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Orality versus textuality in the Reformation: The origin and influence of textuality on theological perspectives in the sixteenth century

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ORALITY VERSUS TEXTUALITY IN THE REFORMATION: THE ORIGIN
AND INFLUENCE OF TEXTUALITY ON THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE
SIXTEENTH CENTURY

by

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ABSTRACT

ORALITY VERSUS TEXTUALITY

THE ORIGIN AND INFLUENCE OF TEXTUALITY ON THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

James A. Freeman

The Reformation could not have occurred without the invention of printing. However, it is a mistake to identify the Reformation with textuality. Orality played a role in the movement. In the Reformation, there were controversies based on a tension between orality and textuality. This tension was not the result of printing but influences based on a tradition of textuality. This can be traced through nominalism, Augustine, and the Platonic-Aristotelean tradition.

The tension between orality and textuality has roots in the Greek tradition. Platonic philosophy was made possible by the invention of writing which created a focus other than oral tradition. Such a shift established the individual as distinct from the synthesis of the oral community. However, this shift also resulted in alienation which inspired the development of mysticism to restore the synthesis of orality.

Augustine is an example of the transition from orality to textuality. Augustine's educational and cultural situation shaped his oral perspective. Social and economic crises created a sense of alienation. Augustine retreated from the anxiety of alienation to the gnosticism of the
Manichaeans. Later, his association with neo-Platonism deconstructed the oral theology of Manichaeanism in favor of a theology of differentiation characterized by the Christian concept of a Trinitarian God.

A similar situation can be observed in the late Middle Ages. The breakdown of the oral synthesis of Medieval Catholicism resulted in alienation. The growth of mysticism can be linked to alienation. Luther's oral background suggests that the influence of mysticism must be taken seriously. Nevertheless, he remains an ambiguous, transitional figure, insofar as his *Theology of the Cross* appears to be a product of a textual theology.

The implications of a textual perspective are not to be found in Luther but in the humanistic theologians of the Reformation. There we may observe the incorporation of textuality into theology. Zwingli, Bucer, Melanchthon, and Calvin serve as models for such a textual theology. There we see the emphasis on the separation of sign from signified, and the hermeneutical role of the Spirit, as the vehicle for reconciling the separation of sign from signified, while not abolishing their autonomy.
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INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines the problem of language in the Reformation. The invention of printing and the revival of texts from the Classical tradition contributed considerably to a humanistic perspective in the Reformation based on refined linguistic sensibilities. The written word became the primary vehicle for the spread of ideas, and the written word of Scripture became the focus of attention in theological discussions. However, in the background of this textual awakening, there remained a vast residue of an older perspective, one based primarily on the oral, not the written word. The great majority of the populace in the late Medieval period was functionally illiterate. Both communication and a communal synthesis were achieved primarily through the oral word in conjunction with visual images. The effects of printing were not immediate. Orality continued to play a major role well into the sixteenth century.

We generally assume that the Reformation is to be exclusively identified with the written word in contrast to the oral synthesis of Medieval Catholicism, and yet we see in the case of the Lutheran movement the continued use of the oral word in conjunction with visual images as the chief means for promulgating the Lutheran message. Furthermore, the controversy at Marburg between Luther and Zwingli can be seen not so much as simply a difference in theology but rather a difference in theology based on linguistic perspective. Luther's notion of the efficacious word is one that can be seen generally to have been in harmony with an oral perspective, whereas Zwingli's signs theory of language is one that bears a
remarkably textual stamp. This is not to say that there were not significant theological differences between the two men. However, in contrast to traditional scholarship which has tended to deal only with the theological issues, we examine the theological issues not in isolation from, but in connection with, linguistic issues. Indeed, it is a major concern of this project to demonstrate that linguistic perspectives often determine one's theological focus.

Chapter I of this dissertation examines the complex relationship between orality and textuality in the Reformation and attempts to show how oral prejudices continued to function within the Reformation in spite of the invention of printing and the emphasis on the written word. At the same time, we show how the textual perspective stood in sharp contrast to the oral and provided the basis for irreconcilable differences in theological discussions. In spite of the persistence of orality, textuality continued to gain ground. If the Reformation was a movement concerned with the Word of God, then the textual implications of the Word can not be overlooked. Chapter I also considers the origins of this textual perspective. Elizabeth Eisenstein has argued that the objectivity and rationalism of the Renaissance came about as the result of the invention of the printing press. We examine this thesis and consider the possibility that the kind of objectivity which she associates exclusively with the invention of printing may in fact be characteristic of a textual heritage which can be traced through nominalism, and Augustine, all the way back to the Platonic and Aristotelean tradition. The humanism of the sixteenth century can be seen as the most recent heir of this tradition, and we argue that it was precisely this already existing textuality which printing served to disseminate.
If the textual perspective of humanism had its roots in Classical antiquity, especially the philosophical tradition of Plato and Aristotle, then it is necessary to explore the origins of textuality in that setting. This is what we do in Chapter II. There we examine the origins of Greek textuality within the oral milieu in which it was born. Using the recent work of E. A. Havelock, Walter Ong, Werner Kelber, and others, we attempt to flesh out a paradigm which places into some coherent perspective the tensions between orality and textuality. In this chapter we consider: what factors lead to the breakdown of the oral synthesis; what are the anthropological and epistemological consequences of the shift from orality to textuality; what are the effects of alienation in the breakdown of the oral synthesis; how do we account for the conscious attempt in the face of alienation to restore the lost synthesis of orality by means of an orally based mystical project; and, finally, how does a textual perspective integrate the features of alienation and the separation of subject and object into its philosophical system. In this connection, we consider the philosophy of Plato as a model for the shift from orality to textuality. Furthermore, we consider the connection between Plato and Aristotle in the establishing of a textual perspective which is continued in some forms of neo-Platonism and becomes the basis for the theological perspective of Augustine, who became the model par excellence for a textual theology in the Renaissance and the Reformation.

In addition to the revival of Classical texts in the Renaissance and Reformation, there was also a revival of Augustine. This was in part brought about by the new availability of the complete works of Augustine. Throughout the Middle Ages, Augustine had been known only indirectly
through a collection of sayings attributed to him, some of which proved later to be spurious. When the pure Augustine became available in the Rennaisance, there was an awakening of Augustinian theology which became the basis for a reconsideration of scholastic theology. The influence of Augustine on the Reformation is unquestionable. However, there is much in common between the revival of Augustinian thought and the textual perspective offered by the philosophical traditions of Plato, Aristotle and neo-Platonism. Augustine himself acknowledges a considerable debt to this tradition in freeing him from the errors of Manichaeanism. That there is a common textual thread between this tradition and Augustine is the focus of Chapter III. In this chapter we examine the stages in Augustine's theological development from his early "oral-rhetorical" education in Carthage, his association with the oral metaphysics of Manichaism, the impact of neo-Platonic textuality in the circle around Ambrose, to Augustine's final synthesis of the problem in his theology of the Trinity. In this chapter, we also consider the growing alienation in Augustine's North African setting as the synthesis of Roman culture and education began to suffer threats from several fronts: economic, social, and religious. In this chapter, we see that Augustine's early perspective is dominated by oral criteria which, in the wake of alienation, led him to seek a secondary oral synthesis in the oral, metaphysical mysticism of the Manichaens. Augustine's introduction to the circle of neo-Platonic Christians associated with Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, constitutes the basis for Augustine's deconstruction of Manichaean orality and sets the stage for his Christian understanding of the Trinity, an understanding not based on oral presence, but one which stresses distinction, separation and division, even alienation
as a vital framework for an understanding of the relational unity of the Trinity. This he sees as diametrically opposed to the undifferentiated unity of divinity in the gnostic, Manichaean system.

In linguistic terms, it is the formulation of Augustine's signs theory of language which provides the schema for understanding the textual nature of language in general. In that context, he stresses a rigorous separation of sign and signified which is most uncharacteristic of the oral setting in which speaker, audience, and oral word are seen to merge into a synthesis epitomized by an indistinct union between the various elements. Finally, we conclude the chapter by suggesting that it is precisely these textual features, in contrast to the theological assumptions of orality, which played a vital role in the resurgence of Augustinian thought in the Rennaissance and Reformation.

In Chapter IV we investigate the social, economic, and theological circumstances just prior to the Reformation. We argue that the situation prior to the Reformation had much in common with the setting of orality both in ancient Greece and in Augustine's Rome. In all three instances, we may witness a breakdown of a cultural synthesis which was largely based on oral criteria. In terms of the breakdown of the oral synthesis, we may therefore postulate common features and reactions. Both in the setting of ancient Greece and Rome of the late empire, we can detect a growing sense of alienation as the oral norms which had provided a coherent and functional view of the world became obsolete in the face of external challenges. In Greece, Havelock has argued that this was chiefly the result of the advent of textuality resulting from the invention of the alphabet. We note other factors as well: economic, social, and cultural, which must be
considered in the context of the breakdown of the oral synthesis. In all instances, however, there was a growing sense of alienation. The loss of a cultural identity created a crisis. In the late Medieval world, we show that a similar breakdown occurred. Furthermore, we examine the reactions to that sense of alienation. Using as our model the conclusions of chapters II and III, we may note similar reactions in the late Medieval period. In Chapter II and III, we suggest that the phenomenon of mysticism often seeks to fill the void created by alienation from the oral synthesis. Such a mystical project seeks to restore the undifferentiated unity of orality but does so on a more self-conscious level. In connection with this model, we consider the mystical movements of the late Medieval period: Eckhart, Tauler, the Free Spirit Movement, the *Theologia Germania*, and Luther. We show that Luther has much in common with this tradition of mysticism, and we suggest that this may explain why oral features continued to play a vital role in the spread of Lutheranism. However, we acknowledge that Luther is a complex figure in this transitional period and that the influence of textuality is not totally lacking from his theology. The locus for this can be found in Luther's *Theologia Crucis*, in which he stresses the notion of the absence of God as the framework for understanding the Christian message. However, insofar as Luther in many respects remained an oral theologian, we argue that the full textual implications of theology are only spelled out in the more humanistically oriented theologians of the Reformation: Erasmus, Bucer, Zwingli, Melanchthon, and Calvin.

