

THE POLISH SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY OF MEDICINE

PHILOSOPHY AND MEDICINE

Editors:

H. TRISTRAM ENGELHARDT, JR.

*The Center for Ethics, Medicine and Public Issues
Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, Texas, U.S.A.*

STUART F. SPICKER

*School of Medicine, University of Connecticut Health Center,
Farmington, Connecticut, U.S.A.*

VOLUME 37

The Polish School of Philosophy of Medicine

From Tytus Chalubinski (1820–1889)
to Ludwik Fleck (1896–1961)

Compiled, translated and Introductions

by

ILANA LÖWY

INSERM, Hôpital Necker-Enfants Malades, Paris



KLUWER ACADEMIC PUBLISHERS

DORDRECHT / BOSTON / LONDON

ISBN-13: 978-94-010-7461-2
DOI: 10.1007/978-94-009-2135-1

e-ISBN-13: 978-94-009-2135-1

Published by Kluwer Academic Publishers,
P.O. Box 17, 3300 AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

Kluwer Academic Publishers incorporates
the publishing programmes of
D. Reidel, Martinus Nijhoff, Dr W. Junk and MTP Press.

Sold and distributed in the U.S.A. and Canada
by Kluwer Academic Publishers,
101 Philip Drive, Norwell, MA 02061, U.S.A.

In all other countries, sold and distributed
by Kluwer Academic Publishers Group,
P.O. Box 322, 3300 AH Dordrecht, The Netherlands.

Printed on acid-free paper

All Rights Reserved
© 1990 Kluwer Academic Publishers
Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 1990

No part of the material protected by this copyright notice may be reproduced or
utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical,
including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and
retrieval system, without written permission from the copyright owner.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	vii
CHAPTER I. Introduction: Philosophy of Medicine in Poland	1
CHAPTER II. Tytus Chałubiński. The Last Follower of 'Medical Systems' or a Pioneer of a New Approach to Therapy?	13
CHAPTER II.a. Text of Chałubiński: Excerpts from <i>The Method of Finding Therapeutic Indications</i> (1874)	25
CHAPTER III. Edmund Biernacki on the Science of Diseases and the Art of Healing	37
CHAPTER III.a. Text of Biernacki: Excerpts from <i>The Essence and the Limits of Medical Knowledge</i> (1898)	49
CHAPTER IV. Władysław Biegański Between the Logic of Science and the Logic of Medicine	69
CHAPTER IV.a. Texts of Biegański: Excerpts from <i>General Problems of the Theory of Medical Sciences</i> (1897)	91
<i>Thoughts and Aphorisms on Medical Ethics</i> (1899)	100
<i>The Logic of Medicine or the Critique of Medical Knowledge</i> (1908)	112
CHAPTER V. Zygmunt Kramsztyk and the Critical Evaluation of Medical Practice	121
CHAPTER V.a. Texts of Kramsztyk:	
'Rational Treatment' (1897)	137
'Is Medicine an Art or a Science?' (1895)	143
'A Clinical Fact' (1898)	155
'On Being-up to Date' (1907)	160
CHAPTER VI. From <i>Medical Critique</i> to the <i>Archives of the History and Philosophy of Medicine</i> : The Institutionalization of Polish School of Philosophy of Medicine	163
CHAPTER VI.a. Texts of Wrzosek and Trzebiński:	
Wrzosek: 'Trends in contemporary medicine' (1900)	185
Trzebiński: 'Rationality and 'Rationalism' in Medicine' (1925)	191
'Absurdity in Medicine' (1927)	200
CHAPTER VII. Ludwik Fleck. From Philosophy of Medicine to a Constructivist and Relativist Epistemology	215

CHAPTER VII.a. Texts of Fleck and Bilikiewicz	
Fleck: 'Some Specific Features of the Medical Way of Thinking' (1927)	229
Fleck: 'On the Crisis of 'Reality' (1929)	237
Fleck: 'Science and Social Context' (1939)	249
Bilikiewicz: 'Comments on Ludwik Fleck's 'Science and Social Context' (1939)	257
Fleck: 'Rejoinder to the Comments of Tadeusz Bilikiewicz' (1939)	267
Bilikiewicz: 'Reply to the Rejoinder by Ludwik Fleck' (1939)	274
CHAPTER VIII. Conclusions: Philosophizing at the Bedside	277
NAME INDEX	285

PREFACE

My 'discovery' of the Polish School of philosophy of medicine stemmed from my studies in the genesis of Ludwik Fleck's epistemology. These studies, and my interest in the scientific roots of Fleck's epistemology were a nearly 'natural' result of my own biography: like Fleck I had been trained, and had worked as an immunologist, and had later switched to studies in the social history of medicine and biology. Moreover, it so happened that Fleck's book, *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* - the description of a science as it is, not as it should be - was the first epistemological study in which I found echos of my experience in the laboratory. My interest in Fleck was also highlighted by the fact that in his works, and, as I discovered later, in the works of his predecessors of the Polish School of philosophy of medicine, was formulated the problem that had stimulated my interest in the history of medicine and biology, and is still central to my present investigations: the relationships between biological knowledge and clinical practice.

The writing of the book was made possible through to the help of many colleagues and friends. The unfailing support for my research, whatever its subject might be, from my colleagues from Unit 158 of INSERM and in particular from its head Patrice Pinell, has made my study of the Polish School possible. I am indebted to those who assisted me through discussion, suggestions and encouragement: Gad Freudenthal, Barbara Markiewicz, Anne-Marie Moulin, Elzbieta Pakszys, Barbara Tuchańska, Thomas Schnelle and Włodzimierz Wypych. Maria Cubrzyńska, head of the ancient books department at the Library of Warsaw University, and Krzysztof Turowski at the Polish Library in Paris, were of great aid in finding the original works. Alexander Rodzewicz helped with the translations from Polish. Robert Sayre not only painstakingly corrected my imperfect English - a thankless task! - but in many cases contributed to the clarification of my thought as well. Stuart Spicker patiently read several imperfect versions of the manuscript and made numerous, highly valuable editorial comments and Suzan Engelhardt

carefully proofread the final draft. Marie-Jo Bézard with her usual competence and kindness dealt with all the technical aspects of the production of this work. I am indebted to Martin Scrivener and to the Kluwer Academic Editions for the efficient and sympathetic processing of the manuscript. Finally, during the writing of this book my children - Tamara, Daniel, Naomi and Rachel - were a permanent, and for me an indispensable source of joy.