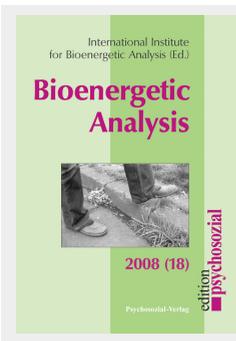


Garry Cockburn

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Standing on both Legs: A Bioenergetic Perspective on the Family, Gender Roles and the Development of the Self in the 21st Century¹

Garry Cockburn

Summary

How does Bioenergetics, which is focused on the body of the individual, articulate its concerns about the family and gender roles? And how can we add new ideas to Bioenergetics without betraying Alexander Lowen's essential ideas, whose integrity he strongly protected? The model of 'suspicion and recovery' of Paul Ricoeur, the French philosopher, allows us to discover what is unexamined, unexplored or repressed in Lowen's ideas on the body and the self. This hermeneutic perspective enables us to examine the *otherness of the embodied self* in a way that honors Lowen's genius and his emphasis on the body. It also provides a way to critique the historical limitations of Lowen's views on the development of the self, the family and gender roles, and provides a pathway for incorporating new knowledge into Bioenergetics.

Keywords: Hermeneutics, Otherness of the Embodied Self, Social Ethics

Introduction

My passion and difficulty in preparing this paper, has been to find a way of discussing the family, gender and development of the self, and yet, still be true to the essence of Bioenergetics. This has not been easy. Bioenergetics

¹ Address given at IIBA International Conference at Seville, Spain, May, 2007.

was founded by Alexander Lowen to work with individuals, not families. So that is one basic problem.

Another is that Alexander Lowen once said, ‘When I die, don’t kill me!’ (Sollmann, 2007, p. 1). Somehow or other, he knew that his followers might want to change the essence of his work, and thereby ‘kill him’. When he was strong, he fought off these challenges. And yet, if we are to address today’s issues, we must do this, even as Lowen did this to Reich.

When he came to write his first book, Lowen explicitly stated that Bioenergetics was independent of Reichian theory and techniques (Lowen, 1958, p. xii). He knew that it was considered heretical to question or modify any of Reich’s concepts in the light of one’s own experience, but he knew he must do that if he was to be true to himself and his creativity. (Lowen, 1975, p. 36).

Lowen’s insight was to really look at and see bodily expression. He wrote:

the next logical development of analysis was to look at the patient’s body for an understanding of behavior... Being able to see and to understand bodily expression is what Bioenergetics is about. (Lowen, 2004, p. 99, p. 101).

The body was Lowen’s passion, his life, from his first written words till his last. In the preface to his first book on the body he wrote:

... Only with humility and candor dare one come face to face with the great wells of feeling which lie at the core of human beings. (Lowen, 1958, p. xii).

And in the last pages of his autobiography he says:

I love the body. I love to work the body. I love to see the body blossom. That’s my life.

The body has always saved me. Fulfillment for me is living the life of the body and experiencing the energy of the body. The fulfillment that life and therapy offer is the ability to be fully true to one’s self. That self for me is the bodily self, the only self we will ever know. Trust it, love it and be true to yourself. (Lowen, 2004, pp. 237–243).

I take this to be his last will and testament. And it is with gratitude that I accept this legacy. I am grateful also to Eleanor Greenlee², who first brought

2 Eleanor Greenlee, an IIBA faculty member, ran several workshops in NZ in 1989 and 1990.

Bioenergetics to New Zealand, to Ferrell Irvine³ and the Bioenergetic trainers⁴ who came to New Zealand to pass on his gifts.

And yet, there is a truth in the fact that we have to do what he feared – we do have ‘to kill him off’. But here’s the secret – we have to do that so that we can keep the essence of his work and his spirit alive, so that we can keep Bioenergetics fresh and creative. But we have to do it in the right way, if that is to happen.