In the final chapter, we therefore turn to a consideration of the humanistic dimensions of the Reformation. In that context, we note the significant role played by the revival of Classical texts. In this regard, we
argue that the textual perspective first set forth by the Platonic-Aristotelean tradition, incorporated by Augustine, and revived by the nominalists, became the basis for a humanistic, textual theology in the Reformation. The project of humanism emphasized the textual nature of the Word. For the humanists, the Word must first and foremost be understood in terms of its textual dynamics. Such dynamics are based on the signum-res dichotomy first outlined by Augustine in which words are understood primarily as signs and not the vehicle for the presence of the signified. Furthermore, the alienation of the res from the signum sets the stage for a hermeneutics of the Spirit, which mediates between sign and signified. In the tradition of Augustine, the reconciliation of the signum and the res occurs as a result of the Spirit. Likewise, in Augustinian, Trinitarian anthropology, the Spirit corresponds to the will in man. Thus, Renaissance and Reformation humanism had as its focus the domain of the will as a primary theological concern. In contrast to the Lutheran notion of passivity, the humanistic notion of an imitatio texti stressed the need for a volitional response to the insights available from a textual encounter with the Word of God. In contrast to mysticism which shunned the world of time and the body, Renaissance and Reformation humanism stressed the somatic realm as the authentic locus for working out the implications of a textual theology. This can be seen in the stress placed on the resurrection. Only in the resurrection can the soul resume its status as a differentiated unity which stresses distinction and otherness as a pattern for a Trinitarian notion of divinity. In the end, we suggest that textuality provides the more dynamic framework for a Trinitarian theology and anthropology.
CHAPTER ONE

ORALITY AND TEXTUALITY IN THE REFORMATION

It is generally assumed that the Reformation grew out of a renewed interest in the text of Scripture. As a result of the growing availability of copies of Scripture due to the advent of printing technology and the work of scholars such as Erasmus, the impact of the printed word could be felt not only by the erudite but by the layman as well. Even the uneducated and illiterate were affected by the new interest in the written text of Scripture. The discussion of new ideas based on a re-reading of Scripture and the new scholarship spread beyond the area of the universities to include the taverns and the streets.

Rather than the traditional authority of the Church, the text became the locus of authority for the discussion of hermeneutical issues. The availability of the text thus created a radical shift in the debate concerning the nature of ultimate authority in theological matters. The dogmatic pronouncements of the Church were held up against the text of Scripture as the final judicial review in the quest for theological validation. Thus, the widespread dissemination of the written text came to present an urgent challenge to the traditional power structures of the late Medieval Church. Sola Scriptura in this sense set the scaffold for the dismantling of the traditional hierarchy of authority in ecclesiastical concerns.
This shift in the locus of hermeneutical authority also brought about a new consideration of the nature of political authority. As far back as the *Unam Sanctam* of Boniface, the two swords of Church and State were clearly viewed by the Church as under one authority: that of the Church with the Pope as head (Petry, 1962: 505). The challenge to ecclesiastical authority therefore led to the additional issue of the nature of political authority. Some of the princes of the Holy Roman Empire saw the opportunity for capitalizing on the trend away from the centralized autonomy of ecclesiastical authority in an effort to consolidate their own claims to autonomous control of their respective regions. Nor was this new opportunism limited to the princes. The reformed notion of the primacy of Scripture had repercussions that directly affected the common man. The new theology which challenged the *status quo* created new possibilities for those whose economic concerns had long since been held in check by the restrictive nature of the hierarchically static structure of the late Medieval world. The traditionally lower echelons of society also embraced the shift in the nature of ultimate authority regarding such a shift as a means for alleviating what were felt to be excessive burdens on economic freedom. The potential threat to the hierarchical power structure of the Roman Church and the possibility of utilizing the movement for political ends created a new alliance which embraced the concerns of the scholars, the princes, and the peasants.

The political implications of this new challenge to the static forms of late Medieval society therefore provided the impetus for various social segments to jump on the bandwagon. The popular element in the movement cannot be underestimated and the alliance formed between the intelligentsia
and the populace represented a strong political force which had to be reckoned with.

Often the movement toward the de-centralization of authority proved to be threatening for both Catholic and Reformed camps. With regard to the Reformation movement, the Peasants' Revolt and the problem with the Anabaptists are two cases in point. Thus, the controversy over the interpretation of Scripture was not simply one between scholars debating the nature and accuracy of linguistic meaning. Rather, the controversy became a rallying point for many segments of society insofar as the possibilities for change and economic opportunity united many on a common front. The fate and direction of whole cities and regions were often subject to widespread changes not only with regard to the locus of power but in some cases to the complete transformation of the overall social structure (Chrisman, 1967, 1982). Most, if not all, of these radical shifts can be traced directly to controversies arising over the nature and interpretation of the Word of God in Scripture. Furthermore, as we have noted, this spirit of contention cannot be summed up in terms of a simple split between the reformers and the Roman Catholic Church. Within the various camps of reform there was widespread disagreement not only over the interpretation of Scripture itself but also over the very nature of linguistic phenomena. There was no clear cut consensus regarding the ultimate nature of the Word of God, especially as that theological category was complicated by the new concern over the Scriptural Word accessible through the printed medium. The printed word often came into conflict with oral tradition and thus led to new considerations of the nature of the Word itself. In this way the implications of textuality began to create a larger theological discussion.
concerning the nature of linguistic phenomena both oral and written. As the written word became more prominent, the linguistic discussion began to incorporate the complex dynamics of textuality. The dynamics of textuality thus came to be increasingly felt in theology. The growing emphasis on textuality can, for example, be seen in the Swiss tradition beginning with Zwingli, who emphasized the referential and signifying nature of linguistic phenomena. In the view of Zwingli, words function as signs which point to a reality distinct from the sign (Bromiley, 1953: 181-182; Locher, 1981: 233-255). As signs, words, especially printed words, do not have the power to convey the immediate presence of the signified.

A textually oriented theology, however, was not always the rule in every segment of the Reformation. We can also witness, in spite of the growth of the printed word, a distinctly oral approach to language in Luther and the Lutheran movement. As can be seen in the controversy between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg, Luther's notion of the efficacious Word, which renders the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament, indicates an understanding of linguistic phenomena which sees words as the vehicle for the presence and the power of the signified. In orality there is understood to be no separation between the signified and the signifier. The oral word has the distinct power to render a sense of immediacy which is lacking in the silence of the printed text. Thus, even in the Reformation itself, the printed text of Scripture was often subordinated to a more Spiritual understanding of the pre-existent logos which was understood to be prior to and pre-eminent above the mere written word. Therefore, Reformation notions of the true nature of the Word were not always consistent or in harmony. Jaroslav Pelikan is quite to the point
when he asserts that, while the Reformation was centered for the most part on the importance of the Word, a consensus of views was not forthcoming (1984: 183). And in particular, Pelikan notes the failure of the Lutheran tradition to formulate a precise theology of the Word. Pelikan observes a marked ambivalence in the Lutheran movement regarding the nature of the Word. Although the Lutheran movement relied heavily on the printed medium for the spread of its ideas, Lutheran theology in many ways remained an oral theology (Scribner, 1984: 237-256). Thus, it often failed to integrate the dynamics of textuality into its system.

This dissertation will explore the complex relationship between the oral and the written in the Reformation. It will attempt to explain both the theological implications of the written word and the persistence of oral attitudes even in areas where textuality and printing played a seemingly major role. While the Lutheran camp, for example, grew largely out of the controversy over the written Word of Scripture, there is surely an ironic twist in the subsequent direction of those regions dominated by Luther's influence. This direction was not in every case toward literacy and textuality. The Reformation is generally regarded as a movement based on the printed word and the growing importance of the hermeneutical autonomy of the literate individual both of which stood in opposition to the traditional authorities of the Church, that is, an authority based to a large extent on oral tradition. And yet, when we consider the work of scholars who have dealt with the the phenomenon of the spread of the Lutheran message, we find that the dissemination of Lutheran ideas was due largely to oral means of transmission and the orally manageable medium of the catechism (Strauss, 1978). Thus, we see the irony of a situation in which the
new theology which was partially, if not wholly, brought about by the use of textuality, printing, and literacy did not always translate into a genuine concern for the promotion of literacy and the priority of the printed word. This irony may be seen especially in Luther himself. Luther, although steeped in the Scriptures, was often ambivalent toward the printed word of the text. While Luther had stated that Scripture was its own interpreter, nevertheless he had a growing sense of caution when it came to granting universal access to the printed text of Scripture (McGrath, 1987: 139).

It was imperative for Luther that the reader of Scripture get the right message from the text. That message was a simple one and the watchword of the Lutheran movement "sola fide." But faith for Luther as for Paul comes *ex auditu*, that is, from hearing the good news which for Luther is the task of preaching or of oral proclamation (Ebeling, 1964: 70). The oral is more direct and immediate than the literal. There is ultimately a conflict between the Spirit and the Letter. The orally preached message of the Gospel, not the individual meditating on the letter in private, appears to be for Luther the authentic arena in which faith is created. Luther’s concern with the priority of the preached Word was one very much shared by the popular element as well. Good preaching became the primary criteria for screening new pastors. This preference for the preached word is thus noted by Scribner:

The first act of any community which developed an interest in the new ideas was to request a preacher to proclaim the 'pure Word of God.' It was not held to be sufficient to read printed tracts or even the Bible: the desire was to *bear* the word. Indeed, for Protestants
'hearing the Word' became virtually a third Sacrament alongside Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Communities cared enough about this to pay out of their own pockets to support a preacher if no benefice was vacant and to put considerable pressure on magistrates who were reluctant to provide or permit such a preacher (Scribner, 1984: 237).

