Uniting Love and Obligation: Becoming an Expert at Life
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Abstract:

This essay will aim to present a fundamentally bodily way of being in the world that unites loves and obligation. First, this essay will present the mismatch of love and obligation as an intuitive problem of everyday living. Then, philosophical writings of Nietzsche, Aristotle, and Kant will be discussed as examples of works that confront the problem of the mismatch of love and obligation. We will see that the noble way of being in the world, as discussed by Nietzsche, does not involve a mismatch, but is no longer accessible to us. Kant's reconciliation of this mismatch, in the giving up of inclination for duty, is unsatisfactory because it requires reflective mediation. Aristotle achieves a unity in his discussion of phronesis, but he is not sensitive to today's issues of multiplicity of context. In addition, Aristotle loses individualization in his uniting of love and obligation, so we ought to write a new story to achieve this unity. We will look to the expert coper in the context of a craft who both achieves a unity of love and obligation and avoid problems associated with Aristotle's philosophy. Then, we will see that by conceiving of language as craft, it will allow for the possibility of becoming an expert at language. Because language is the form of the world that shows up to us conceptual beings, achieving expertise at language will allow us to achieve expertise in everyday living, outside of the context of a craft, and unite love and obligation in our daily life. We will see that expert speech is equivalent to Buber's notion of I-You speech (as opposed to I-It speech) which involves bodily confronting another individual with one's whole being. When we speak as an I for a You, we will regain immediacy of being in the world, unite love and obligation, and become an expert at life.
In everyday human experience, there seems often to be a mismatch between love and obligation. By love we mean what one desires, what one wants, or what one is inclined to do if one is following one’s sensible impulses. It might seem to most people that if a person can do what she loves all of the time, this person has absolute freedom. (While there are many that disagree, this is not a completely irrational thought.) And, by obligation we mean what one’s duty is, what one ought to do if striving towards a life of goodness, of virtue, of beauty, of meaning. Hopefully it is obvious how there can often be a mismatch between these two notions. But, to make things clear, we can entertain a few examples. There are probably a lot of people who both like to eat unhealthy food and want to be healthy. How does one reconcile the love of unhealthy food that appeals to one’s senses with the obligation to not eat unhealthy food if one wants to be healthy? In addition, there are probably a lot of people who would prefer to always get what they want, but who also believe that it is a virtue to consider the wants and desires of others. How does one reconcile the love of getting what one wants all the time with the duty to consider the feelings and desires of others? There are countless examples of people confronting this mismatch in their everyday lives.

In addition, this notion of the mismatch between love and obligation is also present in works of philosophy considered among the greats. In On the Genealogy of Morality, Nietzsche's discussion of the noble demonstrates how this divide is not present for the nobles abiding by the noble morality. In this case, there cannot be a divide because the noble does not conceive of the concept of a duty or an obligation in the way that we do today. Nietzsche makes clear that the noble way of being in the world is no longer accessible to us because the ressentiment of the slave class has shaped the historical development of morality as a concept. When we conceive of morality today, the concept of what it means to be “morally good,” we inevitably consider
values external and independent to the self that exists in a specific moment here and now. And, we talk of an obligation and a duty to act in accordance with these values. This conception of morality is drastically different from the noble morality because what is good for the noble is spontaneously good.

The noble “conceives of the basic concept ‘good’...spontaneously, starting from himself” and what he individually values (Nietzsche, 2007, 22). These value judgments of what is good have “overflowing health...as their presupposition...together with that which is required for its preservation: war, adventure, the hunt, dance, athletic contests, and in general everything which includes strong, free, cheerful-hearted activity” (Nietzsche, 2007, 17). The noble embraces and loves these values of goodness that emerge spontaneously from within himself. Therefore, he is inclined to participate in these activities. So, when the noble points to the good he only needs to point to himself. What the noble is inclined to do, i.e. what the noble loves to do with his time, is what is most good. And, the noble must necessarily participate in the activities he loves and is inclined towards in order to preserve the overflowing health and beauty that the noble values and calls most good.

We stated that the noble does not experience a mismatch between his love and obligation. From our contemporary standpoint, it is not unreasonable to assume that the noble necessarily participates in the activities that he loves and is inclined towards because he experiences some sort of obligation towards these activities which embody the noble conception of the good. But, putting this sense of obligation and duty on the noble is a mistake because the noble does not experience an obligation or duty to act nobly. For the noble to experience an obligation to act nobly would require that the concept of noble be placed in a realm external to and removed from the world of physical, embodied, noble individuals. And, as we stated before,
the noble morality is not a conceptual realm of virtue that one points to or reflects upon in order to determine which actions are morally good. Instead, the noble simply loves and is (therefore) inclined towards certain activities; and, the notion of good emerges from these loves.

Like any notion of morality, the noble morality consists of a spectrum ranging from the most desirable good to the least desirable bad. Therefore, there are good nobles and bad nobles. There are individuals that embody (in their actions) the highest good of what it means to be a noble, and there are individuals that are bad nobles insofar as they fail at acting nobly. A bad noble, for example, might display cowardly behavior or be inhospitable towards another noble. The spectrum of the noble morality that ranges from good to bad is completely exhausted by the individuals that embody the noble morality. This fact is what greatly differentiates the noble morality from the modern notion of morality.

The modern notion of morality is not exhausted by the individuals that belong to the morality because the morality is understood as external to the self. With the modern notion of morality, we have an obligation towards something external to ourselves. But, with the noble morality, individuals experience a highly embodied inclination to act like or emulate the good noble (he who is strong, courageous, etc.), and experience an aversion to acting like the bad noble (he who is cowardly, weak, etc.). But, the nobles do not experience an obligation to act like these individuals because the experience of the noble is wholly contained in the realm of what one is inclined towards or disinclined towards. In other words, there are only examples of nobly embodied individuals that one desires to either imitate or avoid.

For the noble, the concept of duty or obligation does not appear as such; there are only particular examples of good and bad noble behavior, not universal definitions or intellectual formulations. What is understood as good and bad is firmly grounded in the embodied
individual. As a result, the concept of the good for the noble is highly personalized and rooted in the interactions one has with others. The noble does not experience a mismatch between love and obligation because what is good emerges spontaneously in the form of activities (and the health necessarily required for these activities) that he is inclined to participate in with other nobly embodied individuals. In this way, the noble must have highly personal, embodied relations with others because the realm of the good is inseparable from the particular, individual bodies that provide examples, or are specific instances, of the good or bad noble. What was perceived as good (or bad) for the noble was grounded in bodily activity and bodily relations with others.

