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J.L. Morenos Influence on
Martin Bubers
Dialogical Philosophy

by Robert Waldl

Ladies and Gentleman,

In the beginning I want to thank the ASGPP for giving me the opportunity for this presentation about

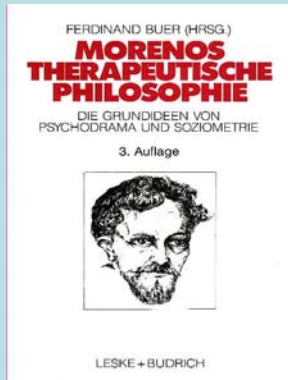
J.L. Morenos Influence on Martin Bubers Dialogical Philosophy.

Furthermore, I thank Mrs. Zerka Moreno very much for encouraging me to give this talk.

Before showing and discussing my findings, I would like to introduce myself and give you a short description of the way of my work.

I am a personcentered psychotherapist in Vienna. Five years ago I went back to the University of Vienna to study philosophy. 2002 I wrote my master thesis about Therapeutic Aspects in Martin Bubers Philosophy. The last chapter of my thesis was focused on Bubers Influence on the different schools of psychotherapy. With regards to this topic I read books about J.L. Moreno and psychodrama. At first sight things seemed to be clear:

In the Scientific Literature Moreno is seen as influenced by Buber



„First of all Martin Buber, who worked from 1916 to 1923 partly in Vienna on his Philosophy of „I and Thou“ ... has influenced Moreno strongly.“ Ferdinand Buer, *Morenos Therapeutische Philosophie*, 1999, page 26

Like other founders of psychotherapeutic schools - such as Laura and Fritz Perls and Victor Frankl, also Moreno is seen as influenced by Martin Bubers Philosophy. However, in one of the textbooks I found a quotation

Moreno 1914, quoted in a textbook for modern Methods of Psychotherapy 1994

(Hilarion Petzold (HG.), *Wege zum Menschen, Methoden und Persönlichkeiten moderner Psychotherapie*, Junfer-Verlag, Paderborn, 1994)

3.2.1 Begegnung

In seinem 1914 verfaßten Flugbericht „Einladung zu einer Begegnung“ formuliert Moreno: „Es gibt kein Mittel zwischen mir und anderen / Ich bin unmittelbar: in der Begegnung. / Ich bin nicht einzig: bloß in der Begegnung, / ob ich ein Gott, ein Narr oder ein Dummer. / Ich bin geweiht, geheiligt, gelöst in der Begegnung, / ob ich das Gras oder die Gottheit treffe“ (Moreno 1914, vgl. 1924). Der Mensch ist

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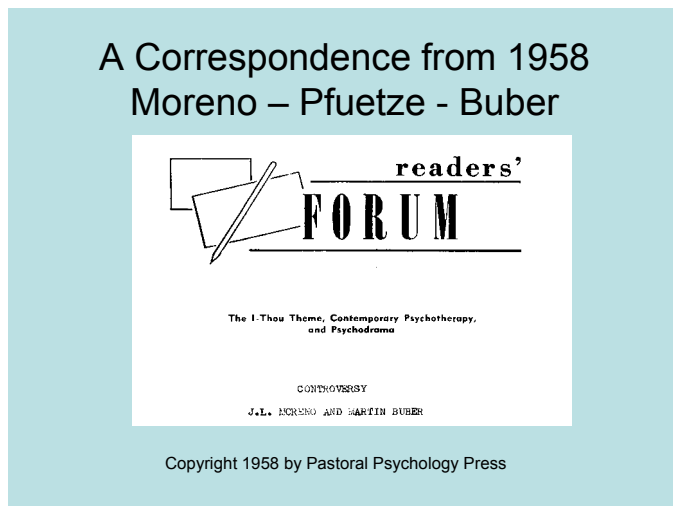
from Morenos writings from 1914, which puzzled me strongly.