So what is the right way? This is a big problem. It is an issue that is at the heart of this Conference and which needs to be struggled with. I think some of us might be ‘killing him off’ on a daily basis with a thousand tiny cuts. If we just keep ‘adding ideas’ to Bioenergetics (e.g. intersubjectivity, post-structural feminism, neuroscience, trauma, attachment theory, etc.) we run the risk of losing our Bioenergetic identity by transforming ourselves into a generic ‘catch-all’ somatic psychotherapy. However, we also just as surely ‘kill him off’ when we treat his words and techniques as dogma, as unchanging truths that should not be questioned or changed. He, then, is in danger of becoming mummified, and we, of becoming irrelevant to today’s world. So we have a dilemma.

The big question is, are these two ways our only choice: either to go wandering through the intellectual shopping malls, adding the latest ideas to our Bioenergetic baskets, or, on the other hand, to go on endlessly repeating the Lowenian past? What, then, is the proper relationship between tradition and innovation? How can we articulate the continuity between what we have received and new knowledge?

There is a third option. In order to establish this third way to keep Lowen’s spirit alive, we need to detour into the hermeneutic tradition. The great French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, has given us the model of ‘suspicion and recovery’ (Ricoeur, 1970, pp. 32ff.). What he means by ‘suspicion and recovery’ is that in the writings of any genius, such as Freud or Marx, who have systematized their knowledge and who have a school of followers, we should ‘suspect’ that

3 In 1990, Ferrell Irvine emigrated from Chicago to New Zealand to set up a Bioenergetic training course. The NZ Society for Bioenergetic Analysis (NZSBA) owes its existence to Ferrell’s courageous act.

4 Michael Maley, Eleanor Greenlee, Louise Fréchette, Bennett Shapiro, Helen Resneck-Sannes, Bob Hilton, Virginia Wink-Hilton and David Finlay. David lived in NZ for more than three years assisting NZSBA.

there is a depth of unexplored, unexamined or even repressed meaning, and that this deeper meaning can and must be ‘recovered’ by a critical analysis of their work.

It may well be that Lowen has left key concepts unexamined and unexplored, perhaps even repressed, in order to get his ideas across. So that one way of going forward is to ‘suspect’ that *all the meaning* has not been fully extracted from Lowen’s basic ideas on the body and the self. If this were so, and we were able to ‘recover’ deeper meanings that lay within, we may yet be able to keep the genius of Lowen alive and fresh. At the same time we would be able to maintain the relevance of Bioenergetic Analysis as the world’s largest school of somatic psychotherapy.

I have called this paper, ‘Standing on Both Legs’. For the purposes of the Conference theme⁵ I am going to make the suggestion that the 1st leg of Bioenergetics be the *somatic* understanding of *oneself, as an individual*. All of Lowen’s work was dedicated to this task. Now I am going to make the bold suggestion that the 2nd leg of Bioenergetics be the *somatic* understanding of *oneself, in relationship to the other*⁶.

This would mean finding a way, if there was one, of bringing *the other*, (or relationality, or intersubjectivity) into the central theory, practice and research of Bioenergetics. In preparing this paper it has become evident that we are not able to fully understand the development of the self, gender issues and the family in the 21st century without this 2nd leg of Bioenergetics. In this paper, I want to develop this idea, the idea of the *otherness of the embodied self*. We will look at the development of the self, and then at gender issues and the family, all from this point of view.

Development of the Self

Let us start with the development of the self, as this is foundational to everything else. Remember what Lowen said, ‘*that self for me is the bodily self, the only self we will ever know*’. He defined the essence of Bioenergetics as being able *to look at* the body and *to see and to understand bodily expression*,

5 IIBA 2007 Conference theme: Self & Community – Creating Connections in Broken Times.

6 This phrase reflects the title of Ricoeur’s book (1990) ‘Oneself as Another’.

and he developed the brilliant techniques that we have all inherited for that purpose.

