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Article

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MARTIN BUBER'S NOTION OF EDUCATION: DIALOGUE, ENCOUNTER, AND THE FORMATION OF THE WHOLE PERSON

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Abstract

Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue offers a profound and humanistic foundation for rethinking education in both its theory and practice. Rooted in his seminal work *I and Thou* (1923), Buber challenges mechanistic and instrumental views of education by emphasizing the centrality of authentic human relationships. His concept of the *I-Thou* encounter characterized by mutual presence, openness, and ethical engagement contrasts sharply with the impersonal *I-It* orientation that often dominates contemporary educational systems. This paper explores Buber's core educational ideas, particularly the pedagogical implications of dialogue, the relational role of the educator, and the moral dimensions of teaching and learning. According to Buber, education must be more than the transmission of knowledge or preparation for the workforce; it must be an encounter that forms the whole person mind, body, and spirit. The teacher, therefore, is not merely a transmitter of information but a co-participant in the moral and existential formation of the learner. In this dialogical framework, education becomes an event of mutual transformation, demanding the ethical presence and responsibility of the teacher toward the student as a unique and irreplaceable being. This paper also examines the contemporary relevance of Buber's thought in addressing challenges such as depersonalization, alienation, and the erosion of meaningful relationships in modern classrooms. Drawing on the insights of scholars like Paulo Freire, Nel Noddings, and Parker Palmer, the study argues that Buber's dialogical philosophy remains a vital resource for creating educational environments grounded in care, mutual respect, and authentic human encounter.

Keywords: Dialogue, Encounter, Human Formation, I-Thou Relationship, Pedagogy

Introduction

The concept of education has long transcended the boundaries of mere instruction and technical training. While modern educational systems often emphasize measurable outcomes, standardized assessments, and cognitive efficiency, the deeper philosophical question of what it means to educate remains urgent. Education, in its fullest sense, must be understood as the process by which individuals are formed in relation to themselves, others, and the world. It is not only about knowledge acquisition but also about personal transformation, moral responsibility, and the cultivation of authentic human relationships. In this broader and more profound understanding of education, the thought of Martin Buber emerges as both foundational and transformative. Martin Buber a Jewish philosopher and theologian articulated a dialogical philosophy that reoriented the way we understand human existence and relationality. His seminal work *I and Thou* (*Ich und Du*), introduced the ontological distinction between two fundamental modes of relation: the *I-It* and the *I-Thou*. The *I-It* relation treats the other whether a person, object, or idea as a thing to be used, analyzed, or categorized. In contrast, the *I-Thou* relation involves a direct, holistic, and mutual presence in which both parties engage each other as whole beings, not as means to an end (Buber, 1958). This relational framework underlies Buber's conception of education, which he viewed not merely as instruction but as encounters – an existential meeting between teacher and student that allows both to be transformed.

Buber argues that genuine education is grounded in presence, mutual respect, and responsibility. The teacher, in this vision, is not merely an authority figure or transmitter of information but a *witness to becoming*, one who accompanies the student on the journey of self-realization and moral awakening (Buber, 1947). The educational process, therefore, becomes a space where the student is not an object of instruction but a subject in dialogue. This approach rejects any attempt to instrumentalize the learner or reduce education to utilitarian functions such as workforce preparation, economic productivity, or technical proficiency. Instead, it calls for a pedagogy that is relational, ethical, and rooted in the full dignity of the human person. In the context of contemporary educational challenges such as depersonalization, technological alienation, diminished student-teacher interaction, and the erosion of communal values Buber's insights provide a powerful philosophical counter-narrative. His insistence on authentic dialogue, ethical presence, and spiritual openness offers a framework for resisting the commodification of education and for recovering its deeper vocation as a transformative human encounter. This paper thus explores Buber's philosophy of education in four critical dimensions: the foundational role of the *I-Thou* relationship in pedagogy; the dialogical nature of teaching and learning; the ethical responsibility and presence of the educator; and the aim of educating the whole person intellectually, morally, and spiritually. In engaging Buber's thought, the paper draws upon complementary insights from educational philosophers such as Paulo Freire, Nel Noddings, and Parker Palmer, who have built on Buber's dialogical foundation in their own pedagogical theories. The ultimate aim is to demonstrate the enduring relevance of Buber's educational philosophy for constructing a human-centered pedagogy in an age of increasing fragmentation.