This poem is published by Moreno several times, it plays a central role. Please let me translate it to you later.

The interpretation of this poem by the author of the textbook is: We can easily see that these lines of Moreno are corresponding with Bubers concept of “I and Thou”. And in fact the connection from these lines to Buber cannot be denied. However, what absolutely does not fit here is the year 1914. I was very familiar with Bubers writings due to my thesis and I remember very well my thoughts, when I was reading this words from Morenos early poems for the first time: When Moreno was influenced by Buber already in 1914, then he must have seen texts by Buber, which I have not seen yet.

By coincidence someone else gave me a strong advice to this issue during the same days. My master thesis was founded by a Victor Frankl – scholarship and I had the opportunity to meet Mrs. Eleonore Frankl, Viktor Frankls widow. She found and gave me copies of letters from Moreno, Pfuetze and Buber.

When I saw this poem from 1914 for the first time, these



copies were lying yet unread on my table.

In this widely unknown letters - which I started reading now again and again, Moreno wrote 1958 what sounded to me at the same time absolutely amazing and however very logical: He wrote that he influenced Buber's *I and Thou* with his early writings which were published nine years before Buber's main work.

I went to my Thesis-Professor Dr. Klaus Dethloff to show him my findings. I still remember him turning the copies and the books around and around saying: This is very exciting; you have to stay on that. And so I did for about two years now.

Two years ago it was not possible to find all the early writings of Moreno in the Austrian Libraries. 2002 I couldn't believe that Moreno should not have left more copies of his writings in the big Libraries of Vienna and I started searching deeper.

6 Copies of Morenos Writings have been lost in the Library of University of Vienna



The name „J. Levy“ was read as „Jacob Gevy“

J.L. Moreno 1914

Of course you know that Morenos name was Jacob Levy at this time. Here you see the first page of a booklet of Moreno from 1914 and you see that a librarian missed a few things on it. So someone added the name of the publisher by handwriting and the “J” is correctly completed to “Jacob”. But then a mistake occurred and this booklet and five others got lost in the system of the library for a long time. The librarian could not read the name “Levy” properly, he saw the “L” as a “G” so this booklets were categorized under the name “Gevy” until I found them. I found them by checking thousands and thousands of books under the keyword “Begegnung” which means encounter.

Found 2002 in the Library of the University of Vienna: „Gevy“ is Moreno!

Titelkurzanzeige (gesucht wurde: W-Gesamindex= (gevy)) - sortiert nach Autor, dann Titel

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Titel 1 - 6 von 6 Geben sie an Zurück Weiter

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1	<input type="checkbox"/> Gevy, J.	Einladung zu einer Begegnung. - 408.841, 1.Ex.a.	1914	Exemplare
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4	<input type="checkbox"/> Gevy, J.	Einladung zu einer Begegnung. - 408.841, 2.Ex.b.	1915	Exemplare
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6	<input type="checkbox"/> Gevy, J.	Flugbericht.	1915	Exemplare

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Zurück Weiter

No unknown writings, but 6 unknown copies of three different booklets published by Jakob Levy 1914 - 1915

Shown here is the list of the search-result from 2002 from the Library of the University of Vienna. The Computer listed six books from the unknown author Gevy, who in fact is Moreno. By this way I did not find unknown writings by Moreno, but I

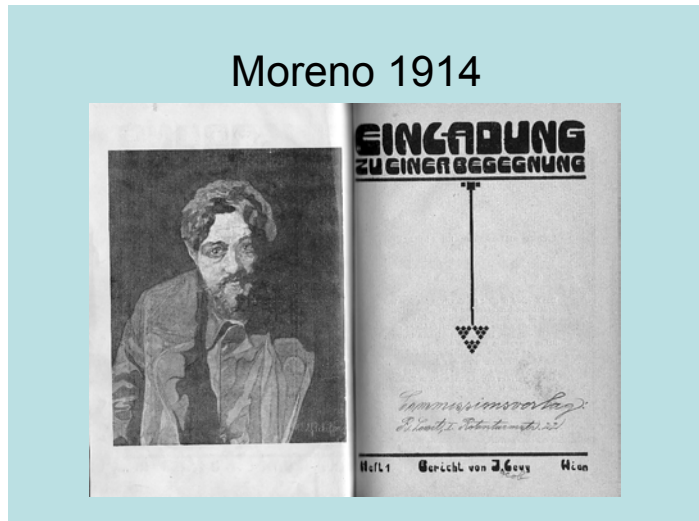
found six copies of three early publications which had not been available for scientists for many years.