So, the noble worldview originates from the self that has a fundamentally bodily engagement with things and individuals in the world. The noble confronts things and individuals as they physically show up to him. For the noble, confrontation occurs in immediacy without explicit reflection or judgment. While the noble is not a non-rational animal, thoughts do not exist in a mental realm separate from action. Thought is present in the noble's everyday intentional involvements with the world, but the noble lacks the capacity for critical reflection. In the noble's interactions with the world, there is a lack of explicit, conscious reflection because individuals were embodied, here and now examples of good and bad behavior. In perceiving others, there was no mediation between the good individual and the system of morality in which his goodness can be evaluated; there is only the individual. But, as stated previously, when we consider morality today we inevitably appeal to a moral code that does not emerge spontaneously from the self. In other words, morality is thought of something that one is in touch with through reasoning and mental reflection. The noble does not experience a mismatch between love and
obligation because what is good emerges from the self. But, because we experience morality differently today, a new philosophy on how to reconcile this mismatch is necessary.

Kant is another philosopher who can be taken as addressing this philosophical problem of uniting love and obligation. Kant does not explicitly talk about love, but he speaks of inclinations that one must resist acting upon unless they are in accordance with one's duty. For Kant, the only way to eliminate the mismatch between love and obligation and achieve positive freedom is to always act out of duty. (While we say that Kant eliminates this mismatch, in reality Kant avoids a mismatch insofar as he chooses obligation over inclination.) If we love and desire freedom, we must come to love our obligation to what is most ethical. In *The Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant states that true “freedom of choice is the independence from being determined by sensible impulses [i.e. one’s inclinations]; this is the negative concept of freedom” (Kant, 1991, 42). In order to be free and act in accordance with what is ethical and good, we must let go of our impulses and inclinations and act only for the sake of duty, i.e. only act out of obligation. This is the obligation to act in accordance with the Categorical Imperative. To act in accordance with the Categorical Imperative, one must reflectively subjugate the maxim of every action to “the condition of its qualifying as universal law” (Kant, 1991, 42). Only through this reflective route can one unite the love of positive freedom and the obligation to act out of one’s duty towards the Categorical Imperative.

With Kant’s moral philosophy, we must exist in the world with conscious, rational reflection and reasoning if we are to ensure that there is not a mismatch between our love and our obligation. In addition, this conscious reflection is necessary if we are not to be determined in our actions. For Kant, it is through conscious, deliberate, reasoning of the mind that the mismatch between duty and inclination, i.e. love and obligation, is reconciled. This conscious
reflection of applying the maxim of each and every action to the Categorical Imperative must be done in order to ensure that one is both moral and free.

Now, we ought to discuss an important point about why the mismatch between love and obligation (duty and inclination) is an issue for Kant, but is not an issue that exists for the noble. It seems that at a certain point in history, love and obligation became split. The noble does not have a mismatch between love and obligation because he does not conceive of obligation or duty in the way we consider the concept today. But, for Kant, the mismatch he perceives between duty and inclination is what motivates his entire ethical philosophy that revolves around the universal law of the Categorical Imperative. So, we should ask ourselves, why was Kant so concerned with a notion of duty that was not even remotely present for the noble? How did a notion of duty (obligation) become separate from (inclination) love? I argue that the love and obligation distinction evolved as a result of the mind and body distinction that was first made explicit by Descartes.¹

In Realizing Reason, Macbeth argues that it was Descartes advance in mathematics that led him to conceive of the world not as a cognitive whole grounded in sensible objects (as the ancients did), but as a grid (a map of Cartesian coordinates) in which the "background" comes prior to the objects. Instead of conceiving of matter as prior to essence (as the ancients did), Descartes began to conceive of essence as prior to things. As a result, instead of being grounded in sensible, intelligible unities that one can physically confront, Descartes grounded his conception of being in the unity of judgment (the non-object involving “background”) that requires critical, mental reflection to discover. This conceptual revolution resulted in Descartes doubting his framework of being in the world (because it was no longer constructed in a “ground

¹ Of course, humans had to become critically reflective before Descartes could write his Meditations, but Descartes was the first to discuss the mind/body dualism explicitly.
up” way from the intelligible unities that surround oneself) and led to his dualistic conception of the mind and the body. I argue that it is from this dualistic conception of mind and body that Kant’s strong philosophical anxieties concerning duty and inclination emerge.

Though it seems that contemporary philosophy has overcome the strong dualistic conception of mind and body, it seems that the love and obligation distinction still remains a contemporary issue. We must overcome this modern split of love and obligation, and I believe that it is through a fundamentally bodily engagement with the world that the present day mismatch between love and obligation can be reconciled. We can learn to truly love our obligations, and be obligated to our loves, through a fundamentally bodily engagement with the world. We will see that love and obligation do not necessarily have to be two separate notions, but can be two aspects of the same thing, namely the seamless cycle of perception and action.

But, before I discuss my theory for uniting love and obligation, we should look to Aristotle to see (and take away lessons from) how love and obligation can be united in unreflective activity.

In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle argues that one of the key prerequisites to uniting love and obligation is a ‘proper upbringing.’ The notion of a proper upbringing is necessary because it is through a proper upbringing that one is habituated into the virtues and learns to take pleasure in doing ‘activity in accordance with these virtues.’ Acting in accordance with virtue is one’s obligation, and one learns to delight in and love the doing of virtuous activities with a proper upbringing. Only with a proper upbringing can one eventually achieve a way of being in the world that aims at the highest good, what he calls eudemonia. Eudemonia is the highest good for man because it is an end-in-itself. When we fully grasp the notion of eudemonia, we will understand that it is the end that we (as humans) all want and should strive for in our lives and in our daily actions. When someone has achieved the way of being in the world that aims at
eudemonia, Aristotle says that she has achieved the state or virtue of practical wisdom, i.e. phronesis. One with practical wisdom desires the good life (desires eudemonia) and is “able to deliberate well about what is good and expedient for himself, not in some particular respect, e.g. about what sorts of things conduce to health or to strength, but about what sorts of things conduce to the good life in general” (Aristotle, 2009, 106).

