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Author(s)	Ikeda, Takashi
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Body and Needs: Perspectives on how the phenomenology of the female body may prove useful for feminist political activism

Takashi Ikeda

Abstract

This paper proposes that the phenomenology of the female body is useful for feminist political activism in three respects: For making the personal-nonpolitical political, for providing a fine need interpretation, and for associating people between inside and outside academic world. Firstly, the phenomenology of the female body will be captured as what Nancy Fraser calls a dialogical, participatory activity of need interpretation by those who have a female body and as an activity that politicizes the neglected female bodily experiences. Secondly, this interpretation will be clarified by comparing the phenomenology of the female body with a Japanese research activity called *Tōjisya Kenkyū* (sufferer's first-person study) that is often regarded as a kind of phenomenological research and prevails among those who suffer from disabilities and other life problems. Thirdly, the case of DARC (Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Center) women's house will specifically draw a concrete picture of how phenomenology of the body will work for the political empowerment of women inside and outside the academic world.

Keywords

Phenomenology, body, feminism, political philosophy, N. Fraser, I. M. Young, *Tōjisya Kenkyū*

Introduction

“What… is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled” (Augustine, 1961: 264). This is the famous sentence from book XI of Augustine’s *Confessions* that Husserl cites in the first part of *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (Husserl, 1991: 3). Phenomenology intends to investigate what seems most obvious and intimate to us, recognizing that the most intimate is the most neglected. The body has been one of the major topics in phenomenological research since Husserl. More recently, *feminist phenomenology* emerged in the late twentieth century, which started focusing on what had been one of the most neglected topics in the history of philosophy: *the female body*.

Since Plato viewed body as a “bind” from the very beginning of Western philosophy, the human being was required to be discharged from bodily needs in order to be a person, a moral subject, and a political agent. Against this tradition, feminist scholars strive to reveal that the long history of contempt for body coincides with the neglect of women’s life both in philosophy and politics. Considered with such a context, the emergence of feminist phenomenology can make a meaningful contribution to feminist politics. Yet, there is no agreement or shared understanding amongst feminists as to how the phenomenology of the female body will be relevant to feminist political thinking, or how it may prove useful for feminist political activism. In this paper I shall explore the issues surrounding feminist phenomenology of the body, and suggest ways that a feminist phenomenological theory of the body, where the body is understood as dialogical and politically responsive could possibly contribute to what Nancy Fraser calls the *politics of need interpretation*.

To clarify my suggestion, I shall highlight a Japanese research activity called *Tōjisya Kenkyū* (sufferer’s first-person study, self-directed study or self-group study) that is often regarded as a kind of phenomenological research in a wider sense and prevails among those who suffer from disabilities and other difficulties in life. The case of DARC (Drug Addiction Rehabilitation Center) women’s house will make it possible to draw a concrete picture of how phenomenology will work for the empowerment of women both

inside and outside the academic world.

Phenomenology and Feminist Politics: Towards the Politics of Need Interpretation

What is phenomenology of the female body and why is it important for feminist *theory*? The phenomenology of the female body is a philosophical inquiry into women's lived experience, embodiment, or modes of being in the world, which is influenced by classical phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty in its methods and concepts¹. In phenomenology one's body is not treated as an object of natural science, that is a physical body, but rather phenomenology is a study project for a strict description or interpretation of *lived* experience and embodiment of each subject². Also, its bodily features including sexuality are difficult to view as merely socially constructed, because each subject is considered in phenomenology as being situated in its own surroundings with its own personal history, which cannot be generalized³. As Sara Heinämaa states, "phenomenology offers methodological and conceptual tools for the development of a philosophical alternative to contemporary feminist naturalism and constructionism" (Heinämaa, 2009: 503).

Besides these more theoretical questions, one other question about the phenomenology of the female body needs to be addressed. So long as it understands itself as *feminist phenomenology*, in what sense does the phenomenology of the female body relate to feminism as a political movement? How does feminist phenomenology contribute to the practical aims of feminism such as the improvement of women's situation in a male dominant social and political environment? Whilst there is a general consensus that the phenomenology of the female body should play a more significant role within academic discourse, the connection between the phenomenology of the female body and feminist politics is less discussed and because of the lack of discussion, any connection remains unclear. One might even doubt how a phenomenological description of experiences could be political. As Linda Fisher wrote in an introduction to the book titled *Feminist Phenomenology* in 2000, feminists would "cite what they see as a general orientation in phenomenology to highly abstract and theory-bound analyses, in context

seemingly unconcerned with the particularities of socio political discourse" (Fisher, 2000: 3).

