BUILDING PEACE IN THE DIGITAL AGE: TOWARDS AN ONTOLOGY OF CARE AND HUMAN RELATIONS

Alessandra Priore[1]
University of Reggio Calabria
alessandra.priore@unirc.it

Federica De Marco[2]
University of Reggio Calabria
f.demarco@uniroma1.it – federica.demarco@unirc.it

Domenico Licopoli[3]
University of Reggio Calabria
domenicolicopoli1996@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT
The emergence of generative artificial intelligence within educational contexts calls for a reconsideration of the ontological foundations of human relationships and the pedagogical conditions underlying peacebuilding. Taking care as its central interpretive category, this paper identifies alterity, embodiment, and transformative reciprocity as the conditions that make educational experience irreducible to any form of algorithmic mediation. The authenticity of educational relationships is thus distinguished from mere communicative effectiveness, demonstrating that both subject formation and the constructive transformation of conflicts are grounded in the encounter with the other. Peace is therefore understood as an educational and relational process founded on mutual recognition, responsibility, and care, thereby outlining a pedagogical perspective that critically integrates artificial intelligence without losing the irreducibly human core of education.

KEYWORDS
Ontology of care; empathy; peace education.

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[1] Co-author of the manuscript; author of Sections 1 and 2.

[2] Co-author of the manuscript; author of Section 3.

[3] Co-author of the manuscript; author of the Conclusion.

1. The Ethics of Care as the Foundation of Educational Relationships in the Era of Technological Transformations

The profound technological and cultural transformations characterising contemporary society are radically reshaping the ways in which individuals build relationships, construct meaning, and experience their own presence in the world. In a society increasingly characterised by communicative acceleration, algorithmic mediation, and the progressive dematerialisation of human encounters, there is a growing urgency to reflect upon the pedagogical value of relationships, care, and peace as fundamental conditions of the educational experience. Today, more than ever, educational research is called upon not only to engage with technological innovation, but also to critically reconsider what makes the educational process authentically human: the possibility of listening, mutual recognition, responsibility, and the co-construction of shared meanings. Against this background, the article develops a theoretical-argumentative inquiry through a critical-hermeneutic approach, guided by the following analytical question: which conditions make the educational relationship irreducible to algorithmic simulation, and how do these conditions contribute to peacebuilding in the age of artificial intelligence? Care, alterity, embodiment, and positive peace are brought into dialogue as the conceptual nuclei through which the pedagogical specificity of the encounter is clarified and the relational claims attributed to conversational systems are critically assessed. Theoretical works are selected for their foundational relevance to these interpretative categories, while recent empirical evidence is drawn from peer-reviewed studies with explicit designs and contexts. Such evidence serves to test and delimit propositions concerning the effects of generative AI on learning, mediated communication, and perceptions of relationship. This articulation of sources keeps the philosophical-pedagogical

argument in dialogue with observable findings and defines the interpretative scope of the analysis. Algorithmic mediation therefore has pedagogical relevance that must be described without attributing uniform effects to it. In experiments on AI-mediated communication, automated suggestions altered the language used and interlocutors' perceptions of one another; these outcomes nevertheless depended on the task, awareness of AI intervention, and the context of use (Hohenstein et al., 2023). Qualitative and longitudinal studies of social chatbots further document that some users develop perceptions of closeness and relational continuity, without warranting an equivalence between such bonds and the reciprocity characteristic of human relationships (Skjuve et al., 2021; 2022). As Floridi (2014) argues, the advent of the so-called Fourth Revolution profoundly alters the way human beings understand themselves, redefining the boundaries between presence, information, and relationships. From this perspective, intelligent technologies are not merely external tools that support human experience; rather, they become integral components of the infosphere within which identities, meanings, and social practices are constructed. Consequently, digital technologies should not be regarded merely as tools within the educational experience, but as a cultural device that profoundly affects cognitive, emotional, and relational processes, making a pedagogy oriented towards the development of critical thinking, responsibility, and ethical awareness increasingly necessary (Gallese et al., 2025; Rivoltella, 2015). Within this context, the issue of peace education also emerges, fundamentally grounded in a relational and intersubjective perspective, raising unprecedented questions concerning the weakening, simplification, and erosion of relationships in the digital age. This challenge appears particularly significant considering that new generations are growing up within communicative ecosystems in which interactions with artificial systems are becoming