Scribner has demonstrated in this article that the German Reformation, in spite of printing, tended to stress the oral medium. Thus, a provocative question arises as to Luther's precise attitude toward the nature of the printed word. It would appear that Luther privileges the oral over the written for its simplicity and immediacy.

In Luther's oral project, it was necessary to reduce the theological insights of the Reformation which had arisen from a direct encounter with the printed text of Scripture to the orally managed medium of the preached proclamation. What is missing, however, from this kind of oral theology is the type of narrative reading of the text which had become a major concern for textually oriented theologians in the Reformation such as Calvin. Hans Frei has pointed out this contrast between Luther and Calvin with Luther's tendency to reduce Scripture to a formula. Frei contrasts this tendency with that of other reformers, particularly Calvin, to read Scripture in terms of narrative. "For Calvin, more clearly than for Luther, not the act of recital or the preaching of a text, but the cumulative pattern constituting the Biblical narrative is the setting forth of the reality which simultaneously constitutes its effective rendering to the reader by the Spirit" (Frei, 1974: 24). There is an interesting link between narrative and textuality. Narrative strategies require a kind of objectivity and distance now understood as the product of literacy and writing. The controversy between a narrative vs. a formulaic
reading of Scripture, therefore, clearly pits orality against textuality as the focal point of theological issues within the Reformation camp itself. For Luther, as for Paul, the Spirit stands above the letter, for Calvin the Spirit and the letter appear to stand side by side. It would seem, therefore, that Calvin assumes a position that does not necessarily privilege the oral word over the printed text. This is an issue that warrants further consideration in assessing Calvin's understanding of the printed word in relation to his overall understanding of a theology of the Word.

In considering the oral aspects of Luther's theology, we must not ignore the oral life world out of which Luther came. For, while he was deeply and seriously involved with textuality in terms of his role as scholar/teacher, nevertheless, can we ignore the orally dominated cultural setting in which he grew up and by which he may be said to have been influenced all of his life. Roland Bainton in his popular account of the life of Luther has noted at the outset the superstitious and folkloristic world into which Luther was born. Bainton writes:

Certain elements even of old German paganism were blended with Christian mythology in the beliefs of these untutored folk. For them the woods and the winds and the waters were peopled by elves, gnomes, fairies, mermen and mermaids, sprites and witches. Sinisters spirits would release storms, floods, and pestilence, and would seduce mankind to sin and melancholia. Luther's mother believed that they played such minor pranks as stealing eggs, milk, and butter; and Luther himself was never emancipated from such beliefs. "Many regions are inhabited, said he, "by devils. Prussia is full of them, and Lapland of witches. In my native country on the top of a high mountain called the Pubelsberg is a lake into which if a stone be thrown a tempest will arise over the whole region because the waters are the abode of captive
Bainton has also related the superstitious manner in which Luther first was launched into a religious career. Everyone is familiar with Luther's encounter with the lightening bolt and the vow to St. Anne to become a monk. Luther's religious life was rooted at least partially to the older, oral world of superstition and folklore. It is interesting to contrast Luther's reasons for entering the monastic life with that of Erasmus, who primarily regarded his monastic affiliation as the means to a free education for a poor scholar with no prospects for financial security (Tracy, 1972: 21-2). For Erasmus, the monastic life was only the means to a humanistic training; for Luther, it was seen as the key for the sequestering of his soul from a world full of devils which sought his demise.

Robert Scribner has researched widely the persistence of oral attitudes regarding folklore and superstition within the reformed movements (1984: 44-77). This persistence was due in part, he notes, to the continuing view among Protestants and Catholics alike to see the natural world in terms of the direct control of divine agencies. "Even under Protestantism supplicatory processions were still held to beseech God to avert natural disorder such as plagues and death" (Scribner, 1984: 76). The creation of disorder in the natural sphere tended to be seen even by Protestants as the result of spirits and devils, though such notions were somewhat subject to restriction. Scribner further notes in regard to the persistence of superstitious notions of causality that:

The prereformation understanding encompassed physical, psychic, and moral causality: the Reformation understanding was limited to the psychic and moral. Yet
a figure as potent as Luther still held to the necessity of exorcism, and even continued to see baptismal water as specially sacred. Numerous Protestant clergy continued to believe in signs, omens, portents, prophecies and indeed miracles. The rupture with Catholic ritual practice was also not as drastic as might be thought. A striking example is found in Brandenburg where Catholic ritual forms survived for two generations after the introduction of the Reformation. This was initially the consequence of the affection of the Elector Joachim II of Brandenberg for the catholic liturgy, something he justified with the argument that it was a highly effective means of teaching children about religion (Scribner, 1984: 76).

Scribner's observation thus appears to suggest a link between the persistence of the older forms of religious mythology and superstition together with visual images for instruction and the conditions of illiteracy and lack of education among the masses. The oral background of Luther's early life, and indeed the entire oral life world of the late Medieval period with its tendency toward a folk mentality, should not be ignored in the attempt to assess Luther's relationship to orality in general. These are issues which must be addressed, if we are properly to assess the role of the oral word and its relation to the printed word in the context of Luther's theology and in the Reformation in general.

As we shall see, the problem of the controversy within the Reformation camp appears to center on the conflicts which arose as a result of the shift in the medium of language. As we have already seen, Luther possesses a clear preference for the oral word which is in many ways a preservation of traditional theological modes of thinking. As we have suggested, this is nowhere more evident than in Luther's theology of the
Sacrament. Here Luther, while desiring to break with the entire sacerdotal system of the medieval Church, nevertheless desires to retain the oral power of the Roman use of the Sacraments. We shall examine this later in greater detail. At this point in the discussion, it is only necessary to mention Luther's understanding of the manner in which the oral word serves in the sacrament to render the presence of the divine. In Luther's consideration of the sacraments, we must, therefore, not ignore this oral aspect of language in which language is understood to operate in a medium where there is no separation between the signifier and the signified. Oral words are thus conceived as having the power to render the presence of the realities to which they refer. William Frawley calls this the iconic function of oral language in which words serve as the psychological catalyst for creating icons of experience which thus evoke a complete and total emotive response (1987: 16-21). In this way oral words in an orally conditioned society appear to recreate the presence of the signified. Words conceived as text in the form of a printed medium have no such dynamic, emotive power. Rather, in a textual setting words are conceived not in terms of iconic representations of reality which invoke a direct participation in that reality, but are rather opaque signs in which a direct transition to an appeal to immediate experience is obfuscated by this very opaque nature of the linguistic sign. When we, therefore, consider the linguistic views of Zwingli in regard to the nature of the sacraments and the words of institution, we can easily note a more textual orientation which sees language in terms of the opacity of the sign.

It appears, then, that the textual influences on Zwingli and his linguistic training which in part we may attribute to his exposure to the wide spread
dissemination of texts resulting from the advent of printing indicate that his philosophy of language in contrast to Luther is one which has assimilated to a greater degree the growing consensus in the Renaissance that language must first and foremost be considered in its textual nature characterized by what Frawley has termed "opacity." Zwingli, therefore, thinks of the words of Scripture in terms of their textual nature, whereas Luther desires to go behind the text to the living oral proclamation of Jesus in which the living voice possesses the power to transform reality effectually to render the presence of the signified in the sacrament. While for Zwingli the words of institution serve as a reminder, a memorial to a past act, for Luther they are the means by which the presence of Christ is made manifest, immediate and full.

The controversy arising over the nature of language is one which can be seen to have been in evidence even beyond the conflict between Luther and Zwingli. Indeed most, if not all, of these controversies turn on this central point concerning the difference regarding the manner in which words were conceived to operate in their essential nature. Thus, in spite of the rise of the textual schools of thought which were characterized by their emphasis on the opacity of the sign, there was a definite persistence in some segments of the Reformation not only to retain but even to privilege the oral nature of language as a more effective means of transmitting the essence of divine presence and instruction. John Bossy noting the trend toward opacity and textuality has said that "the 'word' of the sixteenth century was to a large extent the devocalised and desocialised medium whose emergence has been argued for by trans-Atlantic media-theorists in the wake of Marshall McLuhan" (Bossy, 1985: 98-99). While this study will seek to limit itself to
the Lutheran and post-Lutheran phases of the Reformation it is worth noting
that the tension between orality and textuality can be seen elsewhere. An
example is the controversy between William Tyndale and Thomas More.
John Bossy has noted the Erasmian influences on Tyndale’s understanding of
the nature of the Word (1985: 99). Tyndale has a proclivity for seeing
Scripture in terms of textuality. Bossy’s assessment of the contention
between Tyndale and More is worth quoting for our purposes.

For Tyndale “that word” which was in the beginning with
God, which was the life and light of men and shone in
incomprehending darkness, was not a personal but a
literal word; it was an ‘it’, not ‘him’, instinctively
conceived as the written word. It was certainly not the
ritual word, for which traditional opinion seems
sometimes to have taken it, but the vehicle for truth; and
not the social word, but objective, transcendent,
addressed to no one and everyone, like the ten
commandments which were to replace statues and
images behind the altars of the English churches. For
More it had no such primacy, being an imperfect method
of communicating what could in principle be more exactly

The contrasting pairs of oral vs. written, iconic vs. opaque, presence
vs. absence thus appear to be focal points for Reformation issues. Scripture
surely played an important role in spawning this controversy but the
controversy itself involved more than simply the correct interpretation of
Scripture. Rather, as we have suggested, what was at stake was no less than
the nature of language itself. How is language affected by the medium of
print? Is there a difference between a text and oral communication? Luther
clearly favors orality for immediacy and presence. Nevertheless, there was a
growing emphasis in the Reformation on the textual and opaque nature of language. Surely this emphasis on the opaque nature of the printed word as conveyed in a textual setting must in some sense have been promoted and encouraged by the rise of printing in the sixteenth century. The printing press in terms of validating a textual orientation with regard to language played a significant role in fostering new attitudes concerning the nature of language and a reassessment of the dynamics of oral speech.