In this state of practical wisdom, one’s reasoning, desires, and actions all simultaneously aim towards eudemonia. When one achieves the state of practical wisdom, one's sensibility towards the good has been fully educated. Therefore, achieving phronesis allows one to move past the training of and habituation into the virtues. One does not have to reflect upon one’s desires and consider whether they might be virtuous or unethical because when one acts with phronesis one’s desires just are desires that aim at the good; and these desires lead to and are necessarily inextricably tied to action. There is no conflict between one’s desires, i.e. one’s loves, and one’s obligations to the good because they are one in the same in the action. Aristotle succinctly states that practical wisdom “is a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regards to the things that are good or bad for man” (Aristotle, 2009, 106). Aristotle further argues that the full realization of the life that aims at eudemonia is the life of contemplation. In order to realize the fullness of the life of goodness and happiness that practical wisdom achieves, one must reflect and contemplate. Aristotle believes that our capacity for contemplation is the most divine part of the soul, and he states that “those to whom contemplation more fully belongs are more truly happy, not as a mere concomitant but in virtue of the contemplation” (Aristotle, 2009, 197).

Aristotle conceives of phronesis as an activity of desire-action that is an end-in-itself, i.e. phronesis is the activity of being in the world that aims at eudemonia in desire and reaches it
immediately in the reasoned action caused by that desire. Therefore, the good is not a product of phronesis (a product apart from the activity/action that produces it) because what it embodies is eudemonia which is an end-it-itself. This is why Aristotle argues that practical wisdom is a different sort of goodness than that associated with the arts and the sciences. He suggests that with the crafts of the arts and sciences “there are ends apart from the actions, [and] it is the nature of the products to be better than the activities” (Aristotle, 2009, 3). For example, a beautiful work of art would be better than the activity of producing that beautiful work of art. In crafts (like painting), the “making has an end other than itself, [but] action cannot; for good action itself is its end (Aristotle, 2009, 106).

Another distinction Aristotle makes between craft and practical wisdom is the fact that while “there is such a thing as excellence in art, there is no such things as excellence in practical wisdom” (Aristotle, 2009, 107). According to Aristotle, phronesis is “what is greatest and most noble, and what we cannot get or learn from another, but must have just such as it was when given to us at birth” (Aristotle, 2009, 48). So, through our habituation into the virtues and learning to take pleasure in doing 'activity in accordance with virtue', we actualize our potential for achieving practical wisdom (the potential which we have had since birth). When one has achieved phronesis, one's actions are ends-in-themselves, and one cannot achieve further excellence at something that is an end-in-itself. While we can practice and become an ‘expert’ at a craft (for instance painting), one cannot become an expert at living because we cannot achieve further excellence beyond acting with practical wisdom. One simply has practical wisdom when one’s desires and actions aim towards eudemonia (when one’s loves and obligation to the good are inextricably linked, i.e. a love-obligation). In no sense is ‘expertise’ achieved because
practical wisdom is the realization of what have (had all along) “just as it was when given to us at birth.”

Because achieving phronesis is realizing our natural endowment as humans, Aristotle says that the practically wise individual who has reached the life of contemplation sees things in the world as they actually are in-it-of-themselves. When we reach this state, we perceive things in the world in their natural form and content because we ourselves have achieved our natural form and content. With phronesis, there is no mediation between the things in the world and the way in which we perceive and understand them, i.e. how they show up to us, because the things in the world are immediately present as they are in-it-of-themselves, in their naturalness. We must not forget that it is important to Aristotle’s philosophy that the ability to confront and understand the world in its natural state is only possible when one is living the life of contemplation. So, it is through the powers of the mind that we achieve this ability to perceive, confront, and understand things in the world with immediacy (without reflective mediation).

We have discussed how the mismatch between love and obligation is both an intuitive problem and a philosophical problem discussed by Nietzsche, Kant, and Aristotle. Now, we will discuss issues and problems associated with these three philosophies. A fleshing out of these issues will allow us to understand how to overcome them and achieve a way of being in the world that can unite love and obligation and that is sensitive to historical contingencies and the present time in which we live.

Nietzsche’s discussion of the noble hypothesizes that at one time there were individuals who did not have the problem of uniting love and obligation. What was seen as good for these individuals spontaneously emerged from the bodily self that took pleasure in noble activity. There was no consideration of obligation for the nobles; therefore, there was no
mismatch. The lack of obligation for the noble was due to the fact that the noble morality was not something external to the individual. The noble morality was present in the world, in embodied individuals that were examples of good and bad behavior. Because of this reality, the noble engaged with others in a fundamentally bodily sort of way. The noble’s interaction with the world and others was one of bodily confrontation, physical immediacy, did not involve the mind or second thoughts, and was therefore unreflective in the fullest sense. While we cannot regain the noble morality or way of being in the world in its equivalence (and should not because they took the ability to kill as something to be valued), perhaps it is possible to recover the immediacy of the noble’s bodily confrontation with the world and others. We will later see that Martin Buber’s conception of I-You speech allows for this possibility.

Kant also shows us how we can resolve the mismatch between love and obligation by letting go of inclinations and acting out of duty that is in accordance with the Categorical Imperative. But, Kant’s philosophy is unappealing because it requires that we must reflect on the maxim of each action in order to be free and unite love and obligation. We cannot just do what we are inclined to do in a given moment; we have to consciously reflect. Therefore, there is an ever present mediation between the self and the world that presents itself to the self. In addition to the fact that I believe his notion of mediation in perception is untrue, we also see problems with this mediation that he considers essential to action. This mediation of applying the maxim of each action to the Categorical Imperative, which is necessary to unite love and obligation and achieve positive freedom, seems highly restrictive because there can be neither immediacy nor spontaneity in one’s actions. When faced with a situation that requires one to act, with Kant's philosophy, one cannot act immediately or spontaneously if she is to ensure that her love and obligation are united. There is value in acting with immediacy and spontaneity because
it allows one to fully present in what one is doing, i.e. fully present in the world. Reflective mediation, as a necessary step prior to acting, does not seem compatible with being fully present in one's actions. It seems that the requirement of stepping back to reflect and reason makes it near impossible to be fully engaged and present in one's actions. And, for these reasons, we should attempt to discover a way of uniting love and obligation that disposes with Kant’s notion of mediation.

