideas, thought style/collective, circulation of thoughts/ideas

Ludwik Fleck was a Polish-Jewish microbiologist (1896–1961)¹ who was born and educated in multicultural Lwów (Lemberg, Lviv), the second largest city of the Austrian Partition of the Republic of Poland. His mother tongue was Polish but he also spoke German, or at least the dialect used within the Austro-Hungarian Empire. A complete bibliography of Fleck's writings would comprise nearly 200 entries (Werner and Zittel 2011); even though most of his publications are microbiological papers, these are not what he became famous for. Worldwide reception of his theory of thought styles and thought collectives began in 1962 when, a year after Fleck's death, Thomas Kuhn named Fleck's book as one of his most important inspirations while writing the most popular book on the philosophy of science in the 20th century, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Kuhn 1962, vi–vii).

However, Fleck has also attracted criticism for being 'inconsistent' and only of 'historical importance' (Harwood 1986). I believe that such criticisms are unfair; it is my contention that they principally stem from the fact that Fleck wrote in two different languages, Polish and German, meaning that his ideas are spread across a variety of works which very few modern scholars, if any, have studied exclusively in their original form. Certainly, I do not know anybody who has read Fleck's German texts in German and his Polish texts in Polish – even people who are fluent in both of these languages read at least half of Fleck's texts in translation as they choose to consult collected editions which are easier to access, thereby they hardly ever compare specific terms with the original source.

This is an issue for two reasons. First, Fleck's legacy was re-discovered gradually and some translations had been made before all of the texts came to light. Second, and more importantly, there are language inconsistencies across his works, owing to the fact that his German and Polish texts were translated by different people – after all, different translators naturally make different decisions when translating certain terms². This accounts for the fact that only the American

¹ For biographical information see (Leszczyńska 2009; Sady 2012).

² A) Maria Tuskiewicz was a microbiologist (Fleck's student); her translation of Fleck's book was consulted with Jerzy Gierasimiuk, Polish philosopher. The German papers were (separately) translated into Polish by the Polish Germanists Wieńczysław Niemirowski and Sylwia Werner. B) The latter translated also several papers into German, her translations were consulted with Claus Zittel, a German philosopher and literary scholar. Other papers were translated into German in cooperation with Thomas Schnelle, a German sociologist, and Bogusław Wolniewicz, a Polish philosopher. C) The German book was translated into English by Fred Bradley (born into a Jewish family in Germany and later emigrated to the UK), a freelance translator, and Thaddeus Trenn, an American historian and philosopher of science; Robert Merton revised this translation. It is not clear who exactly translated the Polish papers published in (Schnelle and Cohen 1986a) since the translations are not signed and there is just a short remark in the *Introduction*: "Dr Felix Lachman (London) was of immense help with the preparation of translations from the Polish" (Schnelle and Cohen 1986b, xviii), so it is reasonable to assume that it was the result of a collective effort of

translation (Fleck 1979) of his German book (Fleck 1935a; Fleck 1980) has an index of terms; none of the editions published in these three languages after 1979 that include his philosophical papers has an index of terms and expressions (Fleck 1983b), (Schnelle and Cohen 1986a), (Fleck 1986c), (Löwy 1990), (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c), (Fleck 2011b). This in turn makes the reception of his theory of thought styles and thought collectives problematic, as potential researchers become entrapped within a vicious circle: 1) it is difficult to conduct research on Fleck without the aid of indexes; 2) indexes are impossible to develop because the translations of some terms are inconsistent; 3) to make the terminology consistent we need to conduct research on his theory, which leads once again to problem 1).

A philological analysis of Fleck’s philosophical writings would help to break this cycle, particularly one that verifies the translations and compares the use of certain expressions in the Polish and German original texts, with the aim of checking which ‘equivalents’ were chosen by Fleck himself. In this article I will attempt to begin this process by focusing on over a dozen of Fleck’s philosophical texts. Although approximately half of his philosophical legacy is in German and the other half is in Polish, the corpus I will review comprises two papers and one book in German, and nine papers in Polish³. Table 1 summarizes the corpus; for each work, the original text is listed in bold:

Texts in Polish	Texts in German	Texts in English
(Fleck 1927) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007b)	(Fleck 1983e), repr. (Fleck 2011b) ⁴	(Fleck 1986f), repr. (Löwy 1990)
(Fleck 2006a) and (Fleck 2007b)	(Fleck 1929) , repr. (Fleck 1983b), (Fleck 2011b)	(Fleck 1986b), repr. (Löwy 1990)
(Fleck 1934) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 2011d)	-
(Fleck 1986c), repr. (Fleck 2006b)	(Fleck 1935a) , repr. (Fleck 1980)	(Fleck 1979)
(Fleck 1935b) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 1983d), repr. (Fleck 2011b)	(Fleck 1986e)

the editors – T. Schnelle, Robert S. Cohen, an American philosopher, and Feliks Lachman, a Polish chemist naturalized in the UK in 1950. Other papers were translated into English by Ilana Löwy (a historian of medicine born in Poland but living in France from the 1950s).