The Meaning of Education

Etymologically the word education comes from *educare*- meaning to bring up, to train, to inform to rear and *educere* meaning to lead forth, to draw out or guide away from. Literally one

can therefore say that education means a process of training or development of some skills, character usually under the guidance of a person. This is affirmed in Kneller understanding of education as the process by which society through schools, college, universities and other institution deliberately transmits knowledge, value and skill from one generation to another (Okewu, 2022, p.157). From this definition a logical mind would infer that this notion simply limit the meaning of education to formal ways of acquiring knowledge. Some scholars have interpreted Education to be the act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. With this designation in mind, education is a means of opening new doors to a more prosperous, mature life. Education is constant and acquired until the day we die. Without education, where would humans find themselves? This process of acquiring general knowledge is formulated through distinct interactions between teachers and students in a school setting, as well as events in our daily lives. By critically thinking and actively learning, one can better obtain knowledge. Furthermore, education is seen and analyzed by some scholars as follows:

- i. The act or process of imparting or acquiring general knowledge, developing the powers of reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life.
- ii. Put differently the act or process of imparting or acquiring particular knowledge or skills. i.e the process of teaching, training and learning in school and college for the development of knowledge and skill so as to prepare individual to live happily in the society.
- iii. The process of transmitting societal lore, values and desirable attitudes from one generation to another.
- iv. The result produced by instruction, training, or study: to show one's education.
- v. The science or art of teaching; pedagogic

According to R. S Peters, education implies the transmission of what is worthwhile in those who become committed to it which involves knowledge and understanding and some sort of cognitive perspective which is not inert. According to the idealists, education is a systematic development of sound mind in a sound body as the perfect virtue redeems man from the cave of ignorance. This helps him to develop individual freedom, responsibility and self control. For the realists, education is a process through which man's potentialities and capacities are developed which helps and enables him to come to the knowledge of truth as it is. According to Ayo Fadahunsi, education is a method through which people are lead out of ignorance. It creates awareness of what is not previously known in the mind of people. Fasanya defined education as the art of training the intellectuality, morality and physicality of a person (Okewu, 2022).

The I-Thou Relationship and the Foundation of Education

At the heart of Martin Buber's educational philosophy lies his ontological distinction between two fundamental modes of human relation: *I-It* and *I-Thou*. This dichotomy, articulated in his seminal work *I and Thou*, constitutes not merely a linguistic contrast but an existential and phenomenological account of how human beings engage the world and each other. The *I-It* relationship is characterized by detachment, objectification, and utilitarianism; it is the mode by which individuals relate to others as objects, instruments, or data points. In contrast, the *I-Thou* relationship embodies mutual presence, reciprocity, and openness, where the other is encountered not as a means but as a whole being, irreducible and sacred

(Buber, 1958). This relational anthropology has profound implications for education. Buber's philosophy rejects any pedagogy that treats students as passive recipients, standardized products, or mere containers to be filled a critique that anticipates and parallels Paulo Freire's condemnation of the "banking model of education" (Freire, 1970, p. 72). In Freire's terms, education must be dialogical, fostering mutual humanization; Buber provides the metaphysical grounding for such dialogical engagement by insisting that genuine human development is possible only within *I-Thou* encounters. In Buber's view, education is not about manipulation or indoctrination but about relation a living meeting between teacher and student, in which both participate in a process of becoming. "Education," Buber writes, "Worthy of the name, is education of character, of the whole person" (Buber, 1947, p. 105). The foundation of this type of education lies not in curriculum, techniques, or institutional systems, but in the existential quality of the educator's relationship with the student. The teacher's capacity to see the student as a Thou a subject with agency, potential, and moral worth lays the foundation for authentic learning and personal transformation.