Aristotle’s philosophy is appealing because it does not require this sort of reflection to avoid a mismatch between love and obligation. When someone has achieved a state of phronesis, her love and obligation are united in action; she can just do virtuous activity and get pleasure from the activity. But, Aristotle’s philosophy is also unsatisfactory for other reasons. The first issue has to do with the life of contemplation, which is the full realization of the state of practical wisdom. When one is living the life of contemplation there is a loss of individualization. If I have achieved the life of contemplation, there is the loss of your individuality to me. This is so because in the state of contemplation one sees things as they are in-it-of-themselves. For Aristotle, confronting an individual as she is in-it-of-herself means confronting the soul of that individual. In the last Book of On the Soul, Aristotle summarizes that "the soul is in a way all existing things" (Aristotle, 1957, 179). So, when one has reached the state of contemplation, and confronts things as they are in-it-of-themselves, there is a lack of distinction between your soul and my soul because we are part of the same universal soul. In this way, there seems to be no recognizable difference between the souls of individuals. This should be considered an issue because there just seems to be something wrong with the loss of individuality, or the loss of an individual's uniqueness as she is in-it-of-herself. This loss of uniqueness is both a pre-
philosophical doubt that I have with Aristotle’s philosophy that aims to unite love and obligation, and a problem I see for us moderns (which I will elaborate on later).

In addition to the inevitable loss of individualization, Aristotle’s philosophy, which holds the life of contemplation as the goal, highest good, and most desirable end, is also problematic insofar as it is elitist. Aristotle, recognizing that the noble morality is unsatisfactory because it cannot condemn slaughter in all circumstances, aims to create and elaborate a new *noble* state of being in the world. He pushes people towards a more desirable goal than slaughter, but (in addition him losing our awareness of the individuality of others) he seems to recognize that this highest state of being human is in a deep sense unachievable for most. The life of contemplation is the highest state of virtue and happiness for *all* of us, but only a *few* people can reach this state. Simply put, Aristotle must realize that someone has to grow food for the philosophers. It seems that only a limited and privileged few can conceivably reach the highest good without because of the circumstances of their birth. This reasoning leads us to another problem with Aristotle: the idea of a proper upbringing.

Aristotle relies on the notion of a proper upbringing in order to achieve phronesis, but he does not explicitly explain the details of what a proper upbringing is - other than the fact that one takes pleasure in doing activity that is in accordance with virtue. In addition to his lack of explicitness, Aristotle takes a limited perspective in conceiving of what a typical, proper upbringing. These two issues are correlated insofar as they were not problem for Aristotle. Aristotle was likely not explicit *and* seems to take a limited perspective of a proper upbringing because he likely assumed that what a proper upbringing entailed was fairly obvious to his contemporary readers. (Perhaps it was considered fairly obvious because those with a proper upbringing necessarily had a *privileged* or *noble* upbringing.) In his work, Aristotle only
considered one context of an upbringing, namely the Athenian context; but, significantly
different societies have developed since that time. Consequently, we now have a multiplicity of
contextual upbringings that have drastically deviated from the ancient Greek state. There has
been an inevitable shift from the context of the Greek world to the multiplicity of societal
contexts today.

Aristotle presumed that there is a proper context for the people that one confronts in her
daily life. Because this is the singular context of the Greek state, one learns how to discern and
understand that context simply by growing up around and engaging in daily activities with the
members of her community. One does not need to be taught the context within which to
confront people because one lives it and has had the upbringing in it. But, nowadays, we have a
failure of contextualization. People are all over and come from all different places. The borders
between cultures, countries, and states have been steadily breaking down; and, therefore, one
confronts a multiplicity of individuals coming from a multiplicity of upbringings and
contexts. There is no single context within which one confronts others as Aristotle presumes in
his philosophy. No longer can we easily point to or even discern the contextual framework
within which we are confronting others.

Perhaps the Kantian ethics is in part a response to this lack of a contextual framework for
confronting others. If we can no longer fully know the upbringing of another or discern the
context within which we are confronting her, then we must confront her as an instance of a
‘rational being,’ a being governed by the same laws of reason and freedom as ourselves.
Furthermore, Kant, as a modern doing philosophy after Descartes, believed that just as there are
physical laws of nature that govern the motion of massive bodies, so too are there laws of reason
and freedom that govern all rational beings (Macbeth, 2012). In this way, we are obligated to
them, and they are obligated to us. Only in treating everyone the same, as an instance of a rational being, can we ensure that we are acting with full reason and positive freedom. Although Kant’s ethics offers a reasonable solution to the lack of contextualization when confronting others, we should not be satisfied with his notion of ‘obligation to a rational being’ because it seems to result in both a mediated confrontation and a complete loss of individuality. We ought to be able to confront individuals (coming from a multiplicity of contexts) in their full uniqueness without having to reflect on the Categorical Imperative. We should not have to mediate our interaction with another with the explicit reflection that she is another rational being to be treated as such. Every person is unique and comes from a different upbringing and contextual framework. We cannot accept a philosophy of the highest good if it has us treat others as just another equivalent soul part of the universal soul or just another equivalent rational being part of the rational human race. Aristotle’s relies on the notion that we can know our context, but the singular social context has since broken down. We need a new philosophy that recognizes this fact and does not give up confronting others (in immediacy without mediation) as unique individuals.

So, it should be clear that relying on Aristotle’s singular and limited notion of a proper upbringing will not suffice if we wish to achieve a unification of love and obligation that is specific to our time. Today, though upbringings occur in a multiplicity of contexts, all upbringings involve an acculturation into natural language. According to John McDowell, the way in which we become rational, conceptual beings is through our acculturation into language. With our grasp of a culture’s language comes the eyes to see a world that is in conceptual form. With our acquiring of language comes a second nature, the nature of a rational animal or the nature of a conceptual being. I firmly believe the McDowellian view, which
applies to all upbringings today, that the acculturation into language gives us *new eyes* with which to see the world. We are not naturally endowed with these eyes at birth; babies are not conceptual beings.

Though Aristotle's philosophy, which unites love and obligation, is no longer sufficient (because of his presupposition of a singular context for upbringing and the fact that individual uniqueness is lost in confronting others), achieving a unity between love and obligation is certainly possible in contemporary times; we just need a different story to get us there. It seems right that one would need a certain kind of upbringing in order to be capable of achieving a unity of love and obligation. For example, someone that was brought up to be a criminal would have great difficulty moving past her upbringing and realizing a completely different way of being in the world that successfully unites love and obligation in all interactions with others. So, it seems that there is something to the notion of a proper upbringing. And, as we discussed before, our acculturation into our second nature (that is the nature of a rational and conceptual being) is through our acculturation into language. Our upbringing today is inextricably linked to the acquiring of conceptual language. Therefore, it seems that focusing on language (or a certain conception of language, as we will see) will be the key to a contemporary philosophy that aims to unite love and obligation.