How on earth can phenomenology then be political?

In order to consider this, I shall raise a question: What does it mean to be political? There may be not just a single answer, because the term "political" has several senses. American feminist political philosopher Nancy Fraser draws attentions to two senses of the political:

First, there is the institutional sense, in which a matter is deemed "political" if it is handled directly in the institutions of the official governmental system, including parliaments, administrative apparatuses, and the like. In this sense, what is "political" ---call it "official political" ---contrasts with what is handled in institutions like "the family" and "the economy," which are defined as being outside the official political system even though they are actually underpinned and regulated by it. Second, there is the discourse sense, in which something is "political" if it is contested across a range of different discursive arenas and among a range of different publics. In this sense, what is "political" ---call it "discursive-political" or "politicized" ---contrasts both with what is not contested in public at all and with what is contested only in relatively specialized, enclaved, and/or segmented publics. (Fraser, 1989: 166)

These two senses of politics are not unrelated. What is not political in the first sense can be political in the second sense. The "official political" does not coincide with the "discursive-political." The usual relation between both is that the former constantly excludes the latter. Discursive politics is thus conceived as "an essential strategy of political resistance" (Fraser, 1989: 165).

In Fraser's writings, the significance of discursive politics is discussed most carefully with regard to the fairness of social welfare system. She points out that to receive benefits from public welfare, people are required to "translate their experienced situation and life problems into administrable needs". They have to "decide their claims on the basis of administratively defined criteria and claimant must prove conformity to administratively defined criteria of need". Such a form of social citizenship is a "form

of passive citizenship in which state preempts the power to define and satisfy people's needs" (Fraser, 1989: 155-156).

Fraser asks the following question: Who interprets people's needs and how? This question will make the fact quite evident that in a form of passive citizenship, people outside the official governmental system are usually excluded from the interpretation of their own needs. In Fraser's view this question tends to *substitute the administrative management of need satisfaction for the politics of need interpretation*, that is, it tends to substitute "*monological, administrative processes of need definition for dialogical, participatory processes of need interpretation*" (Fraser, 1989: 156).

The concept of need often plays a pivotal role in feminist philosophical exchanges. For example, what Fraser calls "administratively defined criteria of need" in most of today's capitalist welfare states, is based on the concept of *self-sufficiency*, a concept that is taken up by Young in her article "Autonomy, Welfare Reform, and Meaningful Work" . In that article, Young draws attention to the surprising consensus among policy makers, service providers, academic researchers, and affected persons that the goal of welfare program is to make people self-sufficient (Young, 2002: 41). This article begins with a memory of one African American woman who had been on public assistance with two small children and was now proud of being off welfare through training as a carpenter's assistant under the state program. Not only the policy makers but also the supporters and herself accepted the idea that "the need to care for their children was not sufficient reason for receive a small monthly check and that the state had a right to expect that they "earn" that money by a work activity" (Young, 2002: 40-41). The concept of self-sufficiency, when it is expressed within a social welfare policy, forces women who engage in care work to feel ashamed because they "don't work" in a male dominant labor market⁴. The conformity to administratively defined criteria of need, that is, what state expects us all to want, can work for supporting male dominance in society.

We return to the question of how the phenomenology of the female body can be political. Any phenomenology of the female body is discursive-political, because it obviously has an aspect of participatory processes of need interpretation. As explained above, the phenomenology of the body is an attempt to describe one's bodily experiences

exactly as are experienced by one who experiences. The body is not treated as an object of scientific observation. Rather, phenomenology is the first-person interpretation of one's own experiences and thus phenomenologists who give this interpretation cannot be neutral, non self-interested observers. As Young's contributions to the phenomenology of the female body show, phenomenology of the female body is not intended to be a site of neutral scientific research on women's body, but it is performed as a kind of need interpretation, *it politicizes* women's experiences in the discourse. In her phenomenological analysis of the female body experiences such as throwing like a girl, the specific features of female experiences of spatial perception or bodily movement are not considered as merely neutral facts, but they are considered as bound to the women's situation in patriarchal culture that "women in sexist society are physically handicapped" (Young 2005: 42).