Other thinkers have affirmed this relational foundation of education. Emmanuel Levinas, whose philosophy of ethics is likewise rooted in encounter, argues that responsibility arises not from rational deliberation but from the face of the Other, which interrupts and commands the self (Levinas, 1969). While Levinas focuses on asymmetrical ethical obligation, Buber emphasizes mutuality and dialogical reciprocity. Together, they present a vision of education as an ethical vocation grounded in relation. Similarly, the American philosopher Nel Noddings draws from both Buber and Levinas in her theory of the "ethic of care," arguing that the teacher's responsibility involves not just intellectual but emotional and relational attentiveness to the student (Noddings, 1992). Moreover, this dialogical foundation resonates with Aristotelian notions of *phronesis* (practical wisdom), which presuppose that education involves not only the acquisition of abstract knowledge (*episteme*) but the development of character and the capacity for wise judgment in concrete, relational contexts (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a-1103a). Buber's *I-Thou* relation enables such moral cultivation by creating a space where learners are not objectified but called forth to reflect on their being and responsibility in the world. In this framework, the *I-Thou* encounter becomes not merely a pedagogical method but the ontological ground of all meaningful education. When a teacher enters into authentic relation with a student, they both inhabit a shared space of presence, vulnerability, and transformation. The student is not merely taught but *addressed*, not merely evaluated but *encountered*. This reverses the dominant logic of control and predictability that often governs modern classrooms, advocating instead for a pedagogy of openness, hospitality, and co-becoming. Buber's *I-Thou* philosophy forms the very foundation of his educational thought. It reorients pedagogy from transmission to transformation, from information to incarnation, from detachment to ethical involvement. By insisting on presence, dialogue, and mutual recognition, Buber not only redefines the teacher-student relationship but also offers a vision of education capable of resisting the dehumanizing tendencies of technocratic and commodified systems of learning.

The Dialogical Principle in Pedagogy

Central to Martin Buber's philosophy of education is the dialogical principle the conviction that genuine education unfolds in the context of authentic dialogue between teacher and student. Unlike monological forms of pedagogy that emphasize one-way communication and hierarchical dissemination of knowledge, dialogical pedagogy involves mutual presence,

openness, and co-participation in meaning-making. Dialogue, for Buber, is not a method or technique but an ontological stance: a way of being-with others that respects their personhood and affirms their capacity for growth and transformation (Buber, 1947, p. 125). In his dialogical framework, Buber warns against what he calls "technical" or "manipulative" education where the teacher seeks to influence or shape the student according to predefined outcomes, treating the student as an object of instruction (*I-It*). In contrast, true education arises when the teacher relates to the student as a *Thou*, a presence to be encountered rather than a problem to be solved (Buber, 1958, pp. 6–7). This dialogical relation involves mutual trust, responsiveness, and ethical responsibility. It opens a space where both teacher and student may be transformed through the encounter. Buber's dialogical principle is echoed in the work of Paulo Freire, whose *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* articulates education as a liberatory process based on dialogue and conscientization. Freire asserts that education must be "an act of love and courage," where teacher and student engage in a co-investigation of reality (Freire, 1970, pp. 77–81). Both Buber and Freire oppose authoritarian and mechanistic pedagogies, insisting that dialogue is essential for freedom, critical thinking, and the affirmation of human dignity.

Moreover, Hannah Arendt, though not explicitly a Buberian, similarly defends a relational view of education in her essay "The Crisis in Education", where she argues that the educator must introduce the child to the world in a way that neither coerces nor abandons, but instead invites responsible freedom. Like Buber, she sees the educational space as a meeting ground between generations, where newness is nurtured through trust and relational accountability. Buber's dialogical pedagogy also anticipates more contemporary relational theories of education. Nel Noddings, building on Buber and feminist ethics, advocates for pedagogy of care, where the teacher's role is rooted in attentive listening and relational sensitivity. For Noddings, care is not merely affective but dialogical; it requires engagement with the other as an active moral subject. Similarly, Parker Palmer emphasizes the importance of the "subject-centered classroom," where dialogue involves not only persons but also the living presence of truth and meaning in shared inquiry (Palmer, 1993, pp. 70–75). The dialogical principle implies a profound reconfiguration of the teacher-student relationship. Rather than dominating, the teacher becomes a co-learner; rather than passively receiving, the student becomes a co-creator of meaning. This mutuality does not imply symmetry Buber acknowledges the asymmetry of responsibility in the relationship but it insists on respect and responsiveness. According to Buber "The educator must not see the pupil as a passive object in learning process, rather to see such person as a living partner in the process of education" (Buber, 1947, p. 107). In institutional settings increasingly governed by surveillance, metrics, and managerial rationality, Buber's insistence on dialogue as the ground of education is a radical and restorative vision. Dialogue, in this sense, is not peripheral but foundational; it shapes the climate of the classroom, the quality of relationships, and the moral character of learning itself. Without dialogue, education risks becoming a sterile transaction; with it, education becomes a space of genuine encounter and human flourishing.