This notion and belief that language can be the key to a way of being in the world in which one’s love and obligation are unified is not completely novel. Martin Buber, in *I and Thou*, argues that there are two modes of being in the world that are established by the way one speaks. These two modes of being in the world are established by the basic words that one can speak. The first is the word pair I-You; the second is the word pair I-It. I will argue that when one speaks as an I *for* a You, she exists in the world with a unity between love and
obligation. And, when one speaks as an I to an It, she will always have a mismatch between her love and obligation. Unfortunately, I believe that using I-It language, i.e. speaking as an I to an It, is very common in contemporary times. And, because language is that which acculturates us into our life as rational animals, gives the world its conceptual form, and is the means by which we interact with others, the individual that exists in the realm of I-It cannot possibly unite love and obligation.

I will argue that it is common for individuals to speak in the realm of I-It because of the common conception of language (which inevitably becomes a common way of using of language) which holds the belief that speech necessarily presupposes thought. But, I insist that we are never cut off from speaking the basic word I-You in our interaction with the world. This way of speaking does not presuppose thought prior to the act of speaking. Language becomes that which simultaneously creates and completes thought. (This conception of speech is the view held by Merleau-Ponty and discussed in his *Phenomenology of Perception.*) This type of speech is not a translation of thought into words; instead, speaking the word I-You is no more and no less than a conceptual, bodily gesture. I will argue that in order to clearly see the distinction between these two ways of speaking (ways of being in the world) it will be helpful to conceive of language as a *craft*, like the craft of playing a sport or playing an instrument. If we conceive of language as craft it opens the possibility of becoming an *expert* at language, just as one can become an expert at a particular sport. And, when one is expertly speaking, I will argue, she is always speaking the basic word I-You and never the basic word I-It. Because language is the form of the world that we are open to, when one has the ability to expertly speak, she has the

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2 This conception and usage of language in which speech presupposes thought is a historical development. The possibility for second thoughts is not something natural to mankind, i.e. it is not something that all humans throughout history were born with. The possibility of us having second thoughts is the product of the social evolution of humanity (Macbeth, 2012). And, this possibility can be traced to the emergence of the ‘text’ as separate from speech (Illich, 1988).
potential to be an *expert at life*. When one is an expert at life, her love and obligation are united both in action and in the fundamentally bodily gestural way she uses language.

Because a vast majority of our engagement with others is through language, perhaps conceiving as language as the key to uniting love and obligation can also help to resolve the problems we have discussed with Aristotle’s philosophy. Aristotle’s reliance on a proper upbringing as the prerequisite to phronesis (that which is the unification of love and obligation in action) is not satisfactory today because there are so many types of individuals coming from a multiplicity of contexts. There is no longer a single context for social interaction; life is a jumble of contexts and these contexts are constantly shifting. But, if we can become experts at speech, and always confront others as ‘Yous’ and never ‘Its’, the unification of love and obligation will not be inhibited by the lack of familiar context nor the different upbringings of individuals. In addition, by expertly speaking and bodily confronting others as ‘Yous’, a loss of individualization (in the full unification of love and obligation) will also be avoided. When one confronts another with speech that is akin to a bodily gesture, one is confronting *that embodied individual*. One is not confronting a non-individuated soul or a rational being that deserves the exact same treatment; one is confronting the individual that stands before them.

We have just briefly seen how conceiving of language as *craft* allows for the possibility of language to be akin to a *bodily* gesture in which speech does not presuppose thought. When our speech parallels the form of bodily gesture we are existing in the realm of I-You and are expertly speaking. When we become full bodied expert speakers, we become experts at life and unite our love and obligation in a fundamentally bodily, action oriented way of being in the world. By becoming an expert at life, we will regain the natural (second nature) and unmediated way of being in the world that Aristotle achieved with his philosophy of practical wisdom. *But,*
this way of being in the world will differ from Aristotle’s insofar as its full-bodiedness consists in a fundamentally bodily engagement with the world, as opposed to the mentally reflective element which is present in the life of contemplation. By conceiving of ‘language as akin to a bodily gesture’ as the key to uniting love and obligation, we can overcome the deficiencies in Aristotle associated with his lack of attention paid to multiplicity of upbringings and contexts of interaction. And, we will see that this same conception of language will also help remedy the loss of individualization that comes with Aristotle’s life of the highest good, the life of contemplation.

Now we should turn our attention to concerns one might have with the way this philosophical argument is progressing. There are likely two main concerns one might have with the way in which this essay is arguing for unifying love and obligation. The first is likely: Why is there so much emphasis on the body? Why must we have a fundamentally bodily engagement with the world (in both action and speech) to unite love and obligation? The second is likely: Why should language be discussed as a craft? Why is conceiving language as a craft necessary to the argument? Language is that which creates our second nature and the world in view to it; does not the term *craft* seem strange? The answer to both of these questions lies in the discussion of the expert coper that follows. We will see that only through a fundamentally bodily engagement with the world can we reach a state in which perception and action are unified in a seamless cycle that involves no mediation of judgment. And, it is in this seamless cycle of perception-action that love and obligation become inextricably combined. In addition, the second concern with why language should be conceived of as craft will be answered through a discussion of Hubert Dreyfus’ notion of the expert coper. We will see parallels between what it looks like when one has become an expert at a craft and become an expert at speaking, and
between how the expert player relates to other players and how the expert speaker relates to other individuals. This discussion of the expert will lead into the rest of the paper’s argument.

Dreyfus is a philosopher who has been investigating and writing on the notion of expert action. Expert action is a type of acting within a certain craft (such as a sport or playing a musical instrument) that is characterized by a loss of experiencing the world as ‘I’. When one is expertly acting, one is not reflecting and is acting in a fundamentally bodily sort of way. There is no conscious reflection involved in the activity; there is only the experience of the motion of one's body. Because there is no reflective experience of the world as an ‘I,’ the expert is completely absorbed into the world and the action that she is doing within the context of the craft. The expert is not grounded in her experience of herself in the world; she is grounded in the movement of her body. It has been proven that expert action is correlated to peak performance in a craft. When one “loses herself in the moment” she is able to perform at the best of her ability. The body is absorbed in the world and one with the activity. The world solicits out of the expert the most appropriate action without any need for reflection; and, as one becomes “more expert,” the appropriate action becomes more refined. It follows that when the individual steps back and reflects upon her relation to the world, she loses her absorption in the world. Reflection, the experience of an ‘I’ relating to explicit concepts around oneself, is incompatible with expert action.