The German word “Begegnung” means encounter or meeting and it is not only the right keyword to find Morenos books, it is the keyword to the whole Moreno-Buber issue.

The main question for eventual influences in either one or the other direction is:

What did Moreno write and what did Buber write and when?

1. Let us start with Moreno



1914 and 1915 Moreno wrote expressionistic poems, short texts and published them in small booklets all under the same title: “Einladung zu einer Begegnung” what means “Invitation to an Encounter” For differentiation he gave his texts different subtitles.

These “Invitations to an Encounter” were not only meant as literature, it was in fact meant as an invitation to meet people. In the first booklet Moreno published, he announces an address where he could be contacted and letters and invitations could be sent to. In the next booklet Moreno got more concrete and writes, he only will consider letters which intend a direct encounter face to face.

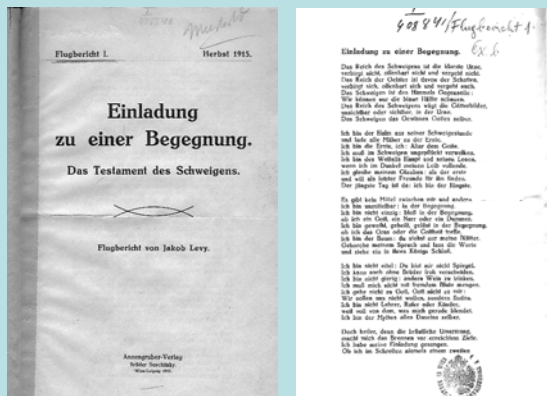
The central- the main- and over all issue, which dominates every page of his booklets is the living Encounter:

Moreno writes about encounter by talking.

He describes encounter by meeting in silence face to face.

He writes about encounter by glances.

Moreno 1915



Moreno formulates in an expressionistic style. His poems are written in archaic, powerful, strong words. Some lines are almost hurting and others are sensitive moving. Not all poems are easy to understand.

For Moreno these booklets have been very important. As we know from advertisements he sold them in Vienna at least six years long.

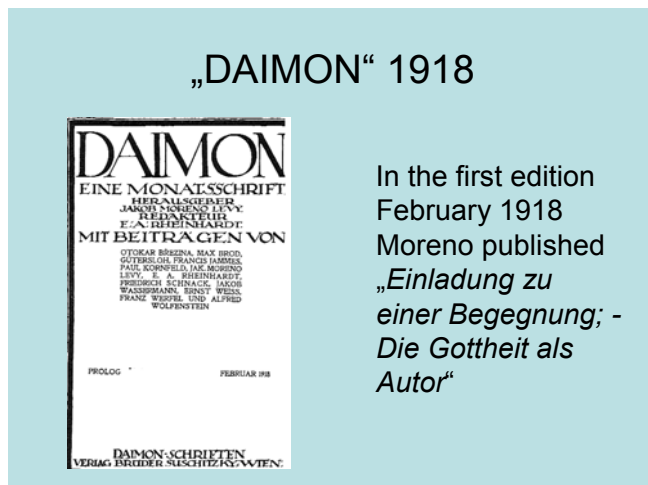
Moreno 1914, 1915, 1918

Es gibt kein Mittel zwischen mir und andern.
 Ich bin unmittelbar: in der Begegnung.
 Ich bin nicht einzig: bloß in der Begegnung,
 ob ich ein Gott, ein Narr oder ein Dummer.
 Ich bin geweiht, geheilt, gelöst in der Begegnung,

*There are no means between me and others
 I am real in the encounter
 I am not unique: only by encounter
 If I am a god or a fool
 I am consecrated, healed, freed by encounter*
 (translated by R.W.)