So how does Lowen account for the development of the self? Just as we are trying to do, to find what remains unexplored or unexamined in Lowen, Lowen himself delighted in bringing out the deeper meaning in Freud's early statement, that 'the ego is first and foremost a body ego' (Lowen, 1958, p. 19). For Lowen, his fundamental thesis is that the origin of the self arises from the physical bio-energy in the body. This physical bio-energy is expressed in both psychic phenomena and in somatic movement. And, as he has so brilliantly pointed out, it is the dialectical relationship between psyche and soma, or, mind and body, at the different developmental stages that gives rise to the different character structures.

Although Lowen and Reich were not formally trained in philosophy, this dialectical view of psyche and soma in the development of the self, places them firmly in a European philosophical tradition, starting from Hegel. For Hegel, however, the self is essentially 'intersubjective'. It knows itself only if it recognizes the equal and independent reality of others, and only if others recognize the equal and independent reality of the self (Beiser, 2005, p. 177). This was in stark contrast to Descartes, *Cogito ergo sum – I think therefore I am*, which asserts that the self knows itself independently of others and the world.

Despite this Hegelian inheritance, there is no mention in *The Language of the Body*, Lowen's major work, that *the other*, or intersubjectivity, is a *constitutive part* of the bodily self. The important dialectical relationship is between psyche and soma, and never, not even for one instance, between mother and baby⁷. It is almost as if Lowen has reverted to a Cartesian position of *corpus ergo sum – I am a body therefore I am*, that the bodily self knows itself independently of others and the world.

Lowen is one third of the way through *The Language of the Body* before he mentions that the individual has a mother. Then the infant is not talked about in an active or interactive manner, but in the passive tense, e.g. '*the infant has already been subjected to a vital experience of nine month's duration*', '*Infants born from these wombs will differ*'. There is only one sentence in the whole of this book that talks about the effects of good mother-love

7 For an elaboration of the dialectical relationship between mother/child refer Ogden (1990, 1996).

on the body and mind of the individual, and this is done in a one-directional and rather abstract manner: ‘*the development that takes place under optimum conditions produces a body structure and personality which evokes our admiration*’. (Lowen, 1958, p. 109).

Of course, Lowen is well aware of the interactive relationship between mother and child. He gives multiple examples in his writings⁸, and he often refers to his own mother’s cruel yet seductive relationship with himself. The key Lowenian principle is that the manner and quality of standing on one’s feet is dependent on the energy and support one’s mother gave in the earliest years (Lowen, 2004, p. 135). While the parental/child interactions of the Oedipal complex are expounded at length in *Fear of Life* and *Love and Orgasm*, his most extensive account of the preoedipal mother/child relationship is in *Betrayal of the Body*, (Lowen, 1967, pp. 189–208) his book on the schizoid condition. This makes grim reading. His negative description of these mothers hardly privileges the mother/baby relationship as we now know we must.

So what might be *unexamined, what unexplored, what might be repressed* in Lowen’s view of the development of the self? What seems unexamined is the reality that *otherness* or intersubjectivity is built-in to the body and to the self. This is fundamental! *Otherness* is built-in to the body and the self. *Otherness* is built-in biologically, dialectically, ethically, neurologically, ontologically, psychically, sexually, socially, somatically and spiritually. It is built-in to the very nature of the bodily self.

Paul Ricoeur, like Lowen, asserts the primacy of the body in understanding the self. But Ricoeur, unlike Lowen, asserts that *otherness is not added on to selfhood from the outside*. It is a constitutive part of the self’s very being and meaning (Ricoeur, 1992, pp. 317ff.).

For Ricoeur, it is through my body, that I am aware that I am in the world, that I exist, and that I can want, I can move and I can act. This is a foundational human experience. My body is the bridge to reality. Secondly, I am aware that others, over there, are foreign to me, that they can nurture me or hurt me, and that I, through my body, can be open to them or resist them. Through my body I exist among others, I exist intersubjectively.