³ Fleck also wrote one paper in English (Fleck 1960) which was published posthumously (Fleck 1986a). The quality of the self-translated passages in the English text shows that Fleck was not fluent in English, so it cannot be treated as representative of the expressions he used in Polish and German.

⁴ Under a modified title (*Über einige spezifische Merkmale des ärztlichen Denkens*), although some translations from Polish reprinted in this volume are ‘revised’ (by S. Werner), there are very few changes.

(Fleck 2006c) and (Fleck 2007d)	(Fleck 1935c) , repr. (Fleck 2011b)	(Fleck 1981)
(Fleck 1936) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 1983a), repr. (Graf and Griesecke 2007), (Fleck 2011b)	(Fleck 1986g)
(Fleck 1938) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 2007a) and (Fleck 2011c)	-
(Fleck 1939a) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 2011e)	(Fleck 1990b)
(Fleck 1939b) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 2011a)	(Fleck 1990a)
(Fleck 1946) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 1983f), repr. (Fleck 2011b)	(Fleck 1986d)
(Fleck 1947) , repr. (Fleck 2006b), (Fleck 2007c)	(Fleck 1983c), repr. (Fleck 2011b)	(Fleck 1986h)

Table 1: The list of Ludwik Fleck's most important philosophical writings and its Polish, German and English translations

There are very few critical remarks on the American translation of Fleck's book⁵. Nevertheless, Fleck researchers find the state of the art problematic, as evidenced by three glossaries of Fleck's expressions (Schnelle and Cohen 1986b, xv–xvi; Graf, E. O., Muter, K. 2006; Kołtan 2007, 127–28)⁶. All of these glossaries are important but they differ in character. They are presented in different languages, based on different (and incomplete) corpuses of Fleck's writings, and the largest one is descriptive in character while the other two are prescriptive – in short, they are separate and incoherent ventures. A philological analysis is therefore still desideratum.

Philological analysis⁷

Although many authors have written in two or more languages, not all of them created a theory (epistemology). And since Fleck did not translate his own texts but wrote originally in Polish

⁵ (Schnelle and Cohen 1986b; Schnelle 1981, 734).

⁶ Kołtan's commentary is restricted to just over a dozen expressions taken from only two Polish papers (Fleck 1936; Fleck 1938) comprising the polemics with Izydora Dąmbska, and he discusses only its Polish and German equivalents (he does not discuss the expressions discussed in current paper).

⁷ This paper is a part of a wider project which is an international cooperative effort between Paweł Jarnicki from Poland, Johannes Fehr (†) and Rainer Egloff, both of whom are from Switzerland. Its main aim is to suggest changes in translations in Polish, German and English and prepare a trilingual glossary of Fleckian expressions (a tool that can be used by translators into other languages as well as for preparing new critical editions of Fleck's philosophical writings). The next aim of the project is to describe how the translations influenced reception in Polish and in English.

and German, this is not a case of strict self-translation – the texts in both of these languages are of equal value. If we treat his writings as self-translation-of-theory, as opposed to self-translation-of-text, we would assume that this theory was formulated in one of these languages first, which appears problematic. The assumption that his theory existed before its formulation in any language also seems problematic. We can find some similarities between some passages from Polish and German texts but there are no passages that could be recognized as self-translated; at most, some could be described as very liberal paraphrasing. It appears that Fleck simply expressed the same thoughts in these two languages. And since both of these languages were his ‘first’ languages we are unable to say which language Fleck primarily used when thinking, if indeed he favoured one language over another.

Due to these problems and the fact that the main purpose of this philological analysis is practical – the preparation of materials enabling preparation of new collected editions of Ludwik Fleck’s philosophical writings in Polish, German and English – the most reasonable solution is, in my opinion, a pragmatic assumption that the level of equivalence is the level of concepts. Hence the assumptions of this analysis are as follows:

- 1) The theory formulated by Fleck in Polish and in German is the same theory.
- 2) This theory is coherent.
- 3) Certain expressions in Polish and German – despite all the major or minor differences of lexical meanings and connotations in both of these languages – refer to the same concept.