The poem I showed you in the beginning is published in these first booklets and he will repeat these lines a few times almost like a credo. These five lines are a mystery - they stay in the centre of the Moreno-Buber issue. Till now these lines have been the prove that, Moreno was influenced by Buber. These lines are so much concentrated. If someone would get the job somehow to formulate "I and Thou" in a poem – these lines would do that very much. These lines will appear later again when we have a look at Bubers writings.

1918 when Moreno was working as a doctor in Bad Vöslau, a little town close to Vienna, he had obviously better financial possibilities, he started to publish the magazine “Daimon”, which was one year later called the “New Daimon” and another year later “Die Gefährten”. DAIMON became the magazine of the Austrian Expressionists and Moreno gathered the most important writers of this literature-style.



Here Moreno publishes his poems and texts from 1914 and 1915 again. But he also started to publish longer texts, and plays on new topics.

In the dialogue of these plays he starts asking very consequently under which conditions living encounter can take place and what are the conditions which avoid the direct encounter.

Moreno is reflecting the role of scientists, of authors, of speakers, of theatre-people in relation to a possible living encounter. He writes in vivid words about love, about healing, about relationship.

2. Secondly, we have to ask:

When did Martin Buber develop his Dialogical Philosophy?

Bubers different statements on the genesis of “I and Thou”

1. In the twenties Buber mentioned several times an „early plan“ for “I and Thou” from 1916
2. In the fifties Buber wrote two times:
“I report that the idea of “I and Thou” has already been expressed, in the same terms, in my early writings ... 1907”

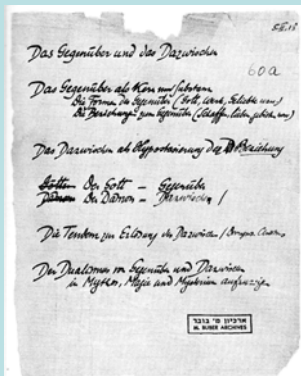
Buber himself gave us two different versions about when he wrote “I and Thou”.

He mentioned several times that he had an early plan for “I and Thou” in the year 1916. This is actually the official version and the so called “early plan” is referred to in every Buber Biography till today.

The answer to this version is. Yes, there are plans, but mostly they are from the early twenties as Rivka Horwitz, an outstanding Buber-specialist could show in her work “Bubers way to 'I and Thou'”. The earliest sketch, which could count as plan for “I and Thou” is from the year 1918.

1918: earliest dialogical lines from

Buber (out of Rivka Horwitz, „Bubers Way to I and Thou“, 1978)



The important terms “I”, “Thou” and “encounter” are still missing in Bubers thinking at February 1918.

But here Buber still does not use the highly important terms “I”, “Thou” or “Encounter”.

Of course someone could think now, maybe there was a plan from 1916, which just was not found. So let us shortly have a look what was Buber's thinking and writing about - in the time before 1918.

Buber was 14 years older than Moreno.

Beside his new interpretations of the Hasidic Legends Buber wrote culture-historical essays. Here his point of view was mystic and not dialogical. Buber thought in a mystic way that the crisis of the society could only be solved by a mental revival in our inner self. Buber was occupied by the inner mystic experience of the single person and did not have the perspective of encounter and dialogue. The writer Buber produced highly aesthetic essays about the crisis of the culture and his thinking was non-political and non-social. This attitude of Buber culminated in a very delicate position about World-War I, which he welcomed as magic and powerful for a long time. In dark and weird words Buber writes about the war. He defends the right of Germany to invade and occupy other European countries. In his mystical understanding the war would lead to a better society and he brings similarities with wars mentioned in the Torah.