8 Lowen (1965) *Love and Orgasm*. pp. 33–46. Lowen (1975a) *Pleasure*. pp. 84ff. Lowen (1972) *Depression and the Body*. pp. 129ff. Lowen (1975) *Bioenergetics*. pp. 111ff. Lowen (1980) *Fear of Life*. pp. 24ff; pp59ff; pp. 160ff. Lowen (1985) *Narcissism*. p. 12; pp. 188ff. Lowen (1988) *Love, Sex and your Heart*. pp. 50ff. Lowen (2004) *Honoring the Body*. p. 145.

Ricoeur adds a third level of meaning that arises from the otherness of the body, which we will examine later when examining the family and the social implications of Bioenergetics. It is through my body I am aware that I should not hurt others in their bodily selves. Through the otherness of my body ‘*I wish to live well, with and for others in just institutions*’ (Ricoeur, 1992. pp. 341ff.).

For Ricoeur, then, the *otherness of the body* gives rise to our three greatest experiences at the level of meaning: my experience of my own body, my experience of others, and my experience that I wish to live with and for others – that I have an ethical conscience (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 318).

Lowen, does not seem to have explored or examined this deep otherness of the body. He may, in actual fact, have *repressed* it. Helen Resneck-Sannes (2005, p. 42) has drawn attention to Lowen’s account, in his book *Bioenergetics*, of the breakdown of his therapy with Reich. It had taken Lowen over 100 sessions to get to the meaning of the scream he discovered in his very first session with Reich. This scream was his terror as a baby looking into his mother’s rageful eyes⁹. Following Reich’s failure to respond to Lowen in the nurturing way he wanted, Lowen said he felt ‘doomed’.

It was after this that Lowen started developing Bioenergetics through his work with Pierrakos. Note what Lowen says:

(My therapy) had an entirely different quality from my work with Reich. There were fewer of the spontaneously moving experiences.... This was mainly because I largely directed the body work.... In the first half of the session I worked with myself, describing my bodily sensations to Pierrakos. In the second half, he dug in on my tight muscles.... Working on myself, I developed the basic positions and exercises which are now standard in bioenergetics.... I began in a standing position rather than the prone one Reich used. (Lowen, 1975, p. 39).

This is not a *relational* therapy he is developing. He says, ‘I largely directed the body work.... Working on myself, I developed the basic positions. I began in a standing position rather than the prone one Reich used’.

Lowen gives another account of this work with Pierrakos. It was probably written about the same time as the quote from the book *Bioenergetics*.

⁹ Note also Lowen’s other account of this terrorized scream in Lowen (1996) Keynote Address in Bioenergetic Analysis. The Clinical Journal of the IIBA. 7 (1) 3 &10–11.

... we began this therapy with me in the standing position rather than lying down... The two positions, lying and standing, reflect two different ways of being in the world. In the lying down position one adopts by implication an infantile mode; being on one's back denotes helplessness. This position favors regression and facilitates the recall of early memories and experiences. Standing on one's feet denotes an adult posture and furthers the processes leading to maturity and responsibility. (Lowen, 1976, p. 41).

Philip Helfaer (1998, p. 47) has noted that getting people off the couch and onto their feet was a symbolic break with the whole European analytic tradition. David Boadella has called Bioenergetics, *The Active Method* (1990, p. 16) with its emphasis on working with the oedipal complex (1985, p. 13) and with a body that is already on its feet. By rising above the *helplessness* of the baby, Lowen took a profound strategic stance that affects us today. While this focus on 'standing' moved Lowen away from his terrorizing mother, it also moved Bioenergetics away from the earliest experiences of body and self in relationship, and away from the primary ground where 'oneself also includes the other'¹⁰.

I believe, by affirming with Ricoeur, that *otherness is not added onto the body from the outside*, that we can then incorporate Ricoeur's philosophical idea of the *otherness of the body* with Lowen's privileging of the body. In doing so we would create a strong theoretical basis for a two-person therapy (Stark, 1999; Klopstech, 2002) within modern Bioenergetics.