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3 Dreyfus takes the expert's fundamentally bodily way of acting to mean that the expert somehow leaves the realm of the conceptual and experiences a world that is un-conceptual. I disagree with Dreyfus and instead affirm McDowell's view that the expert still is acting as a conceptual being in a conceptual world. When I say 'fundamentally bodily sort of way, I mean that the expert perceives and acts within a space of egolessness (a space void of conscious thought and reflection), i.e. there is no self-conscious experience of the self or the 'I'. The mind is quieted as the expert becomes one with the action of her body; but, the actions of the expert are still in the realm of the conceptual.
Not only is expert action correlated to peak performance, we also see that one’s love and obligation are inextricably linked together in the action of expert coping. In order to become an expert soccer player, for example, one must likely devote thousands of hours to playing and practicing the sport. (In fact, ten thousand hours of practice is the commonly accepted number for achieving expertise in a craft.) Unless one is forced to put in all of this time and effort (and it seems unlikely that one could reach an unreflective state if one is being forced to practice and play), an expert soccer player must love playing the game if she is to devote hours of energy to improving her skills. So, when the expert is playing soccer, she loves what she is doing. As she plays, she becomes wholly absorbed in her love for the game and loves the actions required to play soccer. She loves the movements of her body as they relate to the rules of the game (i.e. kicking the ball with her feet to progress up field), and it is in the rules of the game that the meaning of her actions lie.

Outside of a soccer game, kicking a ball to someone ten yards in front of you is simply kicking a ball to someone ten yards in front of you. But, in a soccer game (which only a rational animal could play), this movement has meaning as part of the context of the game. The meaning of this action becomes ‘moving the ball up field to get into position to score a goal.’ So, the expert soccer player loves her actions that have meaning in the context of the game. And, as a member of a team competing against another team, it is the expert’s obligation to play to the best of her ability to help her team achieve victory. In effect, it is her obligation to be an expert coper because this is how she achieves peak performance. Because she is wholly absorbed in her love for the game when she is expertly acting, her love and obligation become an inextricably linked love-obligation that aims at the highest good within the context of the game, i.e. victory.

4 Though there are some clear cases of expert action that do not unite love and obligation because the action itself is inherently in opposition to the Good that one is obligated to, such as the actions of an expert assassin, we will not be focusing on these cases.
Not only does the individual acting as an expert in a certain craft have a unity in her love and obligation, the way in which she acts also resolves the problems associated with Aristotle. The expert actor is like the person with practical wisdom because both are able to unite love and obligation in unreflective activity. There is no separation between perception and action for either the individual with phronesis or the expert coper. The expert coper simply sees what to do and does it; she perceives what she must do and immediately acts. What is important and relevant in a specific context, like the context of a sport for example, "calls out" to the expert as she perceives, while the irrelevant stimuli does not enter the expert's perceptive awareness. And, because the expert has put in a great amount of practice into her craft, she instinctually and instantly acts expertly on only the relevant stimuli. There is no mediation of judgment in the cycle of perception and action, in the cycle of seeing what to do and doing. Because there is no moment of reflection (judgment) between perception and action in expert coping, all occurs in synchronicity. In other words, the pure cycle of perception and action is "seamless" or "extremely tight."

Though the person acting with phronesis and the expert actor both exist in a way where seeing what to do is unreflectively and immediately followed by doing, the expert actor avoids problems that arise with the full-bodiedness of practical wisdom. With Aristotle’s philosophy there is a loss of individualization with the life of contemplation, and there is the issue of confronting the other when both context and upbringing are characterized by fragmentation and multiplicity. The expert involved in craft avoids these problems. Because the expert confronts others in the context of a certain craft, the issues of fragmentation and multiplicity of context and upbringing fall away. The upbringing of an individual does not affect the confrontation because one can see and unreflectively respond to that individual’s movements within the craft. All of an
individual’s upbringing related to that craft is embodied and fully present in each action. And, all skills developed and all practice put into the sport can be confronted in bodily immediacy. An expert confronts another’s upbringing (in that craft) in fullness with each interaction within the context of the craft. In addition, the context is not fragmented because the context is clear: the context is the craft. In life, while context is not as clear as it is within a craft, and while another's upbringing is not immediately obvious in her physical movements, we will see that confronting another as a You (in a fundamentally bodily sort of way that parallels the expert's mode of being) also overcomes these potential obstacles.

The expert actor also avoids the problem of the loss of individualization because of this way of bodily confronting others. The expert actor confronts others when participating in craft just like the noble bodily confronts others as good or bad examples of the noble morality. The noble does not have to reflect on how he or the other relates to the noble morality that somehow transcends the bodily engagement with the world and others. In the same way, the expert does not (and cannot) reflect on how she or the other relates to the spectrum of skill that transcends the “here and now” engagement with the craft and with the other. The expert confronts the other simply as an example of good or bad craft skill, without reflection, and appropriately makes the right play that takes this perceptual knowledge into account. The expert bodily confronts the other as an embodied individual, that is the product of her upbringing with the craft, and responds to the unique individual’s skill level and technique. For this reason, there is no loss of individualization of others for the expert.

So, if the expert unites love and obligation in unreflective activity, and avoids the problems we have discussed with the noble morality, Aristotle’s philosophy, and Kant’s philosophy, why is there a need to go further? The answer is because expertise in a craft cannot
suffice on its own. We cannot just be a soccer player or a chess master; we need to be a human being. We have already discussed how it is through language that we become rational animals with a second nature. While we are not always engaged in craft all of the time, we are always using language. This is why language is the key to uniting love and obligation in all of our actions and interactions in the world. We said that in order to make clear between expert speech and non-expert speech (I-You speech and I-It speech) we must consider language as a craft. If we consider language as a craft, we can apply the same way of thinking about and achieving expertise in craft to expertise in language. Now, we will look to and discuss the language used by an expert coper (for example a soccer player) with her teammates while in “flow” to get an understanding of what characterizes expert speech. Because the expert cannot reflect while acting, she cannot have thoughts prior to action. Speech becomes an action similar to a bodily movement, and this is the conception of speech that Merleau-Ponty argues for. Therefore, for the expert, speech cannot presuppose thought.