Ad 1) None of Fleck’s researchers question this. He wrote both in Polish and German about ‘the theory of thought styles and thought collectives’, gave similar examples, drew similar conclusions, etc. Nevertheless, this should be recognized as an assumption, since the emergence of a theory simultaneously in two languages is probably not very typical. How can the works be translated when both the ‘target’ and ‘source’ languages are the same? Translating Fleck between Polish and German is an extraordinary situation because both languages are in some sense the ‘source’ language.

Ad 2) First of all, this is not self-contradictory, i.e. the relations between concepts expressed in both languages are the same. Furthermore, changes to this theory in the course of time were very minor, if indeed there were any. Some researchers claim that there are five stages of development to this theory as, for instance, (Zittel and Schmalz 2007, 18–24), but their argumentation is not convincing. It seems that the theory of thought styles and thought collectives was formulated in texts published between 1934 and 1936 – these texts are the core of this theory and are the most important for our analysis. Everything that was written prior to this should be seen as early attempts

to formulate his theory, and as such these texts are of lowest importance for philological analysis (since ultimately they do not express his final, fully formed theory). Moreover, everything he wrote after 1936 were polemics (defences of the theory) and texts trying to popularize this theory among various audiences. Therefore we can say that these texts are of medium importance.

Ad 3) The third assumption should become clearer with the examples given below. To put it succinctly, the problem with translations of Fleck's writings is more extensive than the usual dilemma of a translator, i.e. whether to translate word-for-word or sense-for-sense? There is a third limiting factor too – the structure of Fleck's theory and his choices of 'equivalents' in the other language. Even if the second assumption turns out to be false, to verify this we have to assume that Fleck's theory is coherent. The general procedure to describe the third factor should be, I suggest, as follows:

- 1) Identify the most important expressions of the theory of thought styles and thought collectives (beginning with the existing glossaries and papers on Fleck's theory).
- 2) Create a list of synonymous expressions of certain concepts and translations of these expressions. Since the translations already exist they may – if we have a digitalized corpus in synoptic tables – be helpful in finding synonymous expressions in the source language⁸.
- 3) Identify the most frequently used attributives, adverbials etc., their translations and contexts as well as the frequency of use of certain expressions. When we check such stable connections in both languages we can:
- 4) Compare the results and formulate prescriptive recommendations and justifications.

The problem of 'communication'

In the introduction to one of the Polish editions of Fleck's writings, Claus Zittel and Florian Schmaltz suggest several times that Fleck dealt with 'communication processes', 'forms of communication' and 'intracollective communication of thought' (Zittel and Schmalz 2007, 13, 16). Although it may be a good idea to present in this way a theory of an interwar thinker to the contemporary reader, if we want to be thorough it is necessary to point out that Fleck wrote about 'communication' only twice:

That symbolic 'human spirit' is an asocial and ahistorical being: being the only one,

⁸ For example, we check what the translations of expression A are, and we find that A is translated as x – the most obvious and frequent translation – but also as y and even z; then we search the corpus again for the most obvious equivalent for z and y, i.e. C and B in the source language. This method can be seen in Table 5 – these expressions were quite often translated into and from each other, which shows that the translators struggled with them and did not recognize them as equivalent terms.

unique, hence solitary, it has no communication with anybody, it does not enter into discussions, does not cultivate the art of imitation, has no companions, friends or enemies. (Fleck 1986g, 80)

One cannot look upon the sciences as being only a set of sentences or a system of thoughts. They are complex cultural phenomena, at one time perhaps individual, at present collective ones, made up of separate institutions, separate actions, separate events. Written sentences, unwritten customs, one's own aims, methods, traditions, development. Preparation of the mind, cleverness of hands. A special organizational structure, with its hierarchy, ways of communication and co-operation, an organizational court, public opinion, press and congresses. (Fleck 1986d, 118)

Both of these passages are translated from Polish. In the first case, the use of ‘communication’ is a verb in the original, while in the second it is a gerund. Both forms are reflexive (*się*):

Polish original	German translation	English translation
nie <u>komunikuje się</u> z nikim (Fleck 1936, 4)	<u>verkehr</u> t er mit niemandem (Fleck 1983a, 85)	it has no <u>communication</u> with anybody (Fleck 1986g, 80)
sposobem <u>komunikowania się</u> i współpracy (Fleck 1946, 327)	einem <u>Kommunikations-</u> und Kooperationsverfahren (Fleck 1983f, 134)	ways of <u>communication</u> and cooperation (Fleck 1986d, 118)

Table 2: The only uses of 'communication' in Fleck's original (Polish) texts and its translations.