Gender Issues

It is from this position of 'otherness' that we can now take a brief look at Lowen's position on gender and the family. In respect of gender, we know that some of Lowen's ideas on women and homosexuality are difficult to deal with. These statements were, as he says (Lowen 1962, p. 196, pp. 237ff.), 'not

10 Note Lowen's (1995, p. 2) revealing statement that he has 'accepted the fact that I do not need to be loved...and not dependent on another'. Refer also Lowen's (2004, p. 217) comments: 'This need to prove my superiority stemmed from a deep feeling of humiliation associated with my bodily functions and from my identification with my mother in her contempt for the body. Although my therapy with Reich lessened this identification with my mother, it did not ground me enough in my body'.

definitive statements' and were reflective of his clinical experiences and the gender hierarchies prevalent in New York in the 1950's.

In our culture there appears to be a reversal of values. Feminine values have gained the ascendancy. I believe that the loss of manhood is related somehow to this reversal of values, to the fact that men have taken on themselves the drudgery of life.

and

Probably because of the turning inward and lack of sharp focus in her body, the woman needs the man or his image to produce a strong genital excitement. Man is women's bridge to the world.

Contrast this with Maori New Zealanders' view of the relationship between the sexes as revealed in the following myth. *Maui*, the great Polynesian male hero, wanted to find out the deepest secrets of life. To learn the secrets of the underworld, he entered the vagina of the sleeping giantess, *Hine Nui Te Po*, the Great Mother of the Night. As he was re-emerging at daybreak the sleeping giantess awoke, and *Maui* got crushed to death in her toothed vagina. Even today, at ritual ceremonies, if a Maori man gets too big for his boots, Maori women will turn their backs on him, bend over and raise their skirts¹¹, reminding him where all men have come from (Salmond, 1975, p. 151).

As long as thirty years ago, Bioenergetic women disagreed with Lowen's theories as they applied to women's sexuality. In response to a research questionnaire from Alice and Harold Ladas (1981), 87% of women disagreed with Lowen, even though over 80% of them had reported improvements to their sexual lives as a result of Bioenergetics. Evidently Lowen was not impressed by this 'raising of skirts' by our Bioenergetic women. Similar research today would likely result in a higher percentage of women disagreeing, and an even higher percentage of us disagreeing with his views on homosexuality.

Homosexuality is an unconscious attempt to establish a heterosexual relationship... one finds that the homosexual is usually emotionally deadened.... Male homosexuality has its origin in an incestuous relationship with the mother. (Lowen, 1962, pp. 195ff.).

11 This derisory practice is called 'whakapohane' in Maori. (Literally: *to act in a ridiculous manner*).

Clearly, we have some urgent updating to do on homosexuality, gender development and gender hierarchies. While this may mean challenging the traditional Freudian and Lowenian position that gender is set at the oedipal stage, it does not necessarily mean a major departure from Lowen's position, as he does point out that:

the events in the preoedipal period from birth to three years of age are equally important (as the oedipal stage) in shaping character, though they do not determine its final form. (Lowen, 1980, p. 160).

Note however, that he is talking about character, not gender.

In fact, modern feminist psychoanalytic studies are giving much more attention to the *preoedipal* aspect of gender development, and in doing so, are creating the conditions for a multiplicity of gender outcomes. For instance feminist writers are referring to the maternal body as the locus of excitement for all offspring, not just male children.

This emphasis on the maternal is balanced by what happens at the rapprochement stage. Jessica Benjamin (1998, p. 61) suggests that all children have a love affair with the father who represents the exciting, compelling outside world; he is the figure of freedom who has access to and enjoys the world.

Benjamin (1998) also balances the traditional Freudian father-centered oedipal model with an emphasis on the mother's contribution to our subjectivity, deepest desires and gender identity. This emphasis on the mother and on women's sexuality links us directly back to the body, back to the essential otherness of the woman's body, separate to and equal with the man's body. This does not demean the role of men and male sexuality. In fact, it frees men up from the patriarchal burden of the classical oedipal situation. It allows them to have both their hearts and their balls.