1916 Gustav Landauer a German Anarchist and an important friend of Buber, prohibited him any more public statement to the continuing World-War. Buber came in a real crisis. Later in his life Buber himself describes this time as a “Self-Correction”, but the real background is not mentioned in the Buber-Biographies .

I mention this, to show that there was no dialogical thinking and no dialogical terms at all during that time in Buber's writing.

After 1916 Buber changes. Influenced by Landauer he formulates anarchistic and other social romantic ideas himself. In May 1918 Buber hold a speech in Vienna, where he describes Jesus as an Anarchist who fights against Rome. This speech from Buber was announced months before. During this visit in Vienna he most probably met Moreno for the first time, because then a publishing cooperation began which lasted for a long time.

The inter-personal relationship appears in Bubers thinking 1918, when he was somehow in contact with Moreno.

Only once before that - in the year 1906, when Buber was writing a foreword for a sociological publication he used the term "das Zwischenmenschliche" what means interpersonal, but he did not come to any dialogical meaning of this word. After this isolated use of this word the inter-personal relationship disappeared in Bubers thinking for thirteen years.

I am not the first one who saw the sudden emerging of the topic "encounter" in Bubers writings in the year 1918. Paul R. Mendes-Flohr, an outstanding Buber-scientist writes that 1918 something must have reminded Buber on his foreword from 1906 and he realized the importance of encounter and inter-personal relationship. I think it is possible to see now how Buber was reminded and made it possible for him to break through to his dialogical thinking.

Considering that all, we can say there can't have been a plan for "I and Thou" in 1916 because there was a complete different thinking then, and Buber absolutely did not have the terms to formulate something we could call such a plan.

But than of course the second later version about the genesis of "I and Thou" also is doubtful.

In the essay about the history of the dialogical philosophy, Buber writes 1954 that he formulated the idea of "I and Thou" already in the same terms 1907. This statement can only be seen a legend.

Buber formulated his dialogical thinking in all his terms in the year 1922, when he wrote his famous book "I and Thou" and not one year earlier.

1958 Buber was confronted with the statement of Moreno, which I showed you in the beginning. Here Moreno writes very detailed and in clear words, that he can't be seen as influenced by Buber because his booklets were published 9 years before Bubers "I and Thou". Dr. Pfuetze a Professor for Philosophy in Georgia sent this statement to Buber the Professor in Jerusalem. As far as I know, this was the only situation when Buber was asked how it really was. Buber answered to Pfuetze very shortly, that he did not know Morenos writings, and that he only read one text by Moreno, which he didn't understand. Then Buber repeats his own legend and claims again that he had formulated his ideas for "I and Thou" already 1907.

Summary

- the interpersonal relationship appears in **Martin Bubers thinking 1918** (1906 there was an isolated use of the term “das Zwischenmenschliche”, without a dialogical meaning)
- there is no dialogical work before “I and Thou”, which was written 1922 and published January 1923

Let me now summarize the time course of Bubers way to dialogical philosophy and then show further details.

3. What Buber received from Moreno

What Buber received from Moreno:

In “I and Thou” we find four different kinds of influence by J.L. Moreno:

1. influence in important ideas
2. Buber took over phrases and significant using of terms
3. the architecture (of the first two chapters) of „I and Thou“
4. Bubers unpublished motto of „I and Thou“

We can find 4 different kinds of influence from Moreno in Bubers book “I and Thou”, which I will detail now.

There is an influence in central ideas. In a few points we will see that Buber took over whole phrases from Morenos early writings and we can see parallels in the significant use of terms. Then we can see similarities in what I call the architecture of “I and Thou”. At last I will show Bubers motto of “I and Thou”, which he decided not to publish.