Between Inside and Outside University: Japanese Tōjisya Kenkyū as a Mediator

What will this new political arena for dialogical, participatory processes of need interpretation be like? Fraser calls it "the social." The social is "a site of discourse about people's needs, specifically about those needs that have broken out of the domestic and/or official economic spheres that earlier contained them as 'private matters'" (Fraser, 1989: 156). To open up the social is to make needs be seen and heard, needs which have been not seen and heard, and to politicize these needs.

In our society there seem to exist several forms of "the social" even though these are not viewed as "political." According to Fraser's definition, to have a study group for phenomenology of the female body may be one way of forming the social⁵. Outside the world of university researchers more examples may be found for example in self-support group meetings of those who have special needs. Then, it will be a significant question how to associate both "social" activities inside and outside academic institutions, in order to consider the practical possibilities of Fraser's political transformation: From the administrative management of need satisfaction to the politics of need interpretation. In order to properly discuss the association between inside and outside universities, I

shall draw attention to a type of participatory research activity, unique to Japan called “Tōjisya Kenkyū,” which has its roots in activities of peer support groups run by those who suffer from alcoholism, while it is often appreciated as a kind of phenomenological research done by people outside the academic world and receives responses from a wide range of official sciences including medical science, cognitive sciences, sociology, pedagogy, and philosophy⁶. This research activity started in 2001 at “Bethel’s house,” a self-support center for those who suffer from schizophrenia, which is situated in a small city in Hokkaido. It has then spread throughout Japan among people with several kinds of disabilities including Asperger’s syndrome, cerebral palsy, drug addiction, or mental problems after the earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

What is Tōjisya Kenkyū? Kenkyū means research or study. Tōjisya refers to those who suffer from disabilities and other difficulties in life, and this term also means subjectivity. Tōjisya Kenkyū is, in essence, a collective participatory research carried out by those who have a disability. The research, which is a kind of phenomenology of their subjectivity as a disabled person, is conducted in the form of discussion and writing as the participants share their own experiences with their fellow peers and write out the results of those discussions. They are not “scientifically” observed or studied by medical experts or social workers from outside during the research process.⁷

Tōjisya Kenkyū is unique in that it falls neither into usual activities of peer support groups nor usual research activities in university. Rather it acts as a mediator between these two. I shall outline two specific features of Tōjisya Kenkyū that differentiate it from other types of peer support groups and provide reasons for interpreting it as a research activity.

The process is public: Normally, the meetings of peer support groups for those who suffer from alcoholism or other related problems are anonymous and undisclosed. On the contrary, as one of the slogans in Bethel’s Tōjisya Kenkyū is “open your vulnerability to the public,” some individuals and groups who engage in Tōjisya Kenkyū publish books and give lectures on their findings occasionally in universities. Some articles are even printed in academic journals⁸.

They are not patients, but researchers: Tōjisya Kenkyū does not intend to be a

therapy program. As Mukaiyachi, the founder of Bethel's house, stresses, Tōjisya Kenkyū is not for developing "technique to eliminate life problems" (Mukaiyachi and Bethel, 2006: 54). Rather it intends that those involved make such questions as 'when and how do I become depressive?' and acquire "a stance to cope with problems that constantly emerge in everyday life." (Mukaiyachi and Bethel, 2006: 53) According to Mukaiyachi, it is not correct to understand Tōjisya (in this case mostly those who suffer from schizophrenia) as people who have problems that other people normally do not have. They are rather the kind of people "who are not allowed to talk about their problems everyone would have in life" (Bethel, 2002: 251), or are not even allowed to "have" these problems, because they are socially treated as to be eliminated. In Tōjisya Kenkyū their problems are externalized as research topics, but these problems will not disappear through this externalization. They remain, but not as something they feel ashamed of, but rather as problems worth studying. Their stance on problems is more like researcher's relation to their work. In fact, they appear as research subjects or experts of their conditions in lectures and books. Tōjisya Kenkyū is a process in which those people become subjects by having and speaking of own experiences and so advising and helping themselves, who are otherwise diagnosed by experts and are allowed only to wait for being "helped" by them. Tōjisya Kenkyū has an effect for making it possible to be subjects in the world instead of making people passive and isolated from the world.

