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**Main Themes**

Comparison and dialogue between psychotherapeutic models

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**Title**

Dao, I – Thou, Borders and Quantum physics. Finding the right language and images for existential experience.

**Abstract for**

Long Presentation

## **Abstract**

In European culture, the concept of 'Self' is fundamental and it is closely related to the concept of personality and its boundaries. The division between 'I' and 'not I' is a basic concept for many models of psychotherapy. Consciousness and thinking are considered as qualities inherent in individuals.

Meanwhile, there are Eastern cultures where concept of 'I' is not pivotal and the focus is on 'We' or on community. My experience of the Taoist practices lets me say that in this culture 'I' and 'World' are not separated. 'I' and its borders is unclear, uncertain, changing and it depends on focusing at the current moment.

In scientific communities, philosophical circles and therapeutic groups, my colleagues and I often observed phenomena of collective thinking, collective consciousness, and the emergence of a common 'Self' of a group.

For me, Buber's metaphors of "I and Thou" echo with Taoist practice. Buber tries to overcome the concept of separate individuals who interact with each other. In I – Thou there is no separate I and Thou, there are no boundaries.

Jung also tried to transcend the concept of an individual and bounded 'Self' by introducing the ideas of Collective unconscious and Synchronicity. It is noteworthy that both Buber and Jung were close friends of Richard Wilhelm, who lived in China for many years and was a Taoist practitioner.

The idea of division of 'I' and 'not I' is so deeply rooted in Western culture and the concept of defined borders and definitions is so inherent to European languages, that it is really challenging to express a Taoist or I – Thou or Dasein experience. Existential philosophers Buber, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty often used poetry or metaphoric language. Ernesto Spinelli to explain his concept of Relatedness also uses metaphors.

My first degree was in physics. I found that concepts and images from quantum physics allow us to better understand such phenomena as group thinking and consciousness, the emergence of a common Self of a group. The worldview of quantum mechanics differs significantly from that of classical science. This is a fundamentally different way of looking at the world, understanding space, time, boundaries and togetherness. And this allows us to take a new look at the personality, boundaries, consciousness, thinking and the process of psychotherapy.

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