As mentioned above, these are the only uses of the word ‘communication’ in the original Polish texts. This fact may come as something of a surprise to readers of Fleck in English, as the English translations of Fleck’s philosophical writings contain fifty-one references to ‘communication’ or its derivatives. Aside from those mentioned above, a further seventeen of them are translations from Polish. Fifteen of these are derivatives of the verb *porozumieć się*, but in Polish the differences in meaning are significant. Polish contains both perfective and imperfective aspects of this verb; it is possible to create verbal nouns from both forms and the imperfect aspects are also lexicalized. This verb in its perfective aspect (*porozumieć się*) primarily means ‘to come to an understanding’, ‘to agree’ and ‘to concur’, and therefore not only ‘to be in contact’, while in its imperfective form (*porozumiewać się*) it means the process of being in contact by means of something, especially words or language. The verbal noun derived from its perfective aspect (*porozumienie*) means ‘unanimity’, ‘understanding’ or ‘agreement’, while the gerund from the imperfective aspect (*porozumiewanie się*) is closest to the contemporary meaning of ‘communication’ as it signifies ‘the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs’.⁹ What seems significant (and deceptive for translators) about this Polish verb in regard to word formation is its relation (as well as in German) to the word *rozum*

⁹ www.dictionary.com 21.05.2014.

(‘reason’; *Verstand*), as this noun is also related to the verb *rozumieć* (*verstehen*; ‘to understand’).

Indeed, Fleck plays with these words:

Polish original	German translation	English translation
Dopiero socjologia myślenia może nam wytłumaczyć <u>zagadnienie porozumienia się i nieporozumienia się ludzi</u> . (Fleck 1947, 84)	Erst die Soziologie des Denkens kann uns <u>das Problem</u> erklären, <u>warum Menschen sich verständigen und nicht verstehen</u> . (Fleck 1983c, 173)	Only the sociology of thinking can explain to us <u>the problem of communication, and lack of it, among humans</u> . (Fleck 1986h, 151)

Table 3: 'Communication' from the Polish - a quotation containing 'porozumienie' from Polish original text and its translations.

Both the German and English translations change the meaning of the original. Fleck used here *a verbal noun from the perfective aspect in a reflexive form* with and without negation. The fact that the one with negation (*nieporozumienie się*) is in its singular and reflexive form is unusual even for a Polish native speaker. It usually means ‘misunderstanding’, ‘disagreement’ or ‘mistake’, but it is not commonly seen in its reflexive form. Fleck plays with words here – *nieporozumienie się* is simply a negative of *porozumienie się* – we cannot translate the former in terms of its lexical meaning; only as the opposite of the latter. If we translate these expressions in regard to their lexical meanings, the differences will be obvious:

Translation of Polish original	Translation of German translation	English translation
the problem of unanimity and non-unanimity of people	the problem [...] why people communicate and do not understand [each other]	the problem of communication, and lack of it, among humans

Table 4: Differences in meaning of the of the quotation from Table 3 in Polish, German and English.

Although the translation in the first column of Table 4 keeps the word play it loses something because the pronoun *się* indicates that this ‘unanimity’ is achieved through contact or communication. In the passage preceding this sentence Fleck claims, roughly speaking, that scientists think they are mavericks and cannot see the ‘team nature of thinking’ because they are unconsciously united with their collectives and at the same time that is why they disagree with members of other collectives. In addition, Fleck claims, this is an unnoticed problem which could be explained by his theory of thought styles and thought collectives, called here the ‘sociology of thinking’ to emphasize that thinking is rooted in society. The most important aspect that is lost in the German and English translations is that the problem of the ‘unanimity and non-unanimity of people’ is concerned not only with communication between individuals but also, for instance, with the socialization processes of scientists which make them fully in agreement with others in their collectives.

While the translations from Polish are translations of the verb *porozumieć się* and its derivatives, only two of thirty-two translations from German are translations of the corresponding derivative of *sich verständigen*, i.e. *Verständigung*. Another six are derivatives of *mitteilen* and the greatest number of cases – twenty-three – are derivatives (and compositions) of the German verb *verkehren*. The explanation of this asymmetry will be possible only after presenting the list of expressions synonymous to ‘communication’ and analysis of their uses.