In considering the nature of these problems the role of the printing press cannot be ignored. In terms of the sheer rapidity of the Reformation movement it can well be argued and has been argued that the Protestant revolt may well not have occurred without this new technology (Eisenstein, 1983: 183). Nevertheless, one must still ask the question: to what extent the printing press alone actually ushered in a transformation of thought processes? To what extent can we attribute to the new technology a shift in the way language came to function? In some instances, namely Zwingli and Erasmus, the printing press, insofar as it promoted the widespread availability of texts, tended to reinforce a view of language which gave priority to the textual medium and the dynamics which were concomitant with textual modes of thinking. But not in every instance was this the case. On the other side of the issue, we have the imposing figure of Luther, who in spite of printing tended in his theological programs to persist in an oral attitude regarding the nature of language. The printed word in this sense was not seen as a primary but rather a secondary medium which always had to be supplemented by the more valid forms of oral speech. Printing, while certainly a useful tool, was nevertheless subordinate to the more direct conveyance of meaning and presence of the signified to be attained through
the use of oral proclamation. In short, we are back to the question of the nature of oral vs. written. In what way does the printed medium affect its audience of silent, individual readers, and how does that differ from oral proclamation occurring not in a private but a communal setting? Why does Luther, a child in one sense of the printed word, favor the oral as the true means to faith? Furthermore, how are we to understand these questions in the context of theological issues, and even philosophical and linguistic ones?

Our discussion so far has focused on the prevailing paradox that within the Lutheran tradition, in spite of the textual availability of Scripture, the movement had strong oral tendencies and influences. Even where we have noted the opposite tendency among certain humanistic trends in Reformation scholarship to focus rather on the nature of the textual, printed medium of the Word of God together with a more textually oriented theology of the Word, nevertheless the reader so far may be inclined to infer that the Reformation tended to remain, in spite of the printing revolution, a predominantly oral phenomenon. Such an inference is in part warranted, and while one may concede that a high degree of orality remained a permanent feature of the Reformation, still there were significant changes with respect to the oral life world of the Middle Ages as a result of printing. While printing did not in every case usher in a transformation of the common consensus regarding the nature of the word whether Scriptural or otherwise, it did introduce new possibilities and innovations affecting the manner in which linguistic phenomena were thought to function. As we will see, this new way of viewing language had much in common with the textual orientation of nominalism. It will therefore be the contention of this study to suggest that printing reinforced certain nominalistic trends which tended
on the whole to focus on the role of texts in the shaping of theological and philosophical positions.

The term nominalism is most familiar to us in the context of the nomalist-realist controversy. In that context, it is popularly held that nominalism was a reaction to the Platonizing influence in early Medieval theology which stressed the reality of universals. In this sense, Platonic realism became the justification for a unified hierarchy which viewed Papal authority as analogous to the Church in a universal sense (Manschreck, 1974: 133-135). The reality of individual church communities was contingent upon their participation in the universal reality of the Roman Church. Against this, the nominalists asserted that universals were merely abstractions from particulars. Thus, the particular and individual entity became the focal point for the foundation of universal categories which were themselves considered to be only abstractions. In terms of linguistics realities, realism stressed a correspondence between signum and res regarding the question of universals. Nominalism, on the other hand, viewed language, especially in the case of universals, as merely a conventional form of agreement which indicated a consensus regarding reference but which in itself did not have the power to convey the essence of the signified.

Because nominalism had this orientation toward the priority of the particular and the individual, it is easy to understand why the nominalist-realist controversy is often viewed as a rivalry between Aristotle and Plato. Plato surely was seen as the patron of the realists, but we must remember that the Plato of the realists was quite remote to the Plato of the text. In fact, what appears to be Platonic is in fact a reduction of popular assumptions about Plato which were incorporated into a system
which stressed the priority and prestige of a universal category which was itself reinforced by oral criteria. Such an oral criteria, as Brian Stock (1972) has shown, provided the basis of a vast cultural synthesis which subordinated the individual to the universal category based on oral assumptions. As we will see in the next chapter, the oral synthesis thrives in a situation in which communal standards are seen to be prior to the individual. Thus, realism in Western Christendom can perhaps be better understood as a phenomenon of orality than a strict adherent to Plato, whose actual texts had not been directly accessible for centuries.

In any event, insofar as Aristotle represented a view of reality which regarded universals as distinctly contingent upon particulars, there is a sense in which he may also be regarded as the father of nominalism. In connection with this observation, we must now briefly trace the revival of Aristotle in the Christian West. To do this, we must also consider the revival of Aristotle in the East which rendered his accessibility to the West possible. In Christian theology, practically speaking, Aristotle was known only in the treatises on logic and interpretation. In the ninth century in Constantinople, there was a momentous re-discovery of the complete works of Aristotle. An academy was thereupon established to edit and interpret the new findings. Thus, for the first time in many centuries the authentic Aristotle was restored to the civilized world. It is worth noting, however, that even in the Byzantine context, the rediscovery of Aristotle came to represent a threat to already established norms of theological dogmatics. It is interesting to observe the kind of disruption which texts can foster. However, the disruption and scepticism in the East was nothing compared to the controversies which arose in the West.
There were two major points of contact between East and West with regard to the revival of the complete corpus of Aristotle. One involves the renewed cultural contact with the East which had become noticeable by the thirteenth century, the other involved contact with Arabic scholars of Aristotle in Spain, particularly Averroes. The twin names of Avicenna and Averroes represent the Arabic contribution to the resurgence in interest in Aristotle and a brief consideration of their contributions is therefore warranted.

Avicenna is of particular interest to us primarily because of his extensive commentaries on Aristotle and because of his understanding that Plotinus, the neo-Platonist, held views that were consistent and even explanatory of Aristotle. This fact alone should give us pause in assuming that there was a strict dichotomy between Aristotle and Plato. Rather, when Aristotle regained prominence in the West and came to represent a challenge to Platonic realism, this realism was not strictly speaking a product of the authentic Plato or the Platonic tradition embodied in Plotinus.

Averroes in Spain continued the trend toward the importance of the commentary as can be witnessed in his elucidations of Aristotle and in his commentary on Plato's Republic, once again indicating that the dichotomy between Aristotle and Plato was not as severe as is normally understood. More significant for our purpose is the fact that the re-discovery of the texts of Aristotle engendered the creation of other texts. Texts begetting other texts is a phenomenon that stands in contrast to orality.

By the end of the thirteenth century, the impact of the revival of Aristotle was beginning to be felt in the Christian West. As early as 1240, Robert Grosseteste had translated the Nichomachean Ethics and On the
Heavens The center of controversy, however, proved to be Paris where the renewed interest in Aristotle produced a growing attitude of anxiety as a rational, critical and textual perspective came to represent a challenge to ecclesiastical authority. The great synthesis of Aquinas seemed to quell this anxiety for a while, but it was short lived. As the implications of Aristotelean rationalism were spelled out by Duns Scotus and later by Ockham, the threat was considered real and worthy of Papal attention. By the time that Ockham was summoned to appear at the court of Avignon, the Papacy was already undergoing a crisis of legitimacy. The Babylonian Captivity had already rendered Papal authority suspect. In the political realm, the Defensor Pacis of Marsilius of Padua had perhaps contributed to this crisis. In the Defensor, we see a view of political authority which understands such authority as rising from the consensus of individuals and not from above (Manschreck, 1974: 146-147). In other words, we can already see a challenge to the Papal hierarchy rising from a perspective which privileges the particular over the universal. Such a postion was surely strengthened by the revival of Aristotle and the beginnings of nominalism.

It is interesting that both Meister Eckhart and Ockham were called to the Papal court at the same time to answer to charges of heresy. As we will see in Chapter IV, Eckhart was suspect because he represented an oral theology which was more democratic than the oral theology of the Avignon Papacy, but Ockham because he represented a position that placed the authority of the text above the oral authority of the Church.

If we consider nominalism from the standpoint of a renewed textual perspective as it came to be embodied in the revival of Aristotle, then we must not only consider the re-establishment of the philosophical perspective
which privileges particulars over universals but also the linguistic perspective which privileges texts over tradition, especially when that tradition is primarily based on oral assumptions. In this sense, the Aristotle of the later Middle Ages was called into question not simply because he was challenged by a rival tradition, but rather because the rival tradition possessed a textual base which was deemed to be more authentic. In this sense, the written word was held up as a challenge to traditional authority. Such a locus of authority tended to legitimize the textual enterprise as the legitimate vehicle for the establishing of normative truth. Furthermore, the textual focus, insofar as it forced a project of critical comparison, served to establish a textual perspective which challenged oral norms of interpretation. The fact that truth was decided not on the basis of oral authority but rather on the proper interpretation of texts shifted the focus of reference away from a direct correspondence between word and meaning, or word and truth, to a linguistic focus which saw a plethora of verbal attempts to arrive at truth. In this sense, texts were a commentary on truth but were always functioning in the domain of referentiality. The fact that one text could either refute or clarify another suggests a linguistic orientation which views language as a matter of convention always subject to review based on comparison with other texts. In other words, the nominalist enterprise, while it validated the priority of texts as the proper locus for hermeneutical activity, nevertheless placed autonomous authority on the individual interpreter who must utilize objective criteria in determining the signifying properties of the text. The result represented a twofold challenge to traditional authority. First, it placed the text above oral tradition. Secondly, it placed the individual above a communal synthesis.
Insofar as the nominalists' project can be traced to a revival of Aristotelian texts and the substantiating of a textual basis for hermeneutical activity, then we may assert that the deconstruction of oral authority which Eisenstein has linked exclusively to the invention of the press and the dissemination of textuality was already in evidence on a smaller scale as a result of the influx of Greek texts from the East. This does not challenge Eisenstein's major thesis that textuality through printing upset the oral synthesis of Medieval theology, but rather suggests that the dynamics which became widespread in Europe as the result of the invention of the press already had a seminal foundation in the linguistic revisionary posture of nominalism which was itself based on comparative readings of newly available texts.