increasingly frequent and pervasive, extending into dimensions traditionally associated with the affective and relational spheres. The more these transformations affect the sphere of human relationships, the more necessary it is to question what characterises the experience of genuine human encounters and the conditions that enable the construction of meaningful relationships. In this respect, the concept of educational care assumes a central role, as it refers to the dimension of attentiveness, responsibility, and mutual engagement that makes it possible to recognise the other not merely as an interlocutor, but as a person. Care thus emerges as the ethical and relational foundation of the educational encounter, that is, as the condition through which relationships can be genuinely established, nurtured, and allowed to flourish. Furthermore, reflection on care finds one of its foundations in Heidegger's thought (1927/2005), which identifies *Sorge* (care) as a constitutive dimension of human existence. Human beings cannot be understood as isolated individuals, since their experience takes shape within the relationships they establish with others and with the world. Care, therefore, does not merely represent a moral disposition but rather a constitutive dimension of human experience, through which individuals construct meaning, orient their actions, and develop their identities. Consequently, the pedagogical question emerging from these reflections concerns the conditions that make the construction of meaningful relationships and shared meanings possible, highlighting how every human experience develops within a network of relationships, responsibilities, and processes of mutual recognition. While Heidegger enables us to understand relationality as a constitutive dimension of human existence, Lévinas (1961/1983) develops this reflection further by locating the very foundation of ethics in the encounter with the other. According to the philosopher, the other cannot be fully subsumed under the subject's interpretative categories nor reduced to a mere object of knowledge. On the

contrary, the presence of the Other manifests itself as irreducible and calls the individual to a responsibility that precedes any conscious choice. From this perspective, ethics does not arise from the application of abstract principles but from the concrete experience of encountering alterity. In the contemporary context, this reflection acquires particular relevance in light of the growing diffusion of conversational systems capable of simulating increasingly sophisticated dialogical interactions. Although such systems can generate coherent, personalised, and even emotionally persuasive responses, they neither experience the alterity of reality nor participate in that relationship of responsibility which, according to Lévinas, constitutes the very core of ethical experience. Accordingly, the central pedagogical question concerns not merely the capacity of technologies to imitate human language, but rather the risk that relationships may progressively be conceived as simple functional interactions, thereby losing those dimensions of openness, unpredictability, and mutual recognition that characterise the authenticity of human encounters. The centrality of alterity and responsibility finds further development in Buber's dialogical philosophy (1923/1993), which distinguishes between the *I–Thou* relationship and the *I–It* relationship. Whereas the former recognises the other in his or her uniqueness and irreducibility, the latter is governed by a logic of use, control, and instrumentalisation. This distinction is particularly significant for interpreting some of the transformations currently affecting human relationships. Although generative artificial intelligence systems are capable of simulating increasingly sophisticated forms of dialogue, the reciprocity they produce remains structurally limited, since the system does not genuinely participate in the encounter, does not share vulnerability, and is not exposed to the possibility of reciprocal transformation (Gallese, 2026). The risk, therefore, lies neither in the existence of these technologies nor in their demonisation, but rather in the progressive normalisation of relational models