Let us conceive of an expert soccer playing running to an open space on the field as the ball is dropping towards her teammate. The expert runs towards the open space because the space solicits her, and this action is the most masterful move she could make on the field at that time because her teammate is about to receive possession of the ball. As she is running towards the open space, she shouts to her teammate, “Head it here!” This is a perfectly common phrase uttered in the context of a soccer game. While the phrase has little or no meaning outside of the action on the field, when it is shouted on the field every player and every spectator understands the meaning of this phrase. If we assume that both teammates involved in the communication are experts in “flow,” then both individuals are not experiencing the world or acting in the world as subjects. They are both wholly absorbed in the action occurring on the field to the point
where their bodies are one with the action, without any self-consciousness at all. One might wonder how a non-subject can use and understand language without any reflection whatsoever; but, when Merleau-Ponty’s conception of language is discussed it will shed some light on this question.

The language interaction between the players does not disrupt their “flows” and does not cause them to take a reflective stance on the action occurring. Rather, the expert speech enhances the action of the players, ensuring that each player is working towards the same movement up field and that the timing will be perfect. While the expert does not reflect on the words she chooses to shout, or experience the words as emerging from her mouth, the phrase has meaning as a solicitation for her expert teammate, and also has explicit conceptual meaning for the spectators. Expert speech simultaneously is a bodily, gestural solicitation, and carries conceptual meaning that can be explicitly reflected on.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty discusses his conception of the phenomenon of speech in the chapter entitled ‘The Body as Expression, and Speech.” Merleau-Ponty is arguing against both the “empiricist or mechanistic psychologies and the intellectual ones” which both argue that words have no significance in-it-of-themselves (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 205). This is because both of these views take the belief that “language is but an external accompaniment of thought (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 205). Instead, Merleau-Ponty argues that “the word has a meaning,” that the word is not simply an external accompaniment of thought (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 206). Instead, he argues that “speech, in the speaker, does not translate ready-made thought, but accomplishes it” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 207). This runs contrary to the understanding of language that supposes an individual with a thought or an intention that she wishes to express, who then somehow translates this thought into words that can be understood.
by others through a similar process but in reverse. This reverse process, of understanding the thoughts behind speech, would suppose “that speech heard can bring [one] nothing: it is [the hearer] who gives to words and sentences their meaning” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 207). In other words, “it seems at first sight true that consciousness can find in its experience only what it has itself put there. Thus the experience of communication would appear to be an illusion” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 207). If speech presupposes thought, then it seems that the mind or rational capacities of the speaker must translate thought into speech that is then re-translated by the mind (or rational capacities) of the hearer to get at the original thoughts behind the speech. This conception of language supposes that the words have no meaning.

Merleau-Ponty argues that the way we can avoid this illusion of communication is by recognizing “first of all that thought, in the speaking subject, is not a representation, that is, that it does not expressively posit objects or relations. The orator does not think before speaking, nor even while speaking; his speech is his thought. In the same way the listener does not form concepts on the basis of signs” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 209). The speaker cannot have meaningful, private thought that is then translated into words because speech is that which complete and creates thought. A private thought would have no meaning for the speaker just as it has no meaning for the listener. Because the speech complete and creates thought, the words “fully occupy [the] mind [of the listener] and exactly fulfill our expectations, and we feel the necessity of speech” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 209). The speech does not have to be translated into thought for it to have meaning because the meaning is completed-created in the words themselves. The listener is captivated by the meaning in the words, and only after the speech concludes can “thoughts on the speech...arise” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 209).
We can understand words as having meaning and the idea that speech complete creates thought by understanding speech as a gesture akin to a bodily movement. One does “not need to visualize external space and my own body in order to move one within the other...In the same way I do not need to visualize the word in order to know and pronounce it. It is enough that I possess its articulatory and acoustic style as one of the modulations, one of the possible uses of my body” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 210). One does not have to reflect on how to move one’s legs while walking and subsequently translate this intention into movement. Similarly, one does not need to reflect on what one wants to signify and subsequently translate this intention into movement. We “have only one means of representing [a specific word], which is uttering it, just as the artist has only one means of representing the work on which he is engaged: by doing it” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 210). In other words, we do not have a means of representing a word in thought that precedes language, just as we do not have a means of representing a movement that precedes kicking a ball. We do the action; we kick the ball. We do the action; we speak the word.

In this way, “thought and expression...are simultaneously constituted...The spoken word is a genuine gesture, and it contains its meaning in the same way as the gesture contains its. This is what makes communication possible” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 213). The meaning of a foot kicking the ball is in the gesture of the action just as the meaning of speech is in the gesture of speaking them. So, for Merleau-Ponty, “the spoken word is a gesture, and its meaning, a world” (Merleau-Ponty, 2006, 214). This notion of language as a gesture and the idea of speech having meaning in its act of utterance is relevant to the notion of a phrase having meaning within a craft; e.g. “Head it here!” When language is considered to be a gesture akin to a physical movement, it can help us understand how the expert can utter a conceptual, linguistic phrase while
experiencing a world of solicitations. So, it should be clear that there is a way of speaking in which words do not presuppose thought. And, it should also be clear that this sort of speech is akin to a bodily gesture because the expert is incapable of reflection. Finally, this way of speaking, what I call expert speech, enhances the “flow” on a field because it does not disrupt the bodily way in which teammates interact with one another while expert coping. While, in his discussion of speech, Merleau-Ponty is making a point about all language utterances, I argue that many people do not speak in this way; often, people reflect before speaking.

So, we now have a clear understanding of what characterizes expert speech and a clear example of expert speech in practice. But, as I just mentioned, people often do not speak to one another in this way. Often, we speak to one another in the non-expert way in which there is reflective thought prior to speech. Of course, reflecting before speaking is not always a bad thing (because sometimes second thoughts are better than our first inclinations to speak); but, I will argue that speech that presupposes thought (i.e. non-expert speech) creates problematic communication in the world. In today’s world, people are sometimes not completely honest with one another. People lie, people manipulate, people are passive aggressive; people do not always mean what they say. People can only not mean what they say if they have a thought that is distinct from the utterance. The expert speaker can never say something different from what she means because there is no thought prior to speech; the speech creates and completes the thought. But, if one is reflecting while speaking, the possibility of lying or manipulating comes into being. When people do not mean what they say, they are existing with a mismatch between their love and obligation. They are not speaking with their whole being, as one speaking as an I for a You must necessarily do. When one does not mean what they say, they must have second thoughts, and these second thoughts potentially create a divide between the self and the world, between
love of truth and meaning and the obligation to present this truth and meaning with one’s whole being.