Alistair McGrath has argued that the term nominalism should now be abandoned insofar as the movement spawned quite rival theologies (1987: 69). McGrath points out, for example, that theologians who traditionally have been termed nominalists nevertheless held rival views of justification. That those who held Pelagian views could be placed within the same category as radical anti-Pelagianists suggests for McGrath that the term is now outmoded and needs to be replaced. However, McGrath approaches the problem strictly from a theological viewpoint ignoring the linguistic basis of these rival theologies. In both instances, we have a re-reading of traditional theology from the standpoint of a text. While it is true that the anti-Pelagian theologians looked more attentively to Augustine than did their rivals, nevertheless, we should acknowledge that in either case it was on the basis of textual authority that their respective claims were made. As in the case of Aristotle, Augustine was understood from a relatively condensed
perspective which did not have reference to the corpus as a whole. If the Augustinian nominalists were opposed to their more Pelagian counterparts, is it not significant that the point of departure was the renewed availability of the complete corpus of Augustine rather than the formulaic condensation of him as it had been available in the early Medieval period? Whereas McGrath is correct in pointing out a wide variance with regard to particular nominalists, the fact that they all held in common a textual locus for theological abstraction suggests that, in spite of their differences, a common linguistic orientation united them on a basis which proved to be far more objective than theological prejudices. Once again, we must stress that the nominalist enterprise stressed a textual perspective and the hermeneutical priority of the literate individual as the valid locus of authority.

We must, therefore, not ignore Heiko Oberman’s thesis that the Ockhamist movement gave rise to a renewed interest in particulars over universals and thus the individual over the community (1986: 55). Furthermore, this movement is to a great extent traceable to the resurgence of the availability of new texts of Aristotle and Aristotelian commentaries in conjunction with the rise of availability of complete texts not only of Aristotle and Plato, but even of Augustine and the fathers (Oberman, 1986: 55). Thus, a resurgence of interest in a detailed reading of texts served as a challenge to what Oberman has termed the meta-theology of the Middle Ages. It is precisely this concern with textuality and a re-reading in the context of textually pure editions of Augustine and the writers of the early Church that was furthered by the advent of printing. While printing alone, we may now conclude, was not in itself responsible for this new orientation, we can nevertheless assert that the possibilities which were
offered by the new technology could have served to strengthen what was already a textual concern for the re-thinking of traditional, oral modes of thought. In other words, while we may concede that the Reformation continued to retain a strong oral element, we must also stress that the rise of printing in the sixteenth century did play an important role in solidifying textual modes of epistemological and theological programs.

Elizabeth Eisenstein in her monumental work, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (1979), has demonstrated brilliantly the effects of the printing revolution on early modern Europe. She has clearly documented the role of printing in the dissemination of information in the forms of treatises and pamphlets on the manner and the speed with which new information was spread throughout Europe in the sixteenth century. Printing became the vehicle by which the Reformation became possible allowing for the availability on an increasingly wider scale of the new learning of the Renaissance as well as the reformed message of the religious movements of the day. Eisenstein in her detailed analysis of the importance of the printed word has taken into serious consideration the changing dynamic on a large societal scale in which linguistic phenomena were thought to operate. Once we consider the private reader, for example, rather than the communal hearer as the focal point of the dissemination of information, we must further consider the implications of a private, silent reader as against the communal oral setting of the hearer. We must consider the dynamic involved in an individual as the focal point of interpretation.

The oral mode of assimilation, as Havelock and others have argued, insofar as it relies on the immediacy of that reception, inhibits individual, hermeneutical reflection (Havelock, 1978: 38-54). Rather, in the oral setting
a homeostatic balance is created in which the oral audience tends to be swept through the means of rhetorical manipulation into a homeostatic bond between speaker, audience, and message. Thus, the rise of printing, insofar as it tended to address itself to the individual, served to create a new arena for the assimilation of new information. The individual came not to rely on the immediate response intended or projected by the speaker of the oral message, rather s/he tended to fall back on other categories of interpretation and evaluation. No longer under the pressure to conform to the mass consensensus of a communal reaction to a particular message, the individual found him/herself rather within the bounds of freedom of thought; that is, s/he was free to formulate conclusions apart from the immediate, and thus often inhibiting, reaction of peers. We therefore must take into consideration the role of printing in emphasizing this new focus on the individual.

Eisenstein’s analysis of the private reader is, therefore, well worth our attention. With the advent of printing, she argues, we see for the first time the individual as the locus of the spread of ideas (Eisenstein, 1983: 84). Medieval society, dominated as it was by illiteracy and oral means of communication, relied almost exclusively on the oral/aural medium. Printing, however, addresses itself to the individual. The implications for theology are both profound and telling. It is easy to make the connection between the individual reading the printed Word in private and the individual as the locus for salvation as over against the institutional church whose primary means of operation was the communal network which utilized the oral medium as its chief means of promulgation and solidification. Before the printing press, most communication took place in the public arena by means
of oral transmission in which the individual was seen less as an autonomous unit than as a participant in a transcendent reality understood as his community. In this sense, we see operative on the communal scale the realist half of the famous nominalist/realist controversy in which the reality of the orally cohesive society as a whole took precedence over the individual. The realist half of that discussion was more in keeping with an essentially oral view of the nature of reality, insofar as access to that reality was subject to the medium of oral communication both in the ex cathedra pronouncements of the papal chair, and in the more generally accessible forms of ecclesiastical communication through images and sacraments. Thus, the oral medium with its emphasis on the immediacy of the oral word in transubstantiation was seen to be the primary means for the conveyance of presence, particularly the presence of the divine. Seen in this light, the rise of the importance of the individual does appear to be a relatively late phenomenon which, Eisenstein argues, was in a large measure created by the advent of textuality and printing, but which we have seen, has its origins in the textual project of nominalism.

While, as we have noted, the trend toward individualism might be more properly placed within the tradition of nominalism, nevertheless, insofar as the printing press served to reinforce the textual, nominalistic nature of linguistic phenomena, we may therefore concur with Eisenstein that the printing press did serve to establish the individual as a viable locus for hermeneutical autonomy. Nevertheless, we must reiterate the assertion that printing alone was not necessarily responsible for the creation of this new locus the seeds of which were already a feature of the nominalistic perspective. This nominalistic perspective, while preceding the invention of
the printing press, nevertheless had a distinctly textual orientation which may in part be traced to the renewed interest in the wave of new treatises of Plato and Aristotle which were made available through a renewed contact with the East. In other words, nominalism emerges as a distinctly textually oriented project emphasizing the linguistic mode of textual as opposed to oral expression.

Eisenstein has in this regard perhaps oversimplified the rise of a concern with the individual as solely a production of the rise of the new technology of printing. To temper the assertions of Eisenstein, it would be best for our study to reiterate Oberman’s theory as to the origins of the late medieval concern of the role of the individual. Here, as we have already suggested, we must take note of Oberman’s assessment of the role of the nominalism of William of Ockham in the development of the category of the individual. Oberman’s insight are worth quoting at length. He writes:

Contentwise we find the characteristics of nominalism in an epistemology engendered by the new logic which relates experience and experiment (the so called notitia intuitiva) in such a way that the individual-be it an inanimate object, a human being or an event- is understood in its own context as potentially new, original, and unique before it is identified by classification into species. This epistemological stance, which one may characterize as born out of a hunger for reality, is part of a more embracing revolt against the ‘meta-world’ of heteronomous authority and canonized speculations obfuscating, overlaying and distorting reality. It is the revolt against ‘a-priori meta-physics’ in order to provide freedom for a genuine a-posteriori physics. Indeed, there are good reasons to claim that the beginnings of modern science can be retraced to nominalism. In the same way it is the revolt against meta-theology to provide freedom
for genuine theology conceived as a practical and not a speculative science. Ockham's razor proves to function by slicing away later crusts from more recent glosses not unlike the humanists' effort to return to the sources. Here lies as well the interest in the traditional anti-speculative distinction between the potentia absoluta and the potentia ordinata. The description of the church as a congregatio fidelium, for instance, is preferred since this perception is closer to experienced reality than a "platonic" abstract universal "extra homines: particulares" as Gabriel Biel put it (1986: 55).