A search through the Polish and German original texts and translations of the expressions mentioned above reveals that the situation is approximately as follows. The most confusing element is that in this list of synonymous expressions, one Polish expression – *wymiana myśli* – corresponds to four German expressions:

German expression (original or translation)	Polish expression (original or translation)
Denkverkehr / Gedankenverkehr	wymiana myśli
Gedankenaustausch / Gedankenwechsel	
Wandern eines Gedankens	wędrówka myśli / poruszanie się myśli
Gedanken-Kreislauf	krążenie myśli

Table 5: The list of synonymous expressions (of ‘communication’) as in the Polish and German original texts and published translations.

***Gedankenaustausch* – *wymiana myśli* – ‘interchange of thought’**

In his Polish texts, Fleck uses the exact phrase *wymiana myśli* seven times, and on three other occasions he employs similar expressions in contexts concerning the interchange of thoughts, opinions etc. *Gedankenwechsel* is missing from all of the original German texts, but there is a single example of it as translated from the Polish *wymiana myśli*. Apart from this single case, this Polish expression is consistently translated by derivatives of the German verb *austauschen* and of the English verb ‘to exchange’. *Gedankenaustausch* is also an expression from the original German text but it is used strictly in this form only once; in similar expressions (derivatives of *austauschen*) it is mentioned five times, and the latter are also consistently translated using derivatives of the Polish verb *wymieniać* and the English verb ‘to exchange’. The only difference is that *Denk-* is consistently translated into English as ‘thought(s)’ and *Gedanken-* usually as ‘ideas’¹⁰, while in the Polish translations there is no such difference – both German expressions are translated into the noun *myśl*¹¹ (‘thought’). Therefore the Polish *wymieniać*, the German *austauschen* and the English ‘exchange/interchange’ seem to be justified and coherent with Fleck’s choice.

10 This distinction also concerns translations of *Denk-* and *Gedankenverkehr* into English.

11 The noun *myśl* (‘thought’) has the same ending in the plural and singular genitive forms in Polish.

‘Agreement’ or ‘unanimity’ (*porozumienie*) – not only ‘communication’ – is possible only within the ‘team’ (*zespół*), as between ‘cognate’ (*pokrewny*) teams ‘the interchange of thought’ is always connected with the ‘modification’ of thought, meaning that ‘agreement’ is not fully possible, and the ‘modification’ from the passage below does not have positive connotations – it means something close to ‘garbling’ (*przeinaczenie*). ‘Informative statements’ – those interchanged without any garbling – are possible only between experts (Fleck 1979, 86). *Wymiana myśli* is closer than to ‘communication’ (although they are not synonymous) than *porozumienie* (translated as ‘communication’ in the passage below), because the interchange of thoughts between cognate groups – although with some misrepresentations – is possible, but agreement or unanimity are not.

Polish original	German translation	English translation
Zasadniczo porozumienie możliwe jest tylko w obrębie zespołu, pomiędzy pokrewnymi zespołami odbywa się ono już z pewnym powikłaniem: międzygrupowa wymiana myśli połączona jest zawsze z mniej lub więcej wybitnym przeinaczeniem jej. (Fleck 1936, 9)	Verständigung ist grundsätzlich nur innerhalb einer Gemeinschaft möglich, zwischen verwandten Gemeinschaften spielt sie sich schon mit gewisser Komplikation ab: der Austausch eines Gedankens zwischen den Gruppen ist immer mit seiner mehr oder weniger deutlichen Umänderung verbunden. (Fleck 1983a, 91)	As a rule communication is only possible within one collective while within kindred collectives it is feasible only with some complexity: the inter-group exchange of ideas is always connected with a more or less marked modification of the ideas. (Fleck 1986g, 85)

Table 6: A quotation containing 'wymiana myśli' from Polish original text and its translations.

***Denkverkehr* – krążenie myśli – ‘circulation of thought(s)’**

In the original German texts there are sixteen uses of *Denkverkehr*, and as I have signalled above, it is translated in most cases into Polish as *wymiana myśli*. However, if we search through the German translations of Polish texts it turns out that there is only one use of the derivative of the verb *verkehren*, as shown in the first quotation in Table 2, and this is a translation of the verb *komunikować się* (‘to communicate’).

