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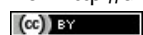
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Commemorative Issue – *Transversal* at Ten

Reflections on a Decade About Ludwik Fleck between 2016 and 2026

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I remember when, in March 2016 in Wrocław, during the conference *Ludwik Fleck's theory of thought styles and thought collectives—translations and receptions*,² Mauro Condé suggested that Sandra Lang and I edit the first issue of a new journal on the historiography of science—featuring post-conference articles.³ Ten years have passed, and Mauro has asked me to write a few words for the anniversary volume of *Transversal*.

What has happened since 2016? In April 2019, a conference titled *Ludwik Fleck and His 'Thought Collectives'* was held in Lviv.⁴ It is also important to note the closure of the Ludwik Fleck Zentrum in Zurich in 2021. However, the Collegium Helveticum continues its annual Fleck Lecture series,⁵ and in November 2025, a workshop titled *New Perspectives on Ludwik Fleck* was held there.⁶ In Zurich, the Fleck Archive is also still located (at the *Archiv für Zeitgeschichte*). The most important documents there are photocopies; however, it has not yet been determined whether Fleck's original materials—which were confiscated from the Soviet spy Marcus Klingberg by the local intelligence services—have been preserved in Israel. In April 2026, a workshop titled *Ludwik Fleck in discussion. Science, society and pluralism* was held in Venice.⁷ Interest in the theory of thought styles and thought collectives thus remains alive, though it falls far short of the level of interest in Thomas Kuhn's theory of the development of science, especially in the English-speaking part of the world, which is only interested in foreign authors when their works have been translated into English.⁸

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² The report was written by Sandra Lang. (2016). Conference Report: Ludwik Fleck's theory of thought styles and thought collectives—translations and receptions. *Somatosphere*, 24.06.2016, <https://somatosphere.com/2016/conference-report-ludwik-flecks-theory-of-thought-styles-and-thought-collectives-translations-and-receptions.html/>. Accessed 30.04.2026.

³ *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science*, no. 1 (2016): Dossier Ludwik Fleck: Theory of Thought Styles and Thought Collectives—Translations and Receptions <https://periodicos.ufmg.br/index.php/transversal/issue/view/806>.

⁴ <https://www.lvivcenter.org/en/conferences/ludwik-fleck-and-his-thought-collectives/>.

⁵ <https://collegium.ethz.ch/events/ludwik-fleck-lectures>.

⁶ <https://collegium.ethz.ch/events/fellow-year-2025-2026/new-perspectives-on-ludwik-fleck>.

⁷ <https://www.unive.it/data/33113/8/115048>.

⁸ Wojciech Sady pointed out to me that, for example, *The Routledge Handbook of Social Epistemology* (2020) ed. by Miranda Fricker, Peter J. Graham, David Henderson, and Nikolaj J. L. L. Pedersen does

New publications about Fleck—or those attempting to apply his theory to the study of various phenomena—continue to appear.⁹ Wojciech Sady is continuing his work on the entry *Ludwik Fleck* in the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy.¹⁰ Interest in Fleck is growing, particularly in South America, and this is undoubtedly due in large part to Mauro Condé. As for new translations of Fleck's work, the most notable are the new translations of his book: the Ukrainian one¹¹ and the Korean one.¹² Several of Fleck's articles have also been translated into Italian,¹³ and one Polish paper was translated into English.¹⁴ What should be done?

1. I believe that the most important thing is, first of all, to prepare a new English translation of all of Fleck's texts and publish them in a critical edition, because the current translations are imperfect, inconsistent, and fail to take into account the fact that Fleck developed a single theory in two languages (so we have two source languages!). And unfortunately, everyone today has to cite the 1979 American edition.
2. It would be worthwhile to conduct an in-depth study of Ludwik Fleck's influence on Thomas Kuhn.¹⁵ I have described how this could be done in a grant proposal that I

not contain a single mention of Fleck. The same goes for Kent W. Staley's *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* published by Cambridge in 2014. When such handbooks or introductions are written by Europeans or South Americans, Fleck is included in their works. See, for instance, *History of Rationalities* by Luca Sciortino (Springer, 2023).