grounded in predictability, adaptation, and functionality, rather than in the openness and unpredictability that are intrinsic to authentic human encounters. In light of the theoretical framework outlined thus far, the concept of care can now be reconsidered in its specifically educational significance. While the perspectives of Heidegger, Lévinas, and Buber have respectively highlighted the ontological, ethical, and dialogical dimensions of care, Mayeroff (1971) further develops its meaning by interpreting it as a relational process through which the growth of the other and the fulfilment of his or her potential are fostered. From this perspective, Noddings (1984) identifies the caring relationship as the very foundation of educational practice. In both approaches, education means cultivating relationships capable of generating trust, belonging, mutual recognition, and, ultimately, life itself. However, the emergence of artificial systems capable of simulating listening, encouragement, and emotional support makes it necessary to question what specifically characterises the educational relationship. If care were reducible merely to communicative effectiveness or to the ability to generate responses perceived as empathic, there would be no theoretical grounds for excluding the progressive extension of educational functions to such systems. If, on the contrary, care entails responsibility, embodied and emotional involvement, exposure to vulnerability, and participation in a shared history, then a qualitative distinction emerges that differentiates the educational relationship from the algorithmic simulation of empathy. In this direction, the reflections of Mortari (2017) are also particularly significant, as she conceives care as a practice aimed at safeguarding the possibility of the other's flourishing. To care means assuming responsibility for the relationship, recognising the fragility and vulnerability that characterise the human condition. Care cannot therefore be reduced to a performance or a technical function, since it entails a form of presence that simultaneously engages cognitive, emotional, embodied, and

ethical dimensions. Moreover, the scope of care extends beyond the interpersonal sphere, assuming social and political significance. Bubeck (1995) argues that care makes visible the networks of interdependence that sustain collective life, while Arendt (1958/1999) identifies plurality as the fundamental condition of human existence and of the construction of a common world. Democratic coexistence, therefore, takes shape through the capacity to inhabit difference, engage in dialogue with others, and participate in the shared construction of the public sphere. For these reasons, the educational challenge lies in preserving the primacy of relationships. As Gallese and Morelli (2024) argue, the dimension of the *we* precedes that of the *I*, since personal identity takes shape within relationships of reciprocity, recognition, and shared experience that constitute the human being from the very beginning. If care, in the perspectives of Mayeroff, Noddings, and, subsequently, Mortari, makes it possible to build relationships grounded in recognition, responsibility, and attentiveness towards the other, positive peace represents the social and communal horizon within which these dynamics can develop, become consolidated, and be translated into shared practices. Within this perspective lies Galtung's (1969, 1996, 2019) conception of positive peace, according to which peace does not coincide with the mere absence of violence but rather with the presence of relational, cultural, and social conditions that foster cooperation, participation, inclusion, and mutual recognition. Consequently, the educational relationship assumes a central role as a privileged space for peacebuilding, since it enables these conditions to be experienced concretely through the everyday practices of encounter, dialogue, and mutual responsibility. Educators interpret contexts, embrace fragilities, mediate conflicts, recognise implicit needs, and construct shared meanings through an embodied presence that simultaneously engages cognitive, emotional, bodily, and ethical dimensions. In this sense, peace is not conceived as content to be

taught but rather as a relational dimension that takes shape through everyday practices of listening, dialogue, recognition, responsibility, and care, grounded in presence. In light of these reflections, the growing diffusion of generative artificial intelligence has become a central topic for educational research, which is called upon to address questions that extend far beyond the technological dimension. As Turkle (2011) argues, the issue does not lie in the capacity of machines to simulate human behaviour, but rather in the risk that individuals may progressively redefine their relational expectations by adapting them to forms of interaction devoid of authentic reciprocity. This issue is particularly significant in educational contexts, where relationships constitute the primary medium through which trust, learning, coexistence, and, from a broader perspective, the conditions for positive peace are constructed. Against this background, attention cannot be limited to the opportunities offered by such systems but must also extend to understanding what makes the educational relationship a distinctive experience that cannot be fully reduced to a functional or performative logic. Precisely because these technologies are becoming increasingly capable of reproducing some of the outward manifestations of listening, dialogue, and relational support, it becomes essential to ask which elements of the educational encounter continue to constitute its distinctive and indispensable core.