Each of the uses of *Denkverkehr* is paired with one of three attributives: *intrakollektiv* (‘intracollective’), *interkollektiv* (‘intercollective’) or *esoterisch* (‘esoteric’). Other derivatives of *verkehren* are also (but not so consistently) attributed by ‘inter-’ or ‘intracollective’. The adjective ‘esoteric’ is related to Fleck’s distinction between esoteric and exoteric circles of thought collectives. For example, in modern science collective there is an esoteric circle of experts close to the centre (writing papers in journals, dealing with uncertain knowledge); outside that, but still in the esoteric centre, there are general experts (writing handbooks and textbooks, dealing with certain knowledge); and outside the esoteric centre there is an exoteric circle – this means that closer to the centre there are ‘generally educated’ members, and outside that a ‘wide audience’ (convinced that experts are speaking of existing reality). One of the most important features of a modern science

collective is that it does not have one centre but consists of many collectives of equal value. Therefore ‘esoteric’ means here ‘taking part inside the esoteric circle of the thought collective of a certain field of knowledge’ – between experts of the field. The meanings of ‘esoteric’ and ‘intracollegiate’ are therefore quite close.

Another expression from Table 5 is *Gedanken-Kreislauf*. Although this expression is not present in the original German texts it is used over a dozen times in translations of the Polish texts (as a translation of the Polish expression *krążenie myśli* – ‘circulation of thought’). Original German texts are short of *Gedanken-Kreislauf*. Fleck uses the verb *kreisen* (‘to circulate’) only twice in relation to *Gedanke* (‘thought’)¹². This seems to be the best evidence that the translators did not fully take into account the third factor – the structure of Fleck’s theory. To translate the Polish *krążenie myśli* they engaged the conventional lexical meaning and hence invented a ‘new’ Fleckian expression. Later on I argue that we can find a corresponding (though not in a lexical sense) expression in German.

In the Polish texts Fleck uses *krążenie myśli* or *krążenie* in relation to ‘thought’ eighteen times, and the verb *krążyć* (‘to circulate’) or its derivatives in the context of ‘thought’ another five times, and twice in relation to *twór* (once explicitly attributed by the adjective ‘thought’ and another time in the context of ‘thought’). It is not possible to identify stable attributives of *krążenie myśli*, yet generally the meaning of most of them is similar to ‘within the collective’ and ‘between collectives’. It is significant that this ‘circulation of thought’ may be ‘intended’ or ‘unintended’ (*zamierzone* or *niezamierzone*).

Is it possible that the German *Denkverkehr* (consistently translated into English as ‘communication of thoughts’ and into Polish most often as *wymiana myśli* – ‘exchange of thoughts’), despite its strict lexical meaning, is better translated as *krążenie myśli* (consistently translated into English as ‘circulation of thoughts’, and into German most often as *Gedanken-Kreislauf*) and vice versa, and that both expressions should be translated into English as ‘circulation of thought’? The frequency of uses of these expressions in the German and Polish texts is similar – twenty-three and twenty-seven, respectively. Are there any other arguments that these two expressions relate to the same concept?

In Table 5 there is also another expression – *poruszanie się myśli* (‘movement of thought’). Fleck uses this expression in Polish texts only twice, in very similar sentences:

¹² And once more in relation to *Auffassung* and *Idee* (‘conception’ and ‘idea’), once to *Aussage* (‘utterance’) and once to *Wort* (‘word’), but never in its nominal form.

	Polish original	German translation	English translation
A.	każde poruszanie się myśli wewnątrz kolektywu potęguje ją i wzmacnia <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> (Fleck 1934, 205)	Jedes Wandern eines Gedankens innerhalb des Kollektivs potenziert und verstärkt es also <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> (Fleck 2011d, 200)	-
B.	każde poruszenie się myśli wewnątrz kolektywu – <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> – potęguje i od-indywidualizuje ją, podobnie jak krążenie jej pomiędzy kolektywami zmienia ją i przekształca (Fleck 1936, 26)	jede Bewegung eines Gedankens innerhalb des Kollektivs ihn – <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> – steigert und ent-individualisiert, ähnlich wie ihn sein Kreisen zwischen Kollektiven verändert und umgestaltet (Fleck 1983a, 113)	every movement of thought within the collective – <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> – intensifies and individualizes it, just as its circulation among the collectives changes and transforms it (Fleck 1986g, 102)

Table 7: Two quotations containing 'poruszenie się myśli' and its translations.