⁹ It would be impossible to list them all here, so I'll limit myself to a subjective selection of those I find most interesting: Sciortino, Luca. (2021). "The emergence of objectivity: Fleck, Foucault, Kuhn and Hacking". *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science*, 88, p. 128-137. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2021.06.005>. Binney, Nicolas. (2023). "Ludwik Fleck's reasonable relativism about science". *Synthese*, 201, 40. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-022-04018-w>. Mößner, Nicola. (2024). "Thought styles". In: *Elgar Encyclopedia of Interdisciplinarity and Transdisciplinarity*. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035317967.ch115>. Stephen Dersley. (2025). *Thought Collectives and Cultural Change. Applying Ludwik Fleck's Theory of Thought Collectives to the Study of Cultural Transformations*, Springer. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-97431-1>. Cimbora, Guillermo. "Ludwik Fleck: Philosopher of Scientific Practice". *Journal for General Philosophy of Science*, 57, 87-107 (2026). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10838-024-09713-5>.

¹⁰ Sady, Wojciech, "Ludwik Fleck". *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2025 Edition), Edward N. Zalta & Uri Nodelman (eds.). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2025/entries/fleck/>.

¹¹ Fleck, Ludwik. (2019). *Як навчає та розвивається науковий факт*. Transl. Stefaniya Ptashnyk.

¹² Fleck, Ludwik. (2020). *과학적 사실의 기원과 발전*. Transl. 이을상 (Yi Eul-sang). Seoul.

¹³ Coniglione, Francesco (ed.). (2019). *Ludwik Fleck. Stili di pensiero. La conoscenza scientifica come creazione sociale*. Transl. Idem.

¹⁴ Fleck, Ludwik. (2025). How Did the Bordet-Wassermann Test Emerge? And How Does Any Scientific Discovery Come About? [unknown translator]. In: *Investigations in the Theory of Knowledge at the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University*. Leiden. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004722064_004.

¹⁵ In December 2025, an article appeared in *Transversal* (Lorenzano, César. (2025). "Fleck: The Forgotten Ancestor". *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.24117/2526-2270.2025.i19.16>), Lorenzano's article would be better if he had taken into account two of my previously published texts: on the influence of art historians on Fleck and Kuhn (Jarnicki, Paweł. (2021). "Stimmung/Nastrój as Content of Modern Science: On Musical Metaphors in Ludwik Fleck's Theory of Thought Styles and Thought Collectives". *Foundations of Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10699-021-09792-3>) and on Fleck's influence on Kuhn (Jarnicki, Paweł and Greif, Hajo. (2022). "The 'Aristotle Experience' Revisited: Thomas Kuhn Meets Ludwik Fleck on the Road to Structure", *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*. <https://doi.org/10.1515/agph-2020-0160>).



published in the Zenodo repository.¹⁶ Extensive archival research and a thorough linguistic analysis of Kuhn's early writings and notes should be conducted, followed by a comparison of Kuhn's theory *in statu nascendi* with Fleck's writings—with particular attention to the metaphorical processes through which both authors assigned meaning to abstract concepts.

3. I am also convinced that Fleck's thesis—that not only thought but also sensory perception is socially and culturally conditioned—requires further study. The belief that all people perceive things in the same way because they are biologically identical still prevails. Meanwhile, I believe Fleck's statement “We look with our own eyes, but we see with the eyes of the collective”¹⁷ should be taken literally. Certain studies on autism could serve as a good starting point here.

¹⁶ Jarnicki, Paweł. (2025). On the Shoulders of an Invisible Giant? Uncovering Ludwik Fleck's Influence on Thomas Kuhn (Proposal to the Polish National Science Centre). Zenodo. <https://zenodo.org/records/17750037>

¹⁷ Although it may sound nice, there is no direct equivalent for the word “body” in the original; this is the translator's own invention: “We look with our own eyes, but we see with the eyes of the collective body” (Fleck, Ludwik. (1986). To look, to see, to know. In: R. S. Cohen and T Schnelle (eds.), *Cognition and Fact – Materials on Ludwik Fleck*, p. 137).