2. Educational Relationships Beyond Simulation: Alterity, Embodiment, and Care

If artificial intelligence is now capable of simulating increasingly sophisticated forms of listening, dialogue, and empathy, the first issue to clarify concerns not only what machines can produce, but what we risk mistaking for an authentic educational relationship. Generative systems can produce linguistically

coherent responses adapted to a user's input. In educational terms, a controlled study conducted in a university physics course reported greater learning gains with an AI tutor designed according to pedagogical principles and restricted to defined content than in a specific in-person active-learning condition (Kestin et al., 2025). This finding supports the possibility of personalising certain learning pathways, but it cannot automatically be transferred to other disciplines, age groups, or technological configurations. However, precisely because these systems are becoming increasingly effective at reproducing the outward forms of dialogue, it becomes pedagogically imperative to ask what, within educational relationships, cannot be reduced to the production of responses deemed appropriate. An educational relationship, in fact, does not simply coincide with a well-functioning interaction; rather, it entails an encounter with another person in their uniqueness, personal history, vulnerability, and capacity for transformation. Viewed in this way, the work of Emmanuel Lévinas enables us to understand that the Other cannot be reduced to an object of knowledge, a function, or a projection of the self. The face of the other calls the subject into question and summons them to a responsibility that precedes every form of possession or control (Lévinas, 1961/1983). Applied to the context of artificial intelligence, this reflection reveals a crucial distinction: while an artificial system may simulate a response to another person, it cannot genuinely participate in an ethical relationship of care. Machines are incapable of exposure to vulnerability, lived responsibility, or being called into question by the alterity of another human being. This doesn't entail denying the instrumental value of artificial intelligence in educational contexts. A pedagogically mature perspective avoids both defensive rejection and uncritical enthusiasm. AI can support instructional design, content development, accessibility, and the personalisation of circumscribed tasks. Its effects, however, depend on educational design: in a field experiment in

secondary education, unguided access to GPT-4 improved performance during practice but produced poorer results once support was removed, whereas a tutor with pedagogical guardrails attenuated this effect (Bastani et al., 2025). The problem arises when support is confused with relationship, communicative effectiveness is interpreted as care, and simulated listening risks replacing the effort inherent in human encounters. It is precisely here that reflection on empathy becomes central. Edith Stein defines empathy as the possibility of grasping another person's lived experience while preserving their irreducible alterity (Stein, 1917/1985). Understanding the Other does not mean appropriating their experience or superimposing it upon one's own; rather, it requires acknowledging that the Other always exceeds our interpretative categories. This distinction is fundamental in education. The quality of an educational relationship is not measured solely by the ability to understand or respond, but by the willingness to recognise that the other person can never be entirely predictable, classifiable, or reducible to a profile. From this perspective, alterity constitutes the first irreducible characteristic that distinguishes educational relationships from algorithmic simulation. Alterity possesses intrinsic educational value precisely because it disrupts the subject's self-referentiality. Encountering another person who cannot be fully anticipated, interpreted, or controlled compels individuals to reconsider their conceptual frameworks, suspend immediate judgment, and assume responsibility for the co-construction of shared meanings. Consequently, educational relationships do not foster learning *despite* the complexity of the Other; rather, they foster learning *through* that very complexity. Closely connected to this dimension is the significance of embodiment. Educational relationships do not unfold solely through words, content, or responses; rather, they are grounded in an embodied presence expressed through gaze, posture, silence, hesitation, emotional tone, and everyday gestures. Maurice Merleau-