Responsibility and Presence in Education

One of the most ethically charged dimensions of Martin Buber's philosophy of education is his emphasis on the responsibility and presence of the educator. For Buber, the pedagogical relationship is not simply a functional interaction between instructor and learner but a moral

encounter that calls the teacher into an active, accountable, and attentive role. Responsibility, in this context, is not imposed by external regulations or institutional duty but arises from the inherent dignity of the *Thou* the student encountered as a full person in relation. Buber writes that “the educator is a person who must stand in a personal relation to the growing human being” and that “this relation involves responsibility for the person’s becoming” (Buber, 1947, pp. 124–127). Such responsibility is dialogical and existential rather than bureaucratic; it requires that the teacher be present not merely in body or function, but in spirit, attentiveness, and moral engagement. Buber refers to this as *wirkliche Gegenwart*, or real presence - a presence that affirms the student as a unique and becoming self. In this vision, presence is not equivalent to surveillance or control. It is an ethical stance of availability, grounded in attentiveness to the student’s needs, vulnerabilities, and aspirations. This is congruent with Emmanuel Levinas’s notion of responsibility as arising from the face-to-face encounter with the Other, where the self is summoned by the other’s vulnerability and difference (Levinas, 1969). While Buber places more emphasis on mutuality than Levinas’s asymmetrical ethics, both thinkers situate responsibility as primary and relational rather than contractual. Responsibility in education, then, is deeply tied to the teacher’s ability to *see* and *hear* the student beyond categories, expectations, or performance metrics. This aligns with Max van Manen’s hermeneutic phenomenology of pedagogy, in which pedagogical responsibility involves tact and perceptiveness the ability to respond meaningfully to the child’s experience in the moment (van Manen, 1991). The educator must attend not just to curriculum but to the student’s existential situation, including their struggles with identity, meaning, and belonging. Moreover, Buber’s vision stands as a critique of depersonalized or instrumental models of education. In systems driven by standardized assessment, learning outcomes, and technocratic efficiency, the relational presence of the teacher is often undermined or reduced to deliverable tasks. Such models reflect the *I-It* mode, where the student becomes a case, a data point, or a problem to be solved. Against this, Buber insists that real education requires the educator to enter into the risk of relationship, where the outcome is not fully controllable and where the presence of the Other may transform both participants.

This transformation is not automatic but depends on the teacher’s willingness to be vulnerable to be open to the *Thou* and to resist the temptation to instrumentalize the learner. In this sense, education becomes a sacramental act, to use theological language, in which something sacred is at stake in the everyday encounter between teacher and student. The teacher’s presence serves as a kind of moral invitation to the student to become more fully human, to enter the space of dialogue and responsibility themselves.

Buber’s insights here find resonance in Parker Palmer understands of “the courage to teach,” which he defines as the inner integration of identity, integrity, and vocation in the act of education. Palmer argues that effective teaching flows not from technique but from the teacher’s inward presence “we teach who we are” (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). Similarly, Nel Noddings emphasizes the relational ethic of care, wherein the teacher’s attentive presence affirms the student’s reality and offers emotional and intellectual security needed for genuine learning (Noddings, 1992). Responsibility and presence are inseparable in Buber’s educational philosophy. To educate is not only to inform but to respond to be fully present to the life and becoming of the other. It is in this responsive presence that real pedagogy begins, creating a space for transformation that transcends techniques and curriculum, and affirms the sacredness of every human encounter.

Educating the Whole Person

Martin Buber's educational vision is inseparable from his existential-dialogical anthropology, which regards the human being not as an isolated individual, but as a being-in-relation called to authenticity, moral responsibility, and community through encounter. In this view, education is not a neutral process of knowledge transfer but a profoundly moral and spiritual endeavor directed toward the formation of the whole person. It seeks to engage the learner in their totality: intellectually, emotionally, ethically, socially, and spiritually. Thus, Buber's educational philosophy resists the fragmentation of the self that characterizes many modern pedagogical systems and instead proposes an integrative model rooted in relational ontology. Buber's assertion that "the real essence of education is the educator's personal relation to the person being educated" (Buber, 1947, p. 123) articulates a foundational principle: the person cannot be educated in parts, as if the mind, body, and spirit were separable domains. Rather, the educator must encounter the learner as a unified and evolving subject, capable of truth, freedom, and moral growth. In this context, education becomes an act of affirmation, a dialogical event that calls the student to become more fully who they are, not merely to perform or conform. This holistic ideal aligns with the classical Greek notion of *paideia*, which conceived education as the formation of character and the cultivation of virtues essential to both personal flourishing (*eudaimonia*) and civic life. For Aristotle, education must aim at the development of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) and *aretē* (excellence of character), thereby forming persons who can live well in relation to others (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1098a–1103a). Buber reclaims this moral dimension of education by insisting that pedagogical work is not value-neutral but inherently ethical, involving responsibility for the student's becoming.