In this discussion, Oberman has hit upon several issues which we may want to qualify in light of our thesis that the stress placed upon individualism was not solely a result of printing technology but was nevertheless textually oriented. Oberman here suggests that the new epistemological stance represented by nominalism was further indicative of a widespread hunger for reality which was to a great extent fed by a popular reaction to the meta-theology of the Medieval Church. This in turn raises the larger issue of whether the Reformation as a whole ought to be viewed as a movement from above or below. Oberman suggests that what came to a head in the Reformation was in fact closely related to the concerns of the popular masses insofar as they hungered for a more experiential form of religion. This is a hotly contested issue which we do not propose to be able to resolve decisively. Still, there are perhaps certain insights into the problem which a consideration of orality-textuality issues may help to clarify. As we have noted previously, late Medieval society in spite of a textually sophisticated minority, was on the whole non-literate. In examining the sociological dynamics of oral societies it has been suggested that they tend to be characteristically homeostatic and conservative (Ong, 1982: 46). The fact
that Medieval culture contained many homeostatic features has led many scholars to question the popular contention that Europe was crying for a Reformation (Eisenstein, 1983: 183). Indeed, the homeostatic bonds in oral societies on the whole prove to be very resistant to change and innovation. This, in more than a few instances, led to widespread resistance to reform on the part of the popular element in those cities which sought too rapidly to bring about innovation. Eisenstein has suggested that the situation prior to the advent of printing was indeed far more stable than is usually considered by scholars who wish to hold forth the thesis of a Reformation fed from below by the common man.

The success of the Lutheran movement in fact may be the result of its implementation of an oral approach which did not threaten the homeostatic preferences of the oral majority. In our consideration of the Lutheran use of propaganda which took advantage of a popular, oral base, we can observe the tendency to tap into the popular oral mentality in the attempt to shift allegiance toward the Reformed movement. The question, however, inevitably arises: to what extent did the new movement represent an actual break with the oral thought forms of the general populace? Shifts in allegiance were most often effected by the utilization of popular appeal. The oral thought forms were thus channelled into a new allegiance which did not represent a major threat to the securities of the homeostatic balance of late Medieval societal structures.

The economic issues are somewhat more complicated. Here we would assume that pressure from below was surely active as a catalyst for change. But again we run into complications. As Hans Hillerbrand has shown in his analysis of the Peasants' Revolt and the Twelve Articles, the popular appeal
in that movement was not strictly based on the desire to restructure society in Marxist fashion on a basis of equal economic opportunity (1972: 106-136). Rather, the peasants were largely expressing discontent over what for them had been the loss of traditional rights pertaining to their social station, namely the freedom to fish and to gather wood. While the Lutheran notion of the freedom of the Christian was subsequently misapplied to result in the increase of general disruption and chaos, the movement from below was on the whole begun by a discontent with what was seen by the peasants as a threat to the older, more conservative and homeostatic order represented by the feudal system in which they were allowed freedom of access to basic necessities. In this sense, they were not longing for progressive economic innovations, rather a return to the more secure way of life as represented by the feudal hierarchy. Thus, even in economic matters, the oral populace more often than not wished to maintain the status quo.

In summation, we would thus contend that the nominalism of Ockham was not representational of the concerns of the general, oral populace but was rather a phenomenon in part created by a growing emphasis on textuality. This growing textual perspective, insofar as it was generated by re-reading of traditional texts with great attention paid to linguistic detail, tended to see reality rising out of an empirical orientation toward individual phenomena both textual and experiential.

In this sense, we agree with Oberman that the new emphasis on the individual had its roots in the nominalistic tradition and was not, therefore, solely a result of the printing press; still, insofar as nominalism represented a perspective based on textuality, we must emphasize that this perspective was heightened by the new medium of print. The category of the individual
was one which was already in place when the invention of printing occurred. The impetus for the invention of the press in fact may be traceable directly to the demand for the availability of important texts. The locus of the individual, therefore, is a category which we cannot divorce from the flourishing of the theological insights of Ockham, insights made possible by the increase in the availability of texts. All of this tended to encourage a new textual re-reading of traditional modes of thought and interpretation.

As we have suggested, the situation was compounded by contradictions in the tradition which came to light from textual comparisons and inconsistencies. This comparative perspective characteristic of textuality brought about a new concern for a textually pure background for theological issues. Insofar as Christianity claimed to be based on the authorities of the past, that base was called into revision by the inconsistencies which became obvious in the resurgence of more textually accurate versions of the Fathers and of Scripture itself. Thus, as the priority of the individual consideration of linguistically accurate and therefore authoritative texts increased, we can more readily detect a shift as early as Ockham toward a critically accurate reading of those texts which were already considered to be foundational for the Christian Church. Later, we shall consider the importance of the advent of the textually pure editions of Augustine as opposed to the collection of theological quotes attributed to him in the re-orientation of Reformation thought. At this point, it is only necessary to acknowledge that a growing awareness of textual discrepancies gave rise to a new program of re-reading accurately in the light of historical, linguistic criticism what had been traditionally regarded as authoritative. Even before the invention of the press, we may look to the historically, and linguistically critical re-readings of
Lorenzo Valla and Nicholas of Cusa as precursors to the textually oriented concerns of a reformed theology.

But apart from the concerns of the textual minority represented by Ockham, we must grant that on the whole Medieval society, insofar as it was dominated by illiteracy and the lack of a text based educational program, was largely subject to the conditions of orality with its concomitant unawareness of the individual. The primary concern was to solidify the oral community based on tradition and the oral medium of communication. This tendency toward a lack of concern for individuality can also be observed in the art of the Medieval period, particularly in the art of portrait making. In this connection, Eisenstein has noted that "before the fifteenth century even artists' self portraits were deprived of individuality" (1983: 130). It is not until the sixteenth century that there begins to appear distinct physiognomies attached to certain individuals. Uniformity of detail was made possible by the rapid repetition of printing. In this respect, it would be worth pursuing for the art critic to explore the effects of printing on the growth of concern in Renaissance art for realism, perspective, and the individual. Thus, through mass repetition, uniformity and consistency were made possible. This development may surely be attributed to the invention of the Gutenberg press. In fact, Eisenstein, while herself not an art critic, has suggested that there is indeed a connection in Renaissance art between the distanciation and abstraction which printing allowed and the rise in concern for perspective, realism, and individuality (1983: 130-131). As scribal labor was set free from the task of merely copying, it increasingly paid attention to the new criteria of accuracy. Some texts were therefore judged to be more accurate than others based on a comparison
with alternative readings. The implications of this historical-critical method were to be felt not just in the perspectives created for the scribe and the portrait artist. They were also to be felt in the rise of historical science.

In regard to the rise of historical science and its concern for objectivity, it is worth noting that a growing number of scholars who deal in the problems and characteristics of oral societies have in fact pointed out the connection between an objective, historical sense and a rise in literacy and textuality (Frawley, 1987: 64). Many, including Levy-Strauss (1962), have argued that oral societies have no sense of the past as objectively distinct and other than the present. There is, in orality, a limited historical perspective as we think of it from this side of the Enlightenment. Granted that the facts of the past, and indeed the influence of ancestral relationships, are significant for oral societies, nevertheless, the figures of the past are kept alive by ancestral worship, and their deeds are made present by the function of oral poetry and ritual. The past is, therefore, experienced not from the perspective of distance and separation but as a direct influence on, and even an integral part of, the present situation. Nowhere is this more evident than in an oral society's preference for the re-telling of heroic deeds of epic heroes and the intense worship and regard for the dead, but the dead not as absent and distant but as present and having direct bearing on the vitality of the present situation. More scholarship needs to be done on the connection between the worship of the saints and this aspect of the oral society of the Middle Ages. Here, one may suggest that the saints functioned as equivalents of both the oral epic hero and deceased ancestors. Furthermore, the present power of the past was not viewed through the lenses of a historical perspective and distance but was rather understood to
be a vital functioning element within the community. Such a perspective, based on distance and objectivity, only begins to emerge on a large scale with the advent of textuality and literacy. Textuality in this sense creates the possibility for distance and abstraction thereby giving rise to a historical perspective which views the past as distant, distinct, and other than the present.

Scribner’s study of the use of images in the visualistic propaganda employed in the spread of Lutheran ideas in the form of the broadsheet offers an interesting insight into the popular role of the saints (1981: 14-36). As the role of the saints and their concomitant function as the equivalent of oral epic hero diminished, it is interesting to note the manner in which the so-called heroes of the Reformation tended to supplant or to replace this vital role in the oral dimension of society within which the Lutheran notions of reform spread. The depiction of Luther sometimes in the traditional garb of his monastic habit or in the role of a German Hercules varying in his labors against the monolithic structure of the Roman Catholic Church personified in the figure of the Pope as anti-Christ is more than a little reminiscent of the agonistic struggles of the oral epic hero. Further study would be necessary to confirm this hypothesis; nevertheless, on the surface it appears that the Lutheran regions, at least in terms of their visualistic propaganda, merely substituted one set of oral heroes for another. It may even be argued that the ease of transition from saint to living present day hero represented less a diminishing of a certain type of heroic-oral mentality than an attempt to re-vitalize an aspect of oral society which the saints were no longer serving in a dynamic and vital capacity.