Beside the fact that *od-indywidualizować* ('deindividualize') has a directly opposite meaning to 'individualize' (translator's choice), in the second passage (Table 7 B), Fleck writes about *krążenie myśli* as if it is a synonymous expression to *poruszenie się myśli*, while *krążenie* takes place between collectives and *poruszenie się* within the collective. It is significant that Fleck did not use *poruszenie się* more often. The first mention of it was translated into German as *Wandern* ('wandering') and the second time as *Bewegung* ('movement'). And if we search through the German texts we will find another very similar sentence containing *Denkverkehr*:

German original	Polish translation	English translation
der intrakollektive <i>Denkverkehr ipso sociologico facto</i> — ohne Rücksicht auf den Inhalt und die logische Berechtigung — zur Bestärkung der Denkgebilde führt. (Fleck 1935a, 113)	intrakolektywna wymiana myśli <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> — bez względu na treść i logiczne uzasadnienie — prowadzi do wzmocnienia struktury myślowej. (Fleck 1986c, 139)	the communication of thoughts within a collective, irrespective of content or logical justification, should lead for <i>sociological reasons</i> to the corroboration of the thought structure [<i>Denkgebilde</i>]. (Fleck 1979, 106)

Table 8: 'Communication' from the German - a quotation containing 'Denkverkehr' from German original text and its translations.

The conclusion is that *Denkverkehr* is more a kind of 'movement' of thought than a kind of 'exchange' (*wymiana myśli*) or 'communication' of thought. The Polish *krążenie* is also a kind of movement – the first meaning is 'moving or forming a circle', but there is also a second: 'moving not directly to the target', 'moving back and forth', 'rambling'.

Another important feature of this 'movement' is that it is possible not only between individuals but also within the individual.

German original	Polish translation	English translation
Dieser esoterische <i>Denkverkehr</i> vollzieht sich zum Teil schon innerhalb der Person des Forschers	Ten ezoteryczny ruch myśli zachodzi już częściowo w obrębie osoby samego badacza: sam ze sobą	Some of this esoteric communication of thought occurs already within the scientist himself. He conducts a

selbst: er hält mit sich selbst Zwiesprache, wägt ab, vergleicht, entscheidet sich. (Fleck 1935a, 128)	prowadzi dialog, rozważa, porównuje, rozstrzyga. (Fleck 1986c, 155)	dialogue with himself as he ponders, compares, and makes decisions. (Fleck 1979, 120)
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Table 9: A quotation containing 'Denkverkehr' from German original text and its translations.

That is why on one occasion the Polish translator decided to translate *Denkverkehr* in a different way – not as an equivalent of ‘interchange of thought’ but as *ruch* (‘movement’),¹³ because ‘exchange’ or ‘communication’ of thought within the individual, in Polish at least, doesn’t make much sense.

Wandern eines Gedankens – wędrówka myśli – ‘wandering thoughts’

Other expressions from Table 5 that denote a kind of movement are the German *Wandern* and the Polish *wędrówka*. This is a kind of a journey but not directly from one point to another – it rather means ‘rambling’ or ‘wandering’. And the coincidence of using the Latin phrase *ipso sociologico facto* leads us to a fourth sentence similar to those from above:

Polish original	German translation	English translation
Wewnątrz-zespołowej <u>wędrówce</u> każda myśl ulega więc <i>ipso</i> <i>sociologico facto</i> wzmocnieniu. (Fleck 1947, 84)	Auf der gemeinschaftsinternen <u>Wanderung</u> unterliegt jeder Gedanke also <i>ipso sociologico facto</i> der Bestärkung. (Fleck 1983c, 172)	in the intra-collective <u>migration</u> each thought becomes strengthened <i>ipso</i> <i>sociologico facto</i> . (Fleck 1986h, 150)

Table 10: A quotation containing 'wędrówka' from Polish original text and its translations.

This fourth similar sentence shows that Fleck was not very strict about using these expressions – *poruszanie się*, *krążenie*, *wędrówka* and *Verkehr* were synonymous for him, they denoted the same concept. Also, each of these expressions is attributed by ‘inter-’ or ‘intra-collective’ (or similar expressions). These were not Fleck’s own terms but – to express this concept in a more general way – they meant a kind of movement, the movement of thought or thinking that is usually beyond the control of the individual, often accidental and without a clear aim. This is something more than ‘communication’.

In the Polish texts Fleck used *wędrówka* thirteen times, nine of which were strictly in relation to ‘thought’, twice in relation to ‘knowledge’ or ‘elements of knowledge’, once to ‘words and sentences’ and once to ‘external influences’.