Similarly, Buber's approach finds resonance in John Dewey's progressive education philosophy, which sees the learner as an active, experiential participant in a social and moral community. Dewey emphasized that education is not preparation for life but life itself, and that schooling must be rooted in the lived experiences and interests of the learner (Dewey, 1938). However, where Dewey places primacy on communal inquiry and democratic participation, Buber underscores the existential depth of personhood and the transformative power of the dialogical *I-Thou* encounter. Further, Buber's holistic model of education intersects meaningfully with Parker Palmer's vision of teaching as a spiritual vocation. Palmer contends that the deepest form of education calls forth the integrity of the teacher and student alike. "Good teaching," he writes, "cannot be reduced to technique; it comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (Palmer, 1998, p. 10). For Buber, the teacher is not merely a conduit for knowledge but a witness to the student's becoming, someone who offers presence, challenge, and ethical recognition. This requires a pedagogy of vulnerability, where both parties risk openness to truth and transformation. Moreover, Buber's insistence on the spiritual dimensions of the person what he names the *Eternal Thou* adds a theologically rich layer to holistic education. Through every authentic *I-Thou* encounter, the person is also drawn into relation with God, the Absolute Other who cannot be objectified. Thus, spiritual formation is not separate from educational development but embedded in the dialogical process itself. In this sense, Buber's vision aligns with the Christian humanist tradition, particularly in thinkers like Gabriel Marcel and Simone Weil, who emphasized attention, incarnation, and fidelity to the other as pathways to both moral and spiritual awakening (Marcel, 1967; Weil, 1951).

The contemporary relevance of Buber's holistic educational model is striking. In a global context marked by technological alienation, emotional fragmentation, and utilitarian models of education that prioritize employability over ethical formation, Buber's philosophy offers a counter-narrative. His framework encourages educators to see students not as economic units or cognitive machines but as beings in search of meaning, belonging, and moral identity. This vision is especially vital in addressing the epidemic of student disengagement, mental health crises, and the erosion of purpose among learners in modern schooling. Moreover, Buber's commitment to educating the whole person challenges educators to create learning environments that are relational, reflective, and inclusive of existential question spaces where students are invited to explore who they are, what they value, and how they wish to live in the world. This requires a pedagogy that is dialogical not only in method but in spirit, one that invites participation, nurtures critical consciousness, and affirms the intrinsic worth of each learner. Martin Buber's philosophy of educating the whole person articulates a rich, multidimensional view of human formation. It reclaims the moral, spiritual, and relational dimensions of education often eclipsed by technocratic paradigms. By rooting education in dialogue, presence, and ethical responsibility, Buber offers an enduring and radical vision one that affirms that to educate is to call the person to fullness of being, to relationship, and ultimately, to transcendence.

The Relevance of Buber's Educational Philosophy Today

In an era increasingly defined by technological acceleration, utilitarian goals, and depersonalized modes of learning, Martin Buber's educational philosophy stands as a necessary counterpoint. His emphasis on dialogue, relationality, and the holistic formation of the human person challenges the dominant trends that reduce education to mere technical training or economic productivity. Today's educational landscape characterized by large student-teacher ratios, digital instruction, outcome-based curricula, and widespread student disengagement often neglects the existential and ethical dimensions of learning. Buber's vision invites educators to recover education's most profound purpose: the nurturing of responsible, responsive, and relational human beings. The *I-Thou* relationship, central to Buber's philosophy, counters the *I-It* logic that permeates many educational systems today. In *I-It* education, learners become data points, performance metrics, or consumers of content, rather than subjects in development. The marketization of education often fosters this mode of relating, treating schools and universities as service providers rather than communities of formation. Against this backdrop, Buber's dialogical principle reasserts the importance of mutual presence, genuine engagement, and ethical responsiveness between teacher and student. As noted by Palmer, true teaching emerges not from mastery of content alone but from the courage to be present and authentic before learner deeply Buberian notion. Moreover, Buber's ideas resonate strongly with contemporary educational movements such as transformative learning, restorative pedagogy, and values-based education. Transformative learning theory, as developed by Jack Mezirow, posits that authentic learning involves shifts in worldview and identity through reflective and dialogical engagement. While Mezirow's framework is rooted in adult education, its dialogical nature reflects Buber's belief in education as encounter that shapes being, not just knowing (Mezirow, 2000). Similarly, restorative pedagogy, now applied in conflict-sensitive schooling, seeks to reestablish relationship and communal belonging goals consistent with Buber's insistence on relational wholeness.