In *The Alphabetization of the Popular Mind*, this notion of speech disconnected from thought, and how it leads to the possibility of lying, is discussed. The authors of this book argue that the possibility of “literary and moral feigning” is the product of the text (Illich, 1988, 84). I firmly believe their argument, but one does not have to accept that assertion in order to understand how only with reflection can one lie. The book states argues that “only a self that has thought what it does say, can say something that it does not think” (Illich, 1988, 84). Only when thought is detached from speech can one contradict what one says. In this way, “a full-blown lie [necessarily] presupposes a self that thinks before it says what it has thought” (Illich, 1988, 84). Unfortunately, we see this type of communication frequently in our daily lives. The possibility of lying and manipulating can only exist when one is reflective and having thoughts that presuppose what one says. Only when individuals are speaking as non-experts can they say something that they do not think or mean.

We have discussed the possibility of expert speech within the context of a craft and non-expert speech that is present in our daily lives. Is there a possibility for speaking expertly, in a fundamentally bodily gestural way that unites love and obligation, outside of a craft? The answer is Yes. We can examples of expert speech in communication between great friends. When we are having a great time with a friend or a group of friends, the conversation just flows and the time seems to fly. We are not reflective of what we are saying because we know that we will not be judged by our close friends. In addition, when we are speaking with good friends, our bodies are very animated. We laugh and we move in animated ways because we do not feel restricted by those around us in any way. We are *physically* active in the conversation and have
a great time engrossing all that we are into the communication. We move completely and fully in ways that are uniquely “ours.” We move and speak without restricting ourselves, with our whole being, as an I for a You must. Our love and our obligation are inextricably linked in the action of communication. We love our friends and the time spent with them, and therefore are obligated to speak honestly (i.e. not lie or manipulate) and aim to always enjoy the time together as much as possible.

One cannot deny that we enjoy ourselves most when we are around great friends and speaking in this way. When we are in the flow of a conversation with great friends speech does not presuppose thought. The conversation flows naturally and everyone feels free to say whatever flows from their mouth. When we are expertly speaking with friends we are speaking like the expert speaks to her teammates. Except, instead of achieving peak performance, we achieve the greatest pleasure. And, just as with the expert player, it takes a lot of practice to get to this level of “performance.” The more time you put in with friends, the more easily the conversation flows. The more time you spend with another, the less you are reflective of what you are saying, and (often) the more enjoyable and carefree the conversation is.

So, it should be clear that it is possible to speak expertly to another outside of the context of a craft. We all have good friends that we speak to in this way. But, is it possible to speak to everyone in this way? Is it possible to speak expertly all of the time, and therefore be an expert at life? The answer is again Yes. Now we will return to the discussion of Buber; when one can speak the basic word I-You all of the time, she always expertly speaking, exists as an expert at life, and lives with a full unity between her love and obligation. When one is an expert at life, one does not just speak the basic word I-You to other individuals. The world takes the form of
You. The world is no longer “a world [that is] experienced;” the world becomes a world of relation (Buber, 1996, 56).

When one is an expert at life, one “stand[s] in relation” to things and bodily confronts each individual or thing in all of its uniqueness (Buber, 1996, 60). One no longer has things because there can be no possession in the world of relation. “Hav[ing] something for [one’s] object (i.e. self)… is the basis for the realm of It,” but “whoever says You does not have something; he has nothing; but he stands in relation” (Buber, 1996, 54-55). The expert does not have experiences, because there is no experience of the I perceiving. The expert is wholly absorbed in the bodily relation between the self and the You, whether it be a person, a tree, the sky. This does not mean that the expert must forget something in order to see a tree as it bodily relates to the self. In fact it is quite the opposite. In order to relate to a You, we must give our whole being to that relation, and “not hold back part of” ourselves (Buber, 1996, 60). All of our conceptual knowledge enhances the relation because we are able to understand our place in the world better. But, that conceptual knowledge only increases our unreflective, perceptual awareness, it does not serve to rip and tear a person or a tree into its categories or reduce it down to pure mechanism – that would be treating something as an It.

In an I-It conversation, two individuals talk to each other as opposed to talking with one another. In this type of communication, each individual takes the view that they must convey the meaning of their thoughts to the other person. When one individual speaks, the other individual listens and either “gets” or “does not get” the meaning that the speaker attempts to convey. Because both individuals assume that they have a full-bodied meaning that the other will either grasp or not grasp, they talk at or to one another with the goal of getting the other to understand. And, because meaning is assumed to lie in the separate minds of the individuals, a mediation of
judgment is necessarily required to “unpack” what the other means. Contrarily, in an I-You conversation, individuals do not have a meaning that the other “gets” or “does not get” through the having of the conversation.

In an I-You conversation, the meaning of the words spoken does not lie in the minds of each individual. An I for a You does not have some meaning for another; instead, an I for a You stands in relation to the other. In an I-You conversation, both individuals co-inhabit the space of the conversation where the meaning co-arises, i.e. the space of the spoken word. When each individual confronts the other as a You, and not an It object, meaning no longer resides in two separate minds; the meaning arises between the subjects through the patient development of mutual understanding. Because the meaning is in the spoken words, there is no moment of mediating judgment in the conversation. Judgment necessarily requires an ego, a mental subjective experience somehow separate from the words spoken, and this experience is not present in an I-You conversation. Because there is no moment of judgment, the cycle of perception and action, listening and speaking, is unbroken and seamless. I can simply say what I think or feel and You can just hear what I think or feel without having to judge or “unpack.”

In an I-You conversation we achieve complete presence because we approach another with our whole being. And, if we are to be an expert at life, we are obligated to give our complete love to the You in the act of relation. There is no internal experience (that one has) apart from the external world; there is only embodied relationally recovered from the ancients. When we become experts at life, both love and obligation and perception and action are unified in an unbroken, seamless cycle of pure embodied being. When we become experts at life the sky will not be a lifeless void of matter to be experienced and picked apart. The sky will become
your life as it is will only be confronted with your whole being. Hopefully someday, we will all look to the world in wonder. Awing at the moving shapes. Laughing at the running water.
References