Thus if we incorporate *the other* as part of the engendered self from the earliest moments, we might then start to see the subtle intersubjective gender complexities that occur both *before and after* the oedipal stage is reached. And, in doing this, we might avoid stereotypical gender models, which are stuck in the binary choice of either male or female as set at the oedipal stage. We might then well find we have a more satisfactory answer, to the multitude of gender variations, including homosexuality, that make up gender difference in the 21st century.

Although Lowen's early statements on gender are no longer acceptable, it is important to recognize that his primary emphasis on the body, like Ricoeur's,

is in fact, also a philosophical statement. Much early radical feminist literature was based on the post-structural position that gender is entirely a cultural construct, and that the self is de-centered and nothing but the outcome of language. Our challenge is to take on board the legitimate criticisms of strong feminists without losing contact with the reality of the bodily self, Lowen's enduring gift to Bioenergetics.

Family

Despite massive changes to the Western family, which we are all aware of, the family remains vitally important as the fundamental source of emotional, physical and financial care and support for most people (NZ Department of Statistics, 2006).

When Lowen talks about his own family he shares a surprising amount of intimate details about his parents and his early family life, about his sexual life, and about his relationship with his wife. He also shares a surprising amount about his negative relationship with his other family – us, the IIBA.

We know from his writing (Lowen, 2004, p. 54) that his wife, Leslie, was 'his other', the person, he said, who balanced his intellectualism and his difficulty in accessing feelings. While they were working together in Hawaii, on the island of *Maui*, (remember *Maui*) Lowen tells us he triggered Leslie's rage by intruding into her work with a man whose inflated chest Lowen thought was blocking his sadness for his unhappy mother. Lowen (2004, p. 179) tells us that he left the room feeling dejected. He said, '*I have never forgotten that incident and never will*'.

It may be that the sight of Leslie working with a man who seemed to carry his mother's pain was a bit too close to Lowen's own pain¹². Lowen (2004, p. 92) has said:

I have long believed that the role of the therapist has something to do with a deep need, conscious or unconscious, to save one's mother... I sensed this was true of me... As a child, I sensed her pain, although I refused to carry her burden. However I could not close my eyes to her suffering.

12 Lowen (2004, p. 134) stated that: 'He (Reich) had perceived quickly that I was holding my chest in an inflated position which he knew was an expression of fear.'

If Lowen had opened his eyes and his heart to *his own suffering* about his rageful mother, then Bioenergetics may well have developed differently¹³. As has been noted, that first contact of the embodied self with the other, with *M-other*, is the foundation for all later developments. Without this basis in the feminine, we in Bioenergetics do not have an effective way of understanding the dynamics of the family. We know from developmental studies that the baby is held, firstly in the matrix of the mother's womb, then in her arms, eyes and breasts, and then in the matrix of the mother and father – the family.

Basing Bioenergetics firmly in this sequential relational matrix gives us a way of working with the family. We can help young adults heal their wounding from their earliest years, confirm the gender patterning that suits them so that their sexuality can be expressed and fully shared with their chosen mate. And we can support them to become parents who raise the next generation in a manner that allows their children a true childhood.

Lowen also has a more sociological way of looking at the family. However, his approach is a straightforward reflection of Reich's analysis of the patriarchal nature and power-relationships within Western families.

The family, as Wilhelm Reich has pointed out, is the operative agent of society (1975a, p. 67)... In most families, the training for this life style starts early in the life of the child (1980, p. 38)... I have come to realise that my family situation was not as unique as I once thought... Why?The patriarchal order is a vertical hierarchy... with the father at the top, the mother below him and the children at the bottom (1980, pp. 197ff.).

In respect of this wider Reichian perspective on the family, it is important to realise that Reich, as a Marxist, said that you could not develop a sociological theory of the family out of psychological ideas (Reich, 1972, pp. 59ff.). He therefore went outside of psychoanalysis to help him understand the family. Reich used sociological and cultural perspectives (Boadella, 1985, p. 68) as the basis for his social action to help liberate women, young people and the family. Although Lowen (2004, p. 92) said that he was '*not a revolutionary like Reich*' he does have a broad vision:

13 On the other hand, we may not have inherited Lowen's genius to see the body if he had understood his pain in 'relational' terms.