Eisenstein has pointed out the way in which printing served to
disseminate textual knowledge in the practical realm by making available what had been previously hand-drawn illustrations and pseudo-scientific diagrams (1983:21). This standardization of illustrations led obviously to the standardization of all sorts of technical information, especially anatomical and scientific information which in turn led to the rise of scientific thought as we have already noted. However, to balance this shift toward the standardization of visual data resulting in the rise of a more accurate attention to scientific detail, we must also note the possibility of the rapid reproduction of visualistic images which of themselves do not represent any direct challenge to the older, more imagistic orientation of the oral perspective. In connection with this, one should thus note the possibility of the reproduction of religious images and the manipulation of those images as they could be employed in the dissemination of Reformation ideas and in creating new allegiances. Through the rapid reproduction of images, the technology of printing served to reinforce a life world that was not necessarily analogous to the rise of the new perspective characteristic of a textual as opposed to an oral orientation. Insofar as images in the form of religious motifs could be mass produced, it could and should be argued that the printing press alone was not responsible for a significantly new shift in linguistic orientation. The press could be used in the service of either the printed or the visual-imagistic medium. Robert Scribner has pointed this out in regard to the work of Eisenstein (1984: 237). Here, Scribner argues that she has failed to take into account the significance of the visual/imagistic medium which tended to reinforce rather than to deconstruct the Medieval, oral life world together with its concomitant state of epistemology and cognition and the consequent social/theological
implications. On the role of visualistic propaganda in the Lutheran reform Scribner writes:

Another way to view the question would perhaps be to consider that popular propaganda was too much a product of popular mentalities to be able to transcend them. Relevant here is the criticism of Lutheranism made by more radical varieties of the Reformation which saw it making too many compromises with the old superstitious religion. Significantly, there is little of the popular propaganda surveyed here that came from the Zwinglian forms of radical traditions. Clearly, this was because of the hostility of these traditions to images, compared with the qualified acceptance of them in the Lutheran tradition. This alone probably ensured that the visual propaganda of the first half of the century of the Reformation would be overwhelmingly Lutheran. The Zwinglian-radical critique of Lutheran compromises with superstition was an accurate enough assessment, for Lutheranism did make a qualified acceptance of popular culture, with all of its visual elements, which in turn put a characteristic stamp on its popular propaganda. It is this stamping of Lutheran propaganda with popular culture that makes it such a good source for the study of popular mentalities. This leads us to even broader questions about the success or failure of the Reformation itself. As Gerald Strauss has pointed out, the Reformation despite its undoubted achievements, failed signally to create a new kind of devout Christian among the popular masses. One could not argue that this failure was the failure of its popular propaganda; rather, the popular propaganda is symptomatic of the wider failure. Thus, questions about the effectiveness of popular propaganda along these lines lead to wider questions about the nature of the reformation itself (1981: 249).
The early work of Walter Ong, *Ramus, Method and the Decay of Dialogue* (1958), concerning the sixteenth century scholar, Petrus Ramus, will serve to illustrate the bifurcation with regard to visual images over against the sole use of a textual project in the transmission of technical knowledge that subsequently came into prominence with the advent of printing. In contrast to the world of the guilds and the means of instruction provided through symbols and images which required oral supplementation, printing did give birth to a new means of instruction. Ramus' methodology illustrates a growing awareness that the new technology allowed for a completely new form of communication. Rather than relying on the image plus oral training, the Ramus text book was designed for the transmission of knowledge purely through the medium of textual communication in the form of the printed word.

This fact gave rise to the imageless textbook in which all instruction was submitted to the form of the printed text. While, as we have noted above, printing made possible the rapid availability of visual images and illustrations which by themselves represented no particular threat to the Medieval system of oral education, printing also made possible the production of texts which were self explanatory requiring only the knowledge of letters. The need for an oral master was thus diminished and the possibilities came about for an entirely revolutionary mode of education and social structure based on the individual's own pursuit of technical mastery apart from the authorities of his guild.

Eisenstein has argued that this Ramus tendency toward the imageless textbook has no accidental relationship to the tendency in the Reformation toward iconoclasm (1983: 35). Pope Gregory had long before touted the
image as the textbook of the illiterate. With the rise of literacy, the image in one sense became obsolete and in a religious sense idolatrous. However, the problem concerning the nature of images turned out to be a subtle and complex one. Luther, far more favorable to the use of images than was Calvin, noted what he considered to be a rather hypocritical stance regarding many of the reformers over the issue of the use of images (Eisenstein, 1983:35). He mentions, for example, the irony of those who would tear down images in the Church while nevertheless poring over pictures in the illustrated editions of the Bible. Luther was thus not at all opposed to the use of images in a religious context appearing to side with Gregory on this matter. When we consider Luther more in depth, it will be apparent that there may be an interesting connection between Luther's privileging of oral speech and his utilization of images as a means of transmitting the Lutheran message. Robert Scribner's *For the Sake of Simple Folk* has shown the degree to which the use of images in the form of broadsheets and cartoons was instrumental in the spread of the Lutheran message. As we have noted, Scribner has issued a challenge to Eisenstein to rethink the issues regarding the significance of literacy and printing in the spread of the Lutheran message. In fact, as Scribner's work has shown, the Reformation, while certainly taking advantage of the new printing technology, nevertheless relied heavily on oral communication in the form of town criers who would orally relate the latest news regarding the movement (Scribner, 1984: 237). This, together with the visual reinforcement of the broadsheet, led in Lutheran sectors rather to a reinforcing of an oral perspective than to its deconstruction.

The influence of Luther's orality can also be detected in the style of
pamphlet propaganda. While printing made possible the rapid production of pamphlets, nevertheless the Lutheran focus of the pamphlet propaganda was not aimed at a textually sophisticated audience. Theological pamphlets had to be scaled down in a manner that would make them intelligible to the illiterate masses to whom they would be read. Furthermore, this was not seen in any way to compromise Lutheran theology. In this regard Hans Hillerbrand has noted that:

there can also be little doubt that there seemed to be an anti-intellectual impulse in the pamphlets...The learned and powerful had failed to understand the authentic message of the Gospel; it was given to the simple to understand it. The theologians and doctors did not know the true faith; it was the simple artisan and peasant who had grasped the authentic meaning. In a tract Karthans, a peasant was called upon to decide the theological disagreement between Luther and his Catholic opponent Murner—and (not surprisingly) opted for the former. In the tract, *einfältig lai*—simple layman—occurs several times and it is meant as a word of commendation rather than derision (Hillerbrand, 1972: 119).

The theology of the pamphlets, if not the complete Lutheran message, Hillerbrand argues, was nevertheless an authentic representation of Lutheran thought. If this was in fact the case, then we must reconsider the entire question of the necessity for literacy and textual thinking in understanding the Gospel from the Lutheran perspective. Hillerbrand further notes that "the peasant was depicted as the paradigm of the authentic understanding of the Gospel. There was a glorification of the illiterate man whose very simplicity seemed to assure the authenticity of his faith. The pamphlets discussed the multitude of socio-economic questions,
always from the perspective of the common man and even the peasant" (1972: 119).

Pamphlets, popular ballads, poems and hymns the publication of which was proliferated by the printing press were still primarily oriented for the ear and the assimilation of their message was accomplished by oral recitation in the form of public performances (Scribner, 1984: 245). However, the use of the broadsheet was perhaps the most effective means for the spread of Lutheran ideas (Scribner, 1981: 250). On the broadsheet, the controversy between Luther and the Pope could be reduced to a simple cartoon in which the good guy and the enemy could be readily discerned (Scribner, 1981: 37-58). The affixed message, usually written in ballad form utilizing the mnemonic devices characteristic of oral composition, became a useful means of fixating the message conveyed by the image on the visually and aurally receptive audience. Thus, Scribner’s assertions must not be ignored in assessing the role of print and literacy in the Reformation. While printing did give rise to more rapid forms of communication within the Protestant revolt, it is a hasty assumption to conclude that the Reformation stood solely for literacy and that the Roman Catholic position was one that favored the strict control of textual strategies. Indeed, Bossy would have us think that the situation was exactly reversed. He writes, “indeed, if we are looking for a typographical pietas practised by silent readers, we are more likely to find it among devout sixteenth century Catholics, reading spiritual books in their pews and closets, than in the ranks of the reformed. For them the pious scriptoria of the Netherlands, and in its turn the press, had created and intimate version of monastic devotion which promoted individual meditation, silent prayer and interior dialogue with Christ in the sacrament
or otherwise” (Bossy, 1985: 101).

In this last paragraph, we have touched upon a growing point of controversy even within the Reformation camps. As Gerald Strauss and others have shown, the Lutheran message of sola fide was, in its formulaic simplicity, one which could be easily assimilated into an oral society. This preference for formulaic simplicity is carried on in the Lutheran tradition of the Catechism (Strauss, 1978). In fact, the Lutheran forms of education were primarily predicated on the oral recitation and memorization of the catechism as the primary means of promulgating the Lutheran message. It would appear, then, that for the Lutheran camps the spread of the message took precedence over the attempts to raise the level of literacy throughout the domains of the Lutheran Church. In fact, such a rise in literacy may have represented what for Luther ran contrary to the basic notions of his theology, a theology that in many ways embraced the status quo. The Gospel message could, therefore, just as easily reach the illiterate cobbler as the Greek scholar. It was not more important that the cobbler learn to read the Scripture for himself than that he fulfill his social and religious calling as cobbler. The catechism and sola fide were to be his mainstay rather than to have any aspirations toward scholarly endeavors.

In the next chapter, we shall consider the recent scholarship regarding the issue of orality vs. textuality to set the stage for an in depth treatment of the various schools of Reformation thought and the effects of printing and the rise of literacy on theological issues. However, at this point, it should be apparent that whatever our conclusions turn out to be regarding the tension between oral and textual points of view, the printing revolution was not solely responsible for the privileging of one state of mind over the
other; nevertheless, it should also be apparent that printing may be said to have complicated the relationship between oral and written and to have accentuated certain attitudes with regard to linguistic phenomena.

What our study so far suggests is that there were in some cases undeniable shifts in the Reformation which took place as a result of the widespread dissemination of information regarding revolutionary possibilities not only in theology but politics as well. One of the most obvious of these shifts is clearly the tendency toward the decentralization of authority. While in theological debates the locus of authority shifted away from what may be regarded as the oral authorities of the Roman Church in favor of the text of Scripture, there was a concomitant shift in general away from the centralization of power in the political realm. This nominalistic and Marsilian view of the nature of power as originating in the individual can be understandably linked to the rise of the role of printing and the challenge which it posed toward the traditionally held position of legitimacy both in religion and politics. The rise of the importance of the individual in general we have suggested may be linked to this tendency as well. The effects of printing in terms of the standardization of scientific knowledge also led to the questioning of oral and traditionally held authorities with regard to cosmology, medicine, and Medieval science. So much cannot be denied and to Eisenstein surely go the honors for the detailed documentation of such trends associated with the Gutenburg revolution.