Ponty demonstrated that the body is not merely a vehicle for the mind but the primordial way through which human beings inhabit the world and encounter others (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). From a complementary perspective, Vittorio Gallese's research on embodied simulation confirms that understanding others is not a purely abstract or linguistic process but one that involves bodily resonance and intersubjective attunement (Gallese, 2003a, 2003b; Gallese & Cuccio, 2015). Likewise, Colwyn Trevarthen (1979) demonstrates that relationships precede the full development of individuality, as infants are oriented from the very beginning toward forms of embodied reciprocity through gaze, vocalizations, and primary affective exchanges. Taken together, these contributions suggest that educational empathy is not merely the cognitive recognition of another person's emotional state but a situated, embodied, and relational experience. Accordingly, while a machine may generate comforting words, it does not share a lived world; it may adapt the tone of its responses, yet it does not participate in a shared history; it may simulate closeness, but it does not inhabit the vulnerability of presence. Embodiment therefore constitutes a second irreducible characteristic of educational relationships, preventing human encounters from being reduced to mere linguistic or informational exchanges. A third fundamental dimension concerns transformative reciprocity, namely the possibility that educational relationships become spaces of encounter in which both educator and learner, despite their different roles and responsibilities, are mutually engaged in processes of growth, the reconfiguration of meaning, and personal transformation. In authentic educational relationships, educators do not act upon an object to be shaped; rather, they enter into a relationship that involves and transforms both participants. Education does not consist in moulding another person according to a predetermined image of what they ought to become, because every individual possesses an irreducible uniqueness.

Educational relationships cannot be likened to the work of an artisan shaping a clay vessel according to a predefined form. Instead, they resemble the process of revealing and cultivating what is already present within the individual by recognising their possibilities, inclinations, and uniqueness. Like an artist who perceives a possible form within an unfinished work, the educator accompanies developmental processes that can never be fully anticipated or controlled. Educational relationships follow this logic whenever they move beyond merely directing, correcting, or transmitting knowledge and instead create a space of mutual recognition in which the other can flourish without being absorbed into a predetermined model. It is precisely within this horizon that care assumes its most authentically pedagogical meaning. From this perspective, educational relationships are irreducible to algorithmic simulation not because technology lacks educational value, but because education inherently entails alterity, embodiment, and responsible reciprocity. These dimensions are not merely ancillary features of educational encounters; rather, they constitute the very conditions through which relationships become acts of care and open the possibility for the construction of peace. If positive peace requires recognition, cooperation, responsibility, and the nonviolent transformation of conflict (Galtung, 1969, 1996, 2019), then it cannot be separated from the quality of the relationships within which individuals learn to recognise, listen to, and respond to one another. Educational care thus becomes a practice of peace not because it eliminates conflict, but because it teaches individuals how to inhabit conflict without reducing the other to a function, a threat, or merely a mirror of the self. It is precisely the comparison with artificial intelligence that enables us to understand that what makes the formation of the person possible does not lie in the effectiveness of communication, but in the experience of a relationship in which the other retains their irreducible alterity. Human formation does not emerge from the immediate availability of appropriate

responses; rather, it develops through the necessity of engaging with someone who resists our expectations, exposes us to uncertainty, requires negotiation, and makes possible a continual redefinition of the self. It is within this experience that care acquires its genuinely pedagogical meaning and that the construction of peace finds its foundation, since both require the willingness to inhabit relationships that cannot be fully predicted, controlled, or automated. Accordingly, these considerations demonstrate that the comparison with artificial intelligence should not be understood as an opposition between the human and the technological; rather, it serves to make more visible those features that render educational relationships genuinely educational and authentically human. Artificial intelligence can support certain educational processes, expand pedagogical possibilities, and provide valuable instructional tools. However, it cannot replace the human experience of responsibility, embodied presence, and transformative reciprocity. It is precisely within these dimensions that educational relationships preserve their irreducible core and that a pedagogy of care finds its deepest connection with the construction of peace.