This is consistently translated into German as *Wanderung* and, indeed, in the original German texts Fleck also used the German noun *Wanderung* ten times – in relation to *Gedanke* five times, twice in relation to ‘finding’, once to ‘word’, once to ‘concept’ and once to ‘fragments of

¹³ ‘Ruch’ is more abstract than *poruszanie się* (and is not reflexive).

knowledge'. Although English translators often translated *Wandern/wędrówka* when it is attributed by 'intercollective' (or equivalents) as 'passage' and when attributed by 'intracollective' (or equivalents) as 'migration', in Polish and German it is still the same word and it would be better, wherever possible, to also choose one word in English – 'wandering'.

Conclusion

Since Ludwik Fleck's philosophy is becoming increasingly popular, a critical edition of his philosophical writings is desirable. Not only the English translations but also both Polish and German texts should be revised to accommodate the fact that Fleck wrote both in German and Polish and that the texts written in both of these languages are of equal value. I suggest introducing a third factor – Fleck's choices of 'equivalent' expressions – to the process of revising the translations. Because Fleck's theory is formulated in two languages I assume that the level of equivalency is at the level of concepts. This seems justified also due to the fact that Fleck was not the most disciplined in the way he used certain expressions.

Following that, I suggest creating a list of synonymous expressions in Polish and German and identifying the contexts as well as the frequency of their uses. Such a comparison will enable prescriptive recommendations and justifications to be formed. The case of 'communication' is an illustrative example. Besides the fact that Fleck used the equivalent of this word only twice in the original texts, it is intriguing that 'communication' in the English translations comes from different Polish (*porozumieć się* and derivatives) and German (*verkehren* and derivatives) expressions. If the English translators wanted to be consistent they should also have translated German expression as 'circulation of thoughts' or the Polish one as 'communication of thought'. However, in my view it would be better to translate Fleck without using derivatives of 'communication' since this limits the process described by Fleck to communication between individuals, while in fact Fleck wrote about something more – something beyond the control of the individual, taking part within the individual, something related also to the process of socialization of members of collectives. The analysis performed above showed that while the pairs *Wandern / wędrówka* and *Austausch / wymiana* are present in the original texts in both languages and are more or less equal in meaning (I suggest translating the former as 'wandering' and the latter as 'interchange'), there are no equivalents of the original Polish expression *krążenie myśli* in the original German texts, nor any equivalents of the original German expression *Denkverkehr* in the original Polish texts. The former is translated into German as *Gedanken-Kreislauf*, a term that is not present at all in the original German texts, and the latter is wrongly translated into Polish as another Polish expression mentioned above – *wymiana myśli* ('interchange of thought'). It appears that by being willing to stand on the shoulders of

Ludwik Fleck we fall into the arms of translators.

My suggestions are then as follows: in the German translations *krążenie myśli* should be translated as *Denkverkehr* (or other derivatives of *verkehren*) and the German *Denkverkehr* should be translated into Polish as *krążenie myśli*. Both of them should be translated into English as ‘circulation of thoughts’:

German expression and translation	Polish expression and translation	English translation
Verkehr	krążenie	circulation
Wandern	wędrowka	wandering
Austausch	wymiana	interchange

Table 11: Prescriptive trilingual glossary of three expressions.

Authors analyzing the notions of the German *Denkverkehr* or the Polish *krążenie myśli*¹⁴ should therefore take into account the meaning of each expression in the second language as they denote the very same concept of Fleck.

PAWEŁ JARNICKI

Projekt Nauka. Fundacja na Rzecz Promocji Nauki Polskiej (Project Science. A Foundation for Promoting Polish Science), ul. Gwarecka 8/12, 54-143 Wrocław (Wrocław), Poland.
pawel.jarnicki@projekt-nauka.com

Notes on contributor

Paweł Jarnicki wrote his dissertation titled "Metaphorical conceptualizations of the concept of «text» and changes of thought styles in history and theory of literature" in 2012 in Polish at Faculty of Polish Philology (University of Wrocław, Poland). His main fields of scientific interest are: the problem of metaphor in science, Ludwik Fleck's philosophy of science and eugenics. Since 04.2013 he is principal investigator in the project realised in cooperation between Project Science Foundation (Wrocław, Poland, Paweł is member of the Board) and Ludwik Fleck Zentrum (Zürich, Switzerland, Paweł is associated researcher).

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14 See, for instance: (Möller 2007; Egloff 2014).

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