It is not solely my idea that Tōjisya Kenkyū be considered a type of phenomenology. When Mukaiyachi explains the most famous phrase of Tōjisya Kenkyū in Bethel's house "by ourselves, collectively!" he acknowledges that he was given a hint for this phrase from Husserl's idea that "when those who think themselves think collectively, the essential understanding will be attained" (Mukaiyachi, 2009: 99). Tōjisya Kenkyū has also a character of dialogical, participatory processes of need interpretation. Mukaiyachi's understanding of the term Tōjisya will make this point clear.

In explaining the meaning of Tōjisya or the subject, Mukaiyachi notices that this term is used and understood in Bethel's Tōjisya Kenkyū in a different way from the sense in which the notion "individual autonomy (Tōjisya Syuken)" is used in sociology or disability studies. The latter use of the term has become common in the context of Japanese

independent living movement of those with bodily disabilities. Under the understanding of the disabled as “people who have been deprived of the basic human right of self-determination” (Mukaiyachi and Bethel, 2006: 67), this term has worked as a political concept describing a principle for patients-centered care and welfare policy. However, in the discourse of Tōjisya Kenkyū, it is pointed out that this idea of individual autonomy or self-determination presupposes that each person knows exactly what his or her own needs are and what they are not. According to Mukaiyachi, it has become evident in the course of Tōjisya Kenkyū that this presupposition is doubtful and that so called self-determination rather easily loses its orientations and lead to worse situations, if it is done individually, that means in isolation and without recourse to others. The phrase of Tōjisya Kenkyū is thus not “be individual” but “by ourselves, collectively!” (Mukaiyachi and Bethel, 2006: 67-68).

It is noteworthy that here Mukaiyachi views the concept of Tōjisya as an alternative to the individualist concept of political agent. The dialogical, participatory processes of need interpretation in Tōjisya Kenkyū are understood in contrast with an isolated autonomous self. These processes are supposed to prevent people from being isolated in the name of individual self-determination.

Mukaiyachi's perspective on political agency seems to demonstrate an affinity to what Fraser calls the politics of need interpretation. Fraser points out that when the claimant must prove conformity to administratively defined criteria of need, service provision has the character of normalization. So service provision often includes an implicit or explicit therapeutic or quasi-therapeutic dimension. Fraser illustrates this with an example of municipal programs for pregnant women who are unmarried and poor. Such a program often includes not only prenatal care, mothering instruction, and tutoring or schooling but also counseling sessions with psychiatric social workers. Such sessions are intended to bring girls to acknowledge those which are considered to be their true, deep, latent, emotional problems. They seem to be harmless, but as Fraser suggests, they are inclined to construct political-economic problems as individual, psychological problems (Fraser, 1989: 155). Participatory processes of need interpretation in Bethel's Tōjisya Kenkyū are intended to avoid such dangers as the one pertaining to the concept

of individual autonomy, which endorses a patients-centered care and welfare policy that can, despite its good intentions, put people with disabilities in a disadvantage.

The Politics of Women: The case of DARC Women's House

The main question in this article is how the phenomenology of the female body can be political. I suggest we can draw a concrete picture of how first-person phenomenological accounts of women's body could possibly contribute to the empowerment of women by looking at the Tōjisya Kenkyū of members in DARC women's house in Tokyo. DARC is a network of non-governmental rehabilitation centers with over 50 centers all over Japan. DARC women's house is particularly famous among its centers, because this group published two books and made it accessible to public what those who suffer from drug addiction really need, specifically in women's case.

Members of DARC women's house study their life experiences and life problems from a variety of perspectives. Their research focuses on when and how they fall into a situation in which they cannot help using drugs. In approaching these questions, one of their studies focuses on the bodily experience of menstruation. After discussing how they act when they get the urge to use drugs, they come to the conclusion that when the menstrual cycle is approaching, they are inclined to use drugs, and also that most of them lack the basic knowledge about menstruation and have no idea of how to deal with it. In Tōjisya Kenkyū meetings of DARC women's house menstruation remains one of the main topics (Kamioka and Ooshima, 2010: 117-118).