3. Educating for Peace in the Age of Artificial Intelligence: The Responsibility of the Encounter

The reflections developed in the preceding sections have highlighted how alterity, embodiment, and transformative reciprocity constitute irreducible dimensions of the educational relationship. Far from representing ancillary elements of human encounters, these dimensions define their constitutive core, making possible that form of mutual recognition through which care acquires pedagogical meaning. Therefore, if the educational relationship cannot be reduced to a merely functional interaction nor assimilated to the

algorithmic simulation of listening and empathy, it becomes necessary to examine the significance that these dimensions assume with respect to the construction of peace. The central question no longer concerns solely what distinguishes human beings from artificial intelligence, but rather the educational conditions through which individuals can learn to recognise the Other, inhabit difference, and transform conflict without resorting to logics of exclusion or domination. Against this background, peace cannot be interpreted as either a static condition or a normative ideal to be transmitted through abstract prescriptions. Rather, it is configured as a relational process continuously exposed to the complexity of human encounters. The concept of positive peace developed by Johan Galtung is particularly significant because it shifts attention from the mere absence of violence to the presence of relational, cultural, and structural conditions capable of promoting justice, participation, cooperation, and mutual recognition (Galtung, 1969, 1996, 2019). Peace, therefore, does not coincide with the elimination of conflict but with the capacity to create contexts in which conflict can be recognised, understood, and transformed constructively. Consequently, educating for peace means preparing individuals to engage with the plurality of perspectives, with both their own and others' vulnerability, and with the inevitable tensions that characterise every experience of living together. Within this framework, the educational relationship assumes a decisive role because it represents one of the first contexts in which the meaning of living together is learned through concrete experience. It is no coincidence that many of the characteristics defining positive peace coincide with those identified in the preceding sections as foundational to educational care: the recognition of the other in their uniqueness, reciprocal responsibility, openness to listening, the shared construction of meaning, and the capacity to engage with conflict without denying the dignity of the person. From this perspective, peace does not appear

as an additional content of education but as an emergent quality of the relationships that education helps to cultivate, a perspective that is also reflected in the recent UNESCO Recommendation on education for peace and human rights (UNESCO, 2023). Accordingly, educating for peace means, first and foremost, educating individuals to remain in relationship. Indeed, Nel Noddings (1984) argues that the most universal element of ethical experience is not a norm but the human desire to preserve and sustain relationships, thereby drawing attention to a dimension that is often overlooked in contemporary discussions of peace. Dynamics of exclusion, hostility, and violence arise not only from the absence of shared rules but also from the inability to recognise the other as a legitimate interlocutor within a shared space. In this sense, the construction of peace requires educational contexts in which individuals can genuinely experience reciprocity, trust, and responsibility, progressively learning that difference does not constitute a threat to be neutralized but rather a constitutive condition of communal life. Building upon these premises, it becomes evident that the construction of peace inevitably also involves the emotional dimension of human experience. The recognition of the other is not achieved exclusively at the cognitive level; rather, it requires the capacity to understand and attribute meaning to the affective experiences that accompany encounters, conflict, and cooperation. For this reason, numerous studies have highlighted the decisive role of social and emotional competencies in processes of coexistence, participation, and violence prevention (CASEL, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011). Accordingly, peace is not constructed solely through rational dialogue but also through the capacity to recognise emotions, regulate one's own responses, understand the perspectives of others, and tolerate the frustration that arises from engaging with different points of view. In this regard, the reflections of Vanna Iori (2010) are particularly significant. The author emphasizes that education in the realm

of emotions should accompany individuals along a developmental path that leads from listening to oneself and to others, to recognising emotions, from understanding them to accepting them, and ultimately to sharing them and assuming responsibility for one's own behaviour. What emerges from this perspective is a conception of peace that is deeply rooted in the affective maturation of the individual. Learning to live together does not simply mean respecting shared rules; rather, it entails developing the emotional awareness that enables individuals to understand the reasons of others without relinquishing their own, to manage disagreement without allowing it to escalate into aggression, and to recognise vulnerability as a shared dimension of the human experience. These considerations become even more significant within a culture characterised by increasingly accelerated processes of communication and experience production. As Byung-Chul Han (2012, 2015) observes, contemporary society progressively tends to expel the negativity of the Other, privileging forms of interaction oriented toward immediacy, the confirmation of one's own expectations, and the reduction of complexity. In a context dominated by speed, efficiency, and the continuous availability of responses, alterity risks being perceived as an obstacle rather than as a resource. Yet it is precisely what appears uncomfortable or resistant that represents one of the fundamental conditions of democratic learning and the construction of peace. The Other is not merely someone to be understood but the one who interrupts the subject's self-referentiality, compelling them to engage with perspectives different from their own. From this pedagogical perspective, peace does not emerge from the elimination of differences but from the capacity to sustain and navigate them without erasing them. This leads to an educational implication of particular importance: building peace also means restoring value to the slow rhythms of experience that make listening, reflection, the reconsideration of one's own positions, and the repair