Our task is to understand human nature and to influence cultural patterns so that they favor this nature (Lowen, 1976, p. 48)

While he was well aware of Reich's socio/political perspective, Lowen did not, himself, develop an explicit sociological or cultural perspective like Reich, and did not become a social activist. However his profound insights into the body did empower his '*sincere hope that he would help alleviate the sufferings of people*'. (Lowen, 1976, p. 48).

Bioenergetics does have trouble in formulating a socio/political ethic in respect of families and the wider society because of Lowen's individualistic bias. But contrary to Reich's Marxist position, a social perspective can be developed out of psychological ideas by privileging the body as containing both 'self and other'. As Paul Ricoeur (1992, pp. 317ff.) has pointed out, the otherness of the body links us intimately with all other people in a spirit of mutuality and respect. We do have a deep wish to live well with and for others in just institutions.

Just how Bioenergetics develops a social ethic is a challenge that besets us all, and gives rise to many more questions than answers. Two of those questions might be: how do we provide somatic psychotherapy for less-well-off individuals and families in our societies and, how do we integrate into our theory, practice and research, the social-cultural, political and environmental issues that affect individuals and families?

Lowen's injunction that our task is '*to influence cultural patterns*' does not mean that we should become crusading rock-stars or social workers. Most of us are, and will remain, therapists to individuals. But it does mean that we each embody an ethical, social and political 'instinct' in our work, 'an alertness on when we must do good'¹⁴ (Ogden, 2005, p. 22), whether it be helping an individual to become a better person in their family and community, or, in fact, helping the disadvantaged in a social clinic in Brazil.

The real implications of incorporating *the other* into the embodied self remain to be fully worked out. That task belongs to us all. However, in closing, it is important to acknowledge the work that has already been done by our own relational theory builders, and the work that has already been done in developing a social ethic for Bioenergetics by our South American colleagues.

14 A quote from Borges.

Some key references are: Hilton (1996, 2003), Finlay (1999), Klopstech (2000, 2000a), Tonella (2000), Lewis (2005), Resneck-Sannes (2005), Weigand (2006), Trucillo (2006), Correia et al. (1999).

Conclusion

To conclude, we are a family from across the globe, with a plurality of differences that enrich us all. Our own *otherness* is reflected in the IIBA. We have seen how many of Lowen's views reflect his own psychology and his historical location in New York. We need not be over-determined by that history or by his individualist viewpoint. But we can never be over-determined by Alexander Lowen's love of the body. That is fundamental to our Bioenergetic identity.

We have been given a great gift by Alexander Lowen. He created a powerful and original way of seeing the body. He loved the body, he loved to see the body blossom. That was his life. His last published words were about the bodily self. *'Trust it, love it and be true to yourself'*.

We must keep true to Lowen's focus on the embodied self, and yet we must be true to ourselves and to the future of Bioenergetics. One of the ways we can do that is by bringing out some of the deeper meanings embedded in his work, and by continuing to develop the implications of the *otherness of the embodied self*.

But most of all, we can finally incorporate the *helplessness* of the baby (Lowen, 1976, p. 41) and in doing so, find the energy to stand as grounded *adults* on both legs. And that is how we keep the essence of Alexander Lowen's work and his spirit alive.

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Garry Cockburn BSW(Hons), CBT., was born in New Zealand, trained as a Catholic priest in Sydney, Australia in the 1960s, and then undertook post-graduate studies in theology in Rome. After leaving the priesthood, he qualified as a social worker and worked in the New Zealand Government child abuse agency for nearly 30 years. He has worked as a social work consultant in the field of child abuse and child, adolescent and family mental health. He has published on the topic of a phenomenological approach to child protection legislation in New Zealand. He finished his Bioenergetic training in 1995, and is in private practice as a Bioenergetic psychotherapist with his partner, Pye Bowden, in their business, Mind & Body.

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