

**Call for Papers**  
**10th International Workshop on Historical Epistemology:**  
**Intersections of Psychological Research and Psychotherapeutic Practices**

**27-29 March 2025**

**IMGWF, Universität zu Lübeck**

*Organized by:*

*EpistHist* Research Network on the History and the Methods of Historical Epistemology

<https://episthist.hypotheses.org/>

*Opening lecture:*

Hans-Jörg Rheinberger

Ten years ago, the Research Network on the History and Methods of Historical Epistemology, *EpistHist*, began in Paris with its inaugural workshop on *épistémologie historique*. These workshops have turned into an annual opportunity to discuss key issues in the history and philosophy of sciences and engage in contemporary methodological debates. By mobilizing historical epistemology as a broad approach, the workshops mediate between 20th-century French epistemology and its recent renewal in the English-speaking world. The abstracts and programs of past editions are available on the research network's website: <https://episthist.hypotheses.org/>.

After editions in Paris, Dijon, and Venice, *EpistHist* is now crossing the Rhine and the Elbe rivers to celebrate its first decade at the Institute for the History of Medicine and Science Studies, University of Lübeck, where Hans-Jörg Rheinberger once conceived tools for interlacing the history of science with philosophy through historical epistemology.

This anniversary workshop will focus on the topic of *Intersections of Psychological Research and Psychotherapeutic Practices*. Here, we aim to explore which approaches within historical epistemology are most suitable for investigating the production of knowledge and practices related to the psyche.

Since Gaston Bachelard (1984) placed research instruments and techniques at the core of his epistemological history with the concept of *phenomenotechnique*, the role of practices has become central to understanding the production and transmission of scientific knowledge. Compared to microscopes or particle accelerators, psychology and the psy-sciences might seem to lack equivalent *phenomenotechniques*. However, at a closer look, the psy-sciences make widespread use of questionnaires, interviews,

protocols, and other “paper tools” essential for their knowledge practices. Mitchell Ash and Thomas Sturm (2007), following Ian Hacking (1992) and Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (2017), have especially pointed to the role of instruments of experimentation as organizers of psychological research practices.

On a cultural and political level, following Michel Foucault’s (2008) analysis of psy-practices as disciplinary practices, scholars like Ian Hacking (1995, 1998, 2002), Arnold I. Davidson (2002), and others explored the normative effects of psy-sciences and psy-practices on subjects, subjectivity, and conceptions of selfhood, showing how concepts and categories shape experiences, resulting in new ways of “making up people.”

Nonetheless, with the notable exception of some recent works (Marks, 2017; Rosner, 2018), inquiries into the history of psy-sciences have primarily focused on the production of psy-knowledge, often overlooking psychotherapeutic practices under the assumption that these are merely applications of that knowledge. Our workshop intends to challenge this by explicitly addressing psychotherapeutic practices as equally relevant for a historical epistemology of psy-sciences. We follow Georges Canguilhem’s (1974) insight that medicine is not the mere application of knowledge generated in the life sciences but a set of diagnostic and therapeutic techniques situated at the crossroads of different disciplines and sciences. Borrowing from Canguilhem, the aim of our workshop is precisely to explore such intersections and crossroads, from experimental psychology to spiritual exercises, and from psychiatric classification systems to psychotherapeutic approaches.

We welcome proposals exploring the relationship between scientific inquiries producing knowledge and the technical development of psychotherapeutic practices. Key questions to be addressed include, but are not limited to:

- What approach within historical epistemology helps to better understand the social, political, and normative effects of psy-practices?
- What instruments in the psy-field can be conceptualized as “paper tools” or even *phenomenotechniques*?
- To what extent and how do categories and concepts from psychotherapy help create new “kinds of people”?
- How has the relationship between psychological research and psychotherapeutic approaches changed over time?
- How have specific scientific inquiries shaped different psychotherapeutic practices?

- Did the scientific knowledge produced by the psy-sciences migrate into psychotherapy, and, if so, how was it translated, transformed, and adapted in the process?
- In what ways have psychotherapeutic techniques contributed to psychological research?
- How have different scientific findings been used to legitimize psychotherapeutic practices?
- What roles have cultural, institutional, and political contexts played in shaping psy-sciences, psychotherapeutic practices, and their interrelations?

Proposals (500 words, along with a brief bio of the candidate) must be submitted by November 30, 2024, in .doc format to [epistemologiehistorique@gmail.com](mailto:epistemologiehistorique@gmail.com). Notification of acceptance or rejection will be sent by early January 2025. The workshop will be conducted in English.

Organizing committee:

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