of relationships possible. In this respect, the pedagogy of slowness proposed by Gianfranco Zavalloni (2011) offers a particularly meaningful interpretative framework. Within a culture that tends to equate progress with speed and performance, slowness assumes the significance of a critical practice capable of restoring depth to educational experience. Educating for peace therefore means freeing learning from the logic of immediacy, recognising that understanding the other, transforming conflicts, and building meaningful relationships require forms of time that can neither be compressed nor automated through algorithmic processes. The issue becomes even more significant in the contemporary context permeated by artificial intelligence. The availability of immediate responses does not, in itself, determine a lower tolerance for uncertainty or waiting; the available literature does not support such a generalisation. It does show, however, that under specific conditions unguided use may encourage dependence on support during a task and separate assisted performance from subsequent autonomous learning (Bastani et al., 2025). For peace education, the pedagogically relevant task is therefore to design time and activities that preserve listening, negotiation, revision of one's positions, and engagement with complexity, rather than treating technical immediacy as a criterion of the educational relationship. If the construction of peace entails the recognition of interdependence and shared vulnerability, then it also becomes necessary to reflect on the forms of community that education is called upon to promote. In this regard, the contribution of Edgar Morin provides a particularly significant theoretical perspective. According to Morin, educating for complexity means helping individuals understand the connections that unite human beings with one another and with the world, overcoming the fragmentations that tend to separate what is, in reality, profoundly interconnected (Morin, 1999, 2001). Peace, therefore, cannot be constructed by individuals enclosed within their

own self-sufficiency; rather, it requires an awareness of belonging to a shared human condition. Such awareness, however, requires educational contexts capable of being translated into concrete practices of dialogue, participation, and the shared construction of meaning. It is precisely in this direction that the pedagogical proposal of Matthew Lipman offers a particularly significant contribution. Through the model of the community of inquiry, critical thinking, creative thinking, and caring thinking are cultivated within a dialogical process that habituates individuals to listen to different perspectives, critically examine their own beliefs, and collectively search for shared meanings (Lipman, 2003, 2005). The community of inquiry is not merely a teaching methodology but an educational space in which difference can be recognised without turning into opposition, and dialogue becomes a concrete experience of democratic coexistence, without the need for algorithmic mediation that risks automating and atrophying processes of reasoning and thought. Accordingly, peace education does not consist in the elimination of disagreement but in the capacity to transform it into an opportunity for mutual understanding and shared growth. This perspective is further developed in the work of John Paul Lederach (2005), according to whom the construction of peace requires the development of a *moral imagination*, namely the capacity to envision new relationships even within contexts characterised by tensions, conflicts, and seemingly irreparable fractures. Moral imagination entails the willingness to recognise the other not as an obstacle or a threat but as an interlocutor with whom paths of mutual transformation can be constructed. In this sense, peace does not coincide with the eradication of conflict; rather, it consists in the capacity to make conflict pedagogically inhabitable, transforming it into an opportunity for learning, change, and shared responsibility. Ultimately, educating for peace in the age of artificial intelligence does not simply mean developing technical competencies or the ability to use technologies

consciously. More fundamentally, it means fostering a form of relational, ethical, and civic intelligence capable of recognising fragility as a shared human condition and coexistence as a common responsibility directed toward the common good.

4. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence now participates in many practices of information access, communication, and learning, but its effects are neither homogeneous nor separable from the conditions of use. Available studies indicate that algorithmic mediation can alter language and interpersonal perceptions (Hohenstein et al., 2023), while conversational systems may be experienced by some users as continuing interlocutors (Skjuve et al., 2021; 2022). These findings do not demonstrate a generalised causal transformation of human relationships. They nevertheless make it pedagogically relevant to examine the criteria by which efficiency, predictability, and constant availability are treated as qualities of relationship (Han, 2015; Turkle, 2011). As Vittorio Gallese (2026) suggests, the self is not a closed and self-sufficient entity but a relational process that takes shape through encounters with the world and with others. Our identity does not precede relationships; instead, it is constituted through them. It is precisely for this reason that contemporary technologies cannot be regarded as neutral tools: they actively participate in shaping our sensibilities, our attentional patterns, and our ways of relating to others. The risk, therefore, does not lie in the existence of artificial intelligence itself, but in the progressive normalisation of forms of experience that promise companionship without reciprocity, dialogue without exposure to alterity, and presence without genuine human involvement. From this perspective, the comparison with artificial intelligence assumes a fundamentally heuristic value. It is not technology that redefines the

meaning of the educational relationship; rather, it is the increasing capacity of artificial intelligence to simulate some of its outward manifestations that makes the ontological conditions underlying that relationship more clearly visible. Relationships of care are not grounded in the quality of the response but in the encounter between subjects who expose themselves to one another's alterity, share a common vulnerability, and remain open to being transformed through the experience of the other. It is precisely this irreducibility of human encounters that constitutes the ground upon which both the formation of the person and the construction of peace become possible. Within this framework, peace education acquires a meaning that extends beyond conflict prevention or the promotion of prosocial behaviour. It emerges as a daily exercise of pedagogical resistance against all those dynamics that reduce the complexity of human experience. Educating for peace means educating individuals to dwell with questions, to embrace vulnerability, to recognise the legitimacy of different perspectives, and to construct shared meanings without eliminating the differences that characterise every authentic human encounter capable of being genuinely inhabited in lived reality (Galtung, 1996; Morin, 2001). From this perspective, the community of inquiry proposed by Matthew Lipman and the *moral imagination* described by John Paul Lederach converge toward the same pedagogical direction: fostering individuals who are capable not only of thinking more effectively but also of imagining forms of relationship different from those already given, recognising in the other not a limitation upon their own self-affirmation but an opportunity for mutual growth that would otherwise remain artificial if reduced to automated interactions (Lederach, 2005; Lipman, 2003). The educational challenge, therefore, does not consist in preparing individuals to adapt passively to a technologically advanced world, but in cultivating their capacity to inhabit that world critically while preserving those forms of dialogue, listening, and participation that make the construction

of genuinely democratic coexistence possible (Dewey, 1916/2014; Freire, 1970). The theoretical-argumentative character of this inquiry also defines the scope of the conclusions reached. The categories of care, alterity, embodiment, and transformative reciprocity provide an interpretative framework for examining the relationship between education, artificial intelligence, and peacebuilding; translating them into observable indicators requires further empirical investigation. The literature considered is still recent and heterogeneous and documents outcomes tied to specific tasks, populations, and technological configurations. The extension of these interpretations to different school levels, disciplines, and cultural contexts may therefore be assessed through longitudinal and comparative studies devoted to the interaction between modes of AI use, cognitive autonomy, reciprocity, dialogue, and conflict management. Ultimately, artificial intelligence confronts pedagogy with a profoundly human question: *What kind of relationships, communities, and shared future do we wish to cultivate?* The answer cannot be entrusted to algorithms alone. It continues to depend upon the educational responsibility to create contexts in which individuals can encounter one another, recognise one another, and be transformed through reciprocal engagement. It is perhaps within this possibility, fragile and always unfinished, that one of the deepest conditions of peace still resides today.

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