What Buber received from Moreno:

Central Ideas:

- living encounter/unmittelbare Begegnung
- encounter is limited in the time
- healing by encounter
- here and now
- presence and past

To the first point:

Buber received from Moreno central ideas for his “I and Thou”. The main topic Buber found in Morenos early texts and poems is the living encounter. Buber did not only

find the term living encounter with an excellent formulation. He took from Morenos writings also a few significant contexts of encounter.

Moreno wrote that encounter is limited in time, the same we find in Bubers "I and Thou".

Moreno writes about healing by encounter, same does Buber in his book.

Moreno writes about responsibility, which someone has who invites to an encounter.

We find similarities in Bubers book.

Moreno shows his preference to the here and now, which we can also find in "I and Thou".

The principle in all this points is the same: Buber found these thoughts in Morenos poems and plays and formulated it far more detailed in his book. Some of this ideas Buber found in very a significant formulation in Morenos writings.

Buber took some phrases from Moreno almost word by word:

*„Es gibt kein **Mittel** zwischen mir und anderen / Ich bin **unmittelbar**: in der **Begegnung**“*

MORENO 1914, MORENO 1915, MORENO 1918

These words Moreno repeated like his credo.

*„Die Beziehung zum Du ist **unmittelbar**. ... Alles **Mittel** ist **Hindernis**. Nur wo alles **Mittel** zerfallen ist, geschieht **Begegnung**.“*

BUBER 1923, „I and Thou“

This text from Buber is quoted very often in the German textbooks for psychotherapy.

Here we have the lines again, which we saw twice before now. Remember that these line till now are the proof for influence the other way round.

The young Moreno was a gifted writer and came to such a genius phrase, that Buber could not avoid to take it over almost word by word. It is nearly unbelievable ironic but true, that one of the best known Buber-quotations in the German language must be seen as a Moreno-quotations in fact.

Unfortunately the genius of Morenos poem will get lost in a translation, but I will try: Word by word it says:

There are no means between me and others / I am actual in the encounter.

it could mean:

There is nothing between me and you / I am real in the encounter.

Moreno used a double meaning of the word “unmittelbar” in such accurate way, that Buber could simply not resist to take it over. “Unmittelbar” means today *immediate* and *direct*. In an etymologic much older meaning the word “unmittelbar” means there is nothing in the middle so it says there is nothing between two people if they meet “unmittelbar”.

Moreno let this term corresponded with the word “Mittel”, which means methods or means, so “unmittelbar” gets the meaning without methods. Buber rearranges the words and makes the sentence longer, but he uses the same, very significant meaning.

This significance is the reason why this Buber-quotation got so attractive for psychotherapists. These sentences from Buber are famous and used quite often in German textbooks. Actually this quotation was one of the reasons why I started to work about Bubers dialogical philosophy.

There are even more phrases with a significant use of terms Buber took from Morenos early writings.

more phrases Buber used from Morenos early writings:

„Ich bin nicht **einzig**: bloß in der Begegnung / ob ich ein Gott, ein **Narr** oder ein Dummer / Ich bin geweiht, **geheilt, gelöst** in der Begegnung“

MORENO 1914, MORENO 1915, MORENO 1918

„Gute und Böse, Kluge und **Törichte**, Schöne und Hässliche, einer um den andern wird ihm wirklich und zum Du, ... **einzig** und gegenüber wesend, ... und so kann er wirken, kann helfen, **heilen**, erziehen, erheben, **erlösen**.“

BUBER „I and Thou“. 1923

I try to translate what Moreno wrote:

*I am not unique: only by encounter
If I am a god or a fool
I am consecrated, healed, freed by encounter.*

I try to translate Buber:

Good and bad, wise and fools, beauties and beasts

*one after an other becomes real and a Thou, ...
unique and opposing
and so he can help, heal, educate, increase and free.*

The significant words which are identical are: single, fool, healing and freeing.
In the German language Bubers text appears like a resonance. For me it feels like this gets lost in the translation.