They also ask why they have not learned ways of caring for their own body and reflecting on their situations and life problems from a wider perspective. According to the results of their investigations, women who suffer from drug or alcohol addiction often had serious domestic troubles, most typically a father with alcoholism who was violent against the mother. Under such circumstances, they got used to taking the role of a mediator, although this often triggered further violence from the father (Kamioka and Ooshima, 2010: 18-19). Owing to such experiences in their childhood, they tend to think that when someone around them are angry or have problems with others, this

is because they themselves behaved inappropriately or do not try hard enough to solve these problems. It is common for women who have addiction problems to care for others' situations instead of their own and to blame themselves for problems that are not of their making. (Kamioka and Ooshima, 2010: 24-25). Such life experiences are supposed to influence their lack of practical knowledge about their own problems including bodily problems. The Tōjisya Kenkyū of DARC women's house suggests that the tendency for having a constant feeling of guilt in life is relevant to the problem of their constant urge to use drugs. On the basis of such first-person understanding of addiction, they developed the motto for recovery: Learn to blame others for problems that have not happened owing to you.

The Tōjisya Kenkyū of DARC women's house shows several aspects of the people who suffer from alcoholism and drug addiction, which are not helpfully analyzed in scientific terms. In the context of this article, I shall shed light on the political dimension of need interpretation in DARC's case. As mentioned before, Fraser claims that the welfare system often has administrative and therapeutic elements. She lists one more element, a juridical one, which "positions recipients vis-à-vis the legal system by according or denying them various rights" (Fraser, 1989: 154). This element gives specific political meanings to the need interpretation in DARC women's house.

Members of DARC often use or have used illegal drugs and many of them have gone to prison for this reason. From the legal perspective they are criminal. There is in fact a marked tendency in Japanese society to think that it is a matter of course that criminals have no right to receive public assistance. For the members of DARC it is normal, when applying for public assistance, to be told by the public officers: "You have become addicted to alcohol and drugs and lived lazily. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" or "It depends on your will. You should work as soon as possible" (Kamioka and DARC, 2012: 108). In such a discourse they are forced again to blame themselves for all that happened in their life and they hesitate to visit public offices. As a result, they often miss receiving benefits from public welfare.

The Tōjisya Kenkyū of DARC women's house seems to call the juridical element of the social welfare into question by revealing that this element conceals a complex of

factors that constitute the situation that they call for assistance. As mentioned before, the Tōjisya Kenkyū of DARC women's house suggests that experiences of men's violence (including sexual abuse) and bodily troubles during the menstrual period, which are both female specific, should be taken into account for understanding members' life situations. It is unjust to attribute all reasons for their predicament to them and to deny them the right to public assistance.

In the recent book *Crimes: The Way for Survival*, members of DARC women's house actually presented their "study on human rights," in which the idea "Learn to blame others for problems that have not happened owing to you" is developed as a political philosophy.

There is an episode that motivated members of DARC women's house to set about the study on human rights. Several years ago, members from a New York based human rights organization, Open Society Foundations or OSF (named Open Society Institute or OSI until 2011) visited the Tokyo office of APARI (Asia-Pacific Addiction Research Institute). APARI was originally established as a part of DARC in 2000 and its main task is to promote cooperation between ex-drug users and experts in medicine and law for replacing punishment with treatment in the criminal justice system. According to the description in the book, members of OSF contacted APARI after they saw representatives from the Japanese government proudly state: problems with drug abuse are kept well under control in Japan because the severe punishment deters people from using drugs. It was impressive for members of DARC women's house that members of OSF suspected that human rights of those who suffer from drug addiction are infringed in the punishment-oriented policy of Japan (Kamioka and DARC, 2012: 110-112).

In Japanese society it is in fact completely normal among people, politicians or citizens, to think that drug abuse is a matter of one's will. In such a circumstance, those who suffer from drug addiction are inclined to simply blame themselves for being an addict, which is precisely and ironically the largest factor for the habitual use according to the Tōjisya Kenkyū members of DARC women's house. After the meeting of OSF and APARI, their research activity is explicitly intended to change the social and legal situation and realize their right for receiving the social support they need.

In their study on human rights, members of DARC women's house discuss what kinds of support programs they thought would be offered as they were in prison. Their needs are summarized in two respects (Kamioka and DARC, 2012: 139-143).

Safe home: They need official support at their residence. After being released from prison, women need a place where they can safely live and bring up their children without men's violence. A safe home is necessary, but it is hard for them to attain it. If they want to rent a new room, they need money, but if they want to work, they need an address.

