

Symposium | CFI : [Symposium 20] How to make the real critical transcultural psychiatry in japan today

📅 Thu. Sep 25, 2025 4:25 PM - 5:55 PM JST | Thu. Sep 25, 2025 7:25 AM - 8:55 AM UTC 🏢 Session Room 7
(Conference Room C)

[Symposium 20] How to make the real critical transcultural psychiatry in japan today

Moderator: Yasuo Miwaki (Jinai University)

[SY-20-04] Electroshock Therapy through the Lens of French Epistemology: Insights from Bachelard and Canguilhem

*Daisuke Nakamura¹ (1. Toyohashi University of Technology (Japan))

Keywords : French Epistemology、Gaston Bachelard、Georges Canguilhem、Electroshock Therapy

The purpose of this presentation is to revisit the historical debate concerning "electroshock" therapy in the history of medicine through the lens of French epistemology. In particular, I aim to explore the relationship between the image surrounding the concept of electroshock and its medical practice. To this end, I will draw on the ideas of two French epistemologists, Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem.

Bachelard, in *La formation de l'esprit scientifique* (1938), argued that prior to the 19th century, the physical stimulus of electricity was accompanied by a host of imaginative representations that functioned as "epistemological obstacles," delaying the emergence of rigorous scientific concepts. Importantly, these images are not simply hindrances to be eliminated, but rather constitute indispensable moments in the development of scientific thought. Similarly, Bachelard's successor Canguilhem emphasized the epistemological role of "error" in living organisms in *Le normal et le pathologique* (1943), and later addressed the role of "ideology" in scientific thought in *Idéologie et rationalité* (1977).

How might concepts such as "obstacle," "error," and "ideology"—typically viewed as impediments to scientific development—be reinterpreted as essential elements within the scientific inquiry? Framed by this epistemological question, this presentation will reconsider the case of electroshock therapy to explore the manifestation of these tensions.