We see the same system. Buber formulates the sentences longer by making a more detailed prose from the short accurate poem.

more phrases in Bubers "I and Thou" inspired by Morenos early writings:

<i>Moreno describes encounter:</i>	<i>Buber describes encounter:</i>
<i>„Wo ich aufgehe, dort ist dein Himmel“</i>	<i>„... nachbarlos und fugenlos ist er Du und füllt den Himmelskreis.“</i>
<u>MORENO 1915</u>	<u>BUBER „I and Thou“, 1923</u>

more phrases in Bubers "I and Thou" inspired by Morenos early writings:

<i>„Wir sollen uns nicht wollen, sondern finden.“</i>	<i>„... da gebe es kein eigenes Wollen.“</i>
<u>MORENO 1914, MORENO 1915, MORENO 1918</u>	<u>BUBER „I and Thou“, 1923</u>
	<i>„Das Du begegnet mir von Gnaden – durch Suchen wird es nicht gefunden.“</i>
	<u>BUBER „I and Thou“, 1923</u>

For time reasons I will not get too detailed with the next examples. And I must say that these examples are not so spectacular like the first one I outlined, but we can not miss that there is more than one significant parallel. The parallels are not always the words themselves the parallel is the significant use of the words. Both describe the direct encounter between people in unusual similar words. The point is Morenos booklets were published nine years earlier.

So what does this mean now? Of course Buber did not find the whole “I and Thou” formulated in Morenos early writings. Encounter is essential for dialogical philosophy, but it is only a part of it. The issues which Buber found in Morenos writings, are much more detailed in his book. It looks like Moreno was the initial encounter for Buber to break through to his dialogical thinking.

When we look at Bubers dialogical philosophy as a building we can see some very important stones in this building, which Buber received from Moreno. Without these significant elements from Moreno, Bubers building of the dialogical philosophy might look very different.

However, there are not only single elements Buber received from Moreno. When we make a step back and look at “I and Thou” we may see that the whole architecture of Bubers main-work is influenced by Moreno.

In his texts published in DAIMON Moreno writes about the conditions of living encounter. In his plays he invents dialogues where authors are accused by others, that they don't want to get in real touch with people. Moreno calls for persecution of all authors in order to really meet them.

The same happens to speakers and theatre-people. The young radical Moreno demands to encounter the whole person in the here and now and not only to call for ears or eyes of an audience. Moreno describes on one side the conditions which lead to a living encounter and on the other side the conditions which hinder people meet each other. And this duality of encounter and non-encounter the book “I and Thou” is all about. Buber starts with the words:”To man the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold attitude.” and actually he does not leave this issue till the last page.

Last but not least there is a significant point even in motto of “I and Thou” which shows the dimensions of the influence of Moreno on Bubers thinking.

As we have seen before, the young Moreno was very strict upon book-authors and said they can not come in contact with their readers via books. He says the only legitimation for writing only may be a report from an encounter or an invitation to an

encounter. He strictly differentiated between living encounter and writing about encounter. Buber did realize although he was writing about living encounter that he wrote just a book. He tried to get out of this trap by writing a short foreword, which he called the motto of "I and Thou". Here he tried to talk to the readers in the second person singular and started with following words:

"You, who is reading here,
what you will read here, is spoken to you...
I don't know you, how may I call you..."

The words he used in the motto are reminding of Moreno. Buber didn't publish this motto. It was found in the unpublished manuscripts of "I and Thou".

I think Moreno did not know this motto. However if you put Morenos comment to "I and Thou" beside Bubers writing, an imaginary dialogue between Buber and Moreno occurs.

Let me use Morenos comments from 1959 as a final word:

"The author Buber does not talk with his "I" to a "Thou" of the reader. Bubers "I" does not come out from the book to encounter this "Thou". Buber and the encounter are stuck in the book. The book is abstract and in the third person. It is an abstraction of the living encounter and not the encounter itself".

Thank you for your attention.

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