In pluralistic and multicultural societies, Buber's insistence on dialogue across difference becomes especially vital. Education in such contexts cannot succeed by enforcing conformity; it must foster respectful listening, openness to the other, and a shared commitment to coexistence. Nel Noddings' ethic of care and Paulo Freire's dialogical pedagogy extend Buber's ideas into practical educational paradigms aimed at social justice and empathy. Freire (1970), for instance, critiques the "banking model" of education that views students as passive recipients, advocating instead for co-intentional learning that honors the agency of both teacher and learner. Buber's *I-Thou* ideal finds deep expression in such democratic and liberating pedagogies. Technological advancements in education such as AI, virtual classrooms, and online platforms pose both promise and peril. While they increase access to information and flexibility, they also risk detaching learning from lived, relational experiences. Buber's thought urges a cautionary approach: technology must serve the human, not substitute for genuine encounter. As educators integrate digital tools, Buber's framework reminds us to preserve space for authentic connection, emotional presence, and moral growth. In a post-pandemic world marked by social isolation, mental health struggles, and identity crises among youth, Buber's call to educate the whole person is more pressing than ever. The modern student yearns not only for skills but also for meaning, belonging, and affirmation. Buber's dialogical pedagogy offers a hopeful path forward, one that sees education as the sacred space where person meets person, where truth is born in relationship, and where freedom is nurtured through responsibility. Martin Buber's educational philosophy is not a nostalgic ideal, but a living imperative. It challenges educators, institutions, and policymakers to ask deeper questions: What kind of persons are we forming? What kinds of relationships are we modeling? What vision of the human person guides our practice? In answering these questions, Buber offers not only a philosophy but, pedagogy of hope, rooted in presence, dialogue, and the sacredness of the human encounter.

Conclusion

Martin Buber's philosophy of education, grounded in the *I-Thou* relationship and the dialogical principle, provides a compelling vision for reimagining education in the contemporary world. Across the preceding sections, we have explored how Buber's thought offers an alternative to mechanistic, depersonalized, and transactional models of teaching and learning. His vision affirms education as a deeply human, moral, and spiritual encounter, one that transcends mere transmission of knowledge to embrace the formation of the whole person in relationship with others. Central to this vision is the belief that genuine education occurs in the space between persons where teacher and student meet in mutual presence, respect, and trust. In such encounters, learners are not objectified as recipients or instruments of institutional goals, but recognized as unique subjects in the process of becoming. Buber's dialogical pedagogy affirms that education, at its best, is an act of calling forth, where the student is not shaped merely by curriculum but awakened through relationship. This insight finds resonance in a range of contemporary educational theories from transformative learning to restorative and care-based pedagogies which increasingly recognize the importance of affective, moral, and relational dimensions of learning. In our fragmented, digitally saturated, and often alienating age, Buber's educational philosophy challenges educators to resist the reduction of education to test scores, market demands, or technical efficiency. Instead, it invites a return to presence to the sacred space where

persons encounter persons, where values are transmitted not just through words but through lived example, and where education becomes a journey of mutual transformation. Looking ahead, Buber's thought offers critical guidance for educators and policymakers committed to renewing education in the face of global crises, social disintegration, cultural intolerance, mental health decline, and ecological degradation. In each of these challenges, the need for dialogical, empathetic, and ethically grounded education is urgent. Schools and universities must not only disseminate knowledge but cultivate citizens who can listen, empathize, dialogue, and act with responsibility in an interconnected world. To embrace Buber's vision is to affirm that education is not only about preparing students for the world, but about preparing the world for greater humanity. It is to reclaim the sacredness of encounter and the dignity of the learner. As we navigate the uncertainties of the 21st century, Buber's philosophy reminds us that it is not technical knowledge alone that will sustain us, but the quality of our relationships and the depth of our humanity. In the end, education as Buber saw it is the art of becoming human together.

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