Place for learning basic life skills: They need opportunities for learning basic life skills concerning how to live a regular life, to care for their body, to write a letter, and to look for a job etc. A lot of women who suffer from drug addiction could not attend schools in their childhood and feel ashamed of lacking basic knowledge. They want to have places where they can ask such basic questions without the danger of being insulted.

The interpretation of need by the members of DARC women's house opposes the administrative management of need satisfaction under which service provision includes therapeutic dimension. As seen above, the members of DARC women's house share the idea of "replacement of punishment by treatment" with the supporters and experts from human rights organizations. Treatment is yet another ambiguous word that can be interpreted in the therapeutic sense. Importantly, the Tōjisya Kenkyū of members of DARC women's house clarifies that treatment should not be viewed as a therapy of individual's psychological problems. Rather, in order to have a clear conception of the effective treatment, their problems should be viewed in the light of the background conditions that construct the life situation of those who suffer from drug addictions.

Concluding Remarks

The activities of Tōjisya Kenkyū provide several motives for recognizing that the dialogical, participatory processes of need interpretation should be substituted for the monological, administrative processes of need interpretation. Without this change in juridical, administrative, and therapeutic dimensions the social welfare policies will continue making people's life situations even worse.

Even if Tōjisya Kenkyū has some political implications, the topics addressed by Tōjisya Kenkyū such as the body and family may seem nonpolitical. Similarly, the phenomenology of the female body is rarely viewed as politically significant in the feminist discussions. However, as I have tried to explain by comparing both research activities with Fraser's politics of need interpretation, what is "to be political" is questioned in these approaches. The tendency to regard "personal" topics of body and family as nonpolitical, "private matter" is in itself highly political in that it depoliticizes the dimension of the most concrete human needs.

Phenomenology generally investigates what seems most obvious and intimate to us, recognizing that the most intimate is the most neglected. The phenomenology of the body is a process for discovering the aspects of human life that have been concealed in the history of philosophy and politics. To sum up, feminist phenomenology may be useful for feminist political activism at least in three respects: For making the personal (and therefore non-political) political again, for providing need interpretations which can help improve welfare provision and for removing the barrier that separates academia from the outside world.

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Notes

- 1 The first feminist encounter with the phenomenology can be said to be Simone de Beauvoir's 1945 review of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Beauvoir 1945), in which Beauvoir expresses her agreement with the idea of the situated, embodied subject (Olkowski, 2006: 3). Since then, the possibility and significance of the phenomenological research on the lived, situated, embodied experience of sexual body has been an important topic for those who are interested in the relationship between phenomenology and feminism. Iris Marion Young's *Throwing like a girl and other essays in feminist philosophy and social theory* (Young 1990) is often mentioned as an early work that developed this phenomenological attempt. As a classical example of more skeptical responses to such a research project, see Butler 1989.
- 2 As Linda Fisher stresses, although phenomenology intends to perform the 'essential' analysis of the bodily experience instead of being an empirical, positive science, its structuring, encoding process "does not deny or obliterate particularity, but sets its guidelines for further individual specification" (Fisher, 2000: 30).
- 3 Thus, Linda Martin Alcoff writes: "we need to supplement discursive accounts of the construction of sexual experience with the phenomenological accounts of the embodied effects on subjectivity of certain kinds of practices. The meanings and significance of sexual events inhere partly in the embodied experiences themselves, whether or not they can be rendered intelligible within any discursive formation" (Alcoff, 2000: 55).

- 4 For this problem, see the feminist discussions on "derivative dependency" (Finemann 1995, 161-164) or "secondary dependency" (Kittay, 1999: 46-47).
- 5 Since 2011 I participated in a study group of the same name, which is held at Rikkyo University in Tokyo.
- 6 Ishihara (2013) provides an overview of the responses to Tōjisya Kenkyū from the Japanese academic world.
- 7 It is a difficult question how this term should be translated into English. In fact, it has been translated in several different ways: Sufferer's first person study, self-directed research, and self-group study etc. None of these translations is false, although none of them is satisfactory.
- 8 From 2011 to 2012 the author organized a regular meeting for "phenomenology of communication and rehabilitation" with Professor K. Ishihara at Tokyo University. This meeting mainly focused on the relationship between phenomenology and Tōjisya Kenkyū concerning developmental and physical disabilities and had two research collaborators who themselves engage in Tōjisya Kenkyū on these disabilities. We also invited a wide range of guest speakers from the field of medicine to the field of robotics.