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Roots of *Encounter* in Psychotherapy

J.L. Morenos Influence on Martin Bubers Dialogical Philosophy
Su, July 16th, 2006, 9.00-9.45 h

“I would be interested in knowing what were the channels of knowing that enabled you to really learn so deeply of people and relationships” This was the first question Carl Rogers asked Martin Buber when they met 1957. Today, almost fifty years later, we found evidence that Buber never mentioned the person who influenced him to deal with the central meaning of encounter and relationship between people and who stimulated central terms for his dialogical thinking.

1913 in Vienna, the medical student J.L. Moreno started to experiment with different group settings. He wrote a number of texts, which he all titled *Invitation to an encounter*. Until his emigration to the USA in 1925, Moreno published pamphlets and booklets, where he dealt with various aspects of relationship and where he first described the *living encounter* (*unmittelbare Begegnung*) and healing by encounter.

A historical and philological analysis shows that Morenos influence on Bubers book *I and Thou* arises on four levels. Firstly, Buber used central ideas, secondly, the architecture of *I and Thou* is affected by Morenos early thinking, thirdly, there are word by word similarities and moreover, there is a strong correlation between Bubers unpublished motto for *I and Thou* and Morenos texts.

The arising of interpersonal relationship in Bubers writings in 1918, the time when he met Moreno, was noted, but was not yet seen in context with Morenos thinking. Moreno himself mentioned several times that Buber received the term *living Encounter* from him, but only now confirmation for this can be presented.

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