However, to balance the picture, we must take into consideration other aspects of the printing revolution. While Eisenstein is careful not to be too explicit in her claims, relying rather on the bulk of her research to suggest trends and shifts in attitudes rather than dogmatically stating the nature of
the shift, nevertheless, the reader is generally left with the impression that printing altered irrevocably certain features of the Medieval synthesis. Surely there were irrevocable results stemming from the new technology. What is lacking however in Eisenstein’s analysis is the persistence of certain Medieval attitudes with regard to the ultimate nature of language, text, and oral speech.

In considering this problem of the complexities of the interrelationships of text and oral speech and the effects of printing on the manner in which language was conceived to function, we are perhaps on safer ground to grant that printing certainly gave rise to new possibilities for cognitive activity. We have already noted the increased possibility for abstract thought which the freedom of printing created for the scholar. Not only was less time devoted to the exhaustive enterprise of copying manuscripts, but the phenomenal increase in the sheer number of texts available for reading is astounding when compared to the scarcity of the availability of texts prior to the invention of the printing press. The scholar was thus thrown into a dizzying whirlwind of manifold and varied views on any given subject. The mere fact of comparing one treatise with another surely tended to force new categories of generalization and in this sense served to change attitudes with regard to what was prior to the press a rather limited perspective.

Though the enhanced possibilities for new ways of thinking were ushered in by the new availability of texts, this alone did not always create on the large scale entire revolutions in thinking. Here again we are wise to remember the caveat of Scribner, that society, in spite of the press, tended to remain largely illiterate and that, even when literacy was on the rise,
preference was still given to the oral aspect of language. Even the literate person in the late-Medieval period tended to read aloud. The phenomenon of silent reading is still a debated issue among scholars (Saenger, 1982: 367-414). The silent scanning of texts which would serve to increase the rapidity with which texts were assimilated was probably a rare phenomenon even as literacy became the rule. In other words, to assess properly the shifts in thought forms as a result of printing, we must proceed cautiously and as our working hypothesis hold forth the possibility that the Reformation retained a high degree of orality even as it was in the process of shifting toward a textual perspective.

William Frawley has noted the tendency among the early scholars of orality-literacy questions to assume too quickly that the effects of the advent of literacy in a society are immediate and overwhelming (1987: 33-35). As we shall see further along in this study, a real tension often does exist and indeed becomes the focal point for radical alterations, but this is not to say that oral features are thereby eliminated simply with the advent of textuality. Thus, in examining the features of orality-textuality and the role of printing in the Reformation, we shall be able to see that, while the rise of printing did usher in new possibilities, and perhaps even new epistemological and cognitive strategies, we cannot ascribe these tendencies exclusively to the invention of the press. We have already noted that the printing press insofar as it could be used for the rapid production of political cartoons and broadsheets, ballads, hymns, and rhyming slogans served to reinforce oral thought forms. Rather, we suggest that printing enhanced the possibilities for textual thinking, but that textual thinking was not exclusively an invention of printing. Therefore, insofar as printing had the
potential for the reinforcing of essentially divergent means of viewing the world, it will be helpful for us to turn now to the broader questions of the nature of oral societies and the effects which are wrought by the transition to textuality keeping in mind that the shift ought not to be viewed as a strict dichotomy, but rather as a spectrum with orality and literacy at opposite ends of the spectrum with the direction of motion beginning with orality and moving toward literacy, or what we shall call textuality, but never completely abandoning the origins of the motion. That is, we must always allow for oral strategies to exist within the setting of textuality acknowledging that even in the highest of literate cultures, oral prejudices may still persist.

The first chapter of this dissertation has served for the most part to illustrate that the Reformation, in spite of the common belief that it was primarily a typographic enterprise, nevertheless, retained a high degree of oral features. The Lutheran movement in particular is characteristic of this tendency. Our preliminary consideration of this aspect of the Lutheran movement has pointed in the direction of certain oral features of the linguistic orientation of Luther himself. In this regard, we have directed the reader to certain oral aspects of Luther's hermeneutic which on the whole appear to privilege the oral word as the authentic arena in which Luther's theological program of *sola fide* was to be carried out. *Sola fide* in its Pauline context of *ex auditoribus* emphasizes the essentially oral and communal nature of the vital and dynamic aspects of oral proclamation. We have hinted at the notion that this oral aspect of Luther's theology may have had its roots in a dynamic, oral life-world that included not only certain features of the oral orientation of scholastic theology but even the folkloristic
dimension of Luther's own rearing in a world which was conceived of as dominated and overwhelmed by agencies of divine and diabolical origins.

On the other hand, we likewise cannot deny that other reformers such as Erasmus, Zwingli, and Calvin, while not abandoning entirely the oral dimension of the Word of God have systematically incorporated the textual medium of the printed nature of the Word of God in Scripture into their overarching theologies of the Word. Thus, we may discern in the controversies which developed over the nature of the Word of God a tension between orality and textuality which in many ways became the focal point of Reformation issues. We are inevitably led, therefore, to a consideration of the question as to why the Lutheran camp sought this persistent allegiance to the oral word while other elements of the Reformation were willing and eager to incorporate the textual locus as the authentic dimension in which a more comprehensive theology of the word was understood.
CHAPTER TWO

ORALITY AND TEXTUALITY IN ANCIENT GREECE

We have now seen that the growth of textual strategies in the Reformation was not solely the result of the advent of printing technology. Nevertheless, printing, in some cases, did serve to reinforce a textual, analytic viewpoint that was to some extent already in place at the time of the invention of printing. Printing in this sense served to further the dynamics of writing. We have suggested that nominalism had its roots in this textual trajectory which can be traced directly to the philosophical and linguistic heritage of Platonic-Aristotelian thought. It is not surprising, then, that when the printing press was invented, a great deal of energy was devoted to the reproduction of Greek texts.

The cry of Rennaissance humanism, and even of the Reformation, was *ad fontes*. The *fontes* in question were not only the scriptural and patristic texts of the Christian heritage but also the Platonic, Aristotelian, and neo-Platonic texts which for centuries had been unavailable or only partially available. We cannot ignore the fact that textuality in the Rennaissance and the Reformation had a particular affinity for these Greek texts. This affinity is characterized by a certain critical attitude which sought to reassess the Christian heritage on a basis which was perceived to be at once more objective and true to the original written medium of the Gospels themselves.

The desire to return to origins often demonstrates a kind of romantic
nostalgia which seeks to heal the wounds of alienation by returning to a purer, more innocent and naive source which represents a kind of dreaming innocence in which the complexities of analytical thought are healed by a more direct appeal to immediate experience. We would be mistaken, however, if we were to read the revival of Rennaissance humanism in this way. The textual traditions of Greek thought, to the contrary, represented for the Rennaissance and the Reformation not a naive return to simple immediate experience but rather an objective way of thinking which called into question much of the Christian tradition. Brian Stock has shown that the tradition in Western Christianity for many centuries was to an overwhelming extent dominated by oral criteria (1972). Thus, when we see the rise in the humanistic concern for a return ad fontes, such should be viewed not as a naive return to a purer and more innocent time, but rather a return to a way of thinking which represents a more philosophical and objective way of assessing the Christian experience.

If Rennaissance and Reformation humanism was in fact based on this project of a return to a more critical and objective orientation for evaluating the oral assumptions of traditional Christianity, then it would behoove us to examine Greek textuality in light of the cultural circumstances in which it first arose. According to E. A. Havelock, the rise of philosophical thinking epitomized in the thought of Plato represents a radical break with the inherited norms of oral thinking within early Greek society (1963: 197-214). According to Havelock, the cognitive possibilities created by the advent of writing, and thus of textuality, allowed for an objective viewpoint which represented an extreme challenge to the oral way of life characteristic of the Greek world before the invention of the alphabet.
If we are properly to assess the dynamics of the objective viewpoint of Greek thought as seen in its Renaissance and Reformation revival, we must first understand its importance within the cultural network where it first appeared. Here we are thrown into the arena of a great deal of scholarship which is relatively novel. The year 1963 is in many ways a watershed in this regard. In that year we witness the publication of Havelock's groundbreaking study, *A Preface to Plato*, in which he examines the implications of the transition from oral to written in the Greek setting. Havelock set out to explore the enigma of Plato's rejection of the poets in the *Republic*. Greek poetry, especially epic poetry, has enjoyed a revered status in Western literature. Thus, it has always been a problem to understand why Plato would reject a part of his own tradition which has been practically sacrosanct in the West. Havelock's answer to this question depends to a large extent on understanding the role which oral poetry played in the society of ancient Greece.

The discovery of the dynamics of oral poetry came as a result of the initial research of Milman Parry into the question of the authorship of the Homeric epics. While the ancient world had assumed that Homer was the single author of the epics, this assumption came to be challenged as the historical-critical method gained ascendancy in scholarship. A close, analytical reading of the texts revealed an overwhelming degree of redundancy and repetition which suggested that the author of the epics could not have been the same person. The rationale was that the same person would not have continued to reiterate material which had already been treated in a previous episode. Akin to this problem was the fact that certain descriptive phrases were repeated over and over again in similar
contexts. Such repetitions, while they may not directly indicate that the
authorship was plural, nevertheless show that epic language, for whatever
reason, did not follow the creative norms of literate traditions. Literate
standards of creativity demand that the artist be innovative and fresh, like
Alexander Pope's definition of the good poet, who is one who writes what
was often thought but never so well expressed. What Parry's research began
to reveal was, to the contrary, that the poet in ancient Greece had an entirely
different role from modern poets and that his language was indicative of
that role.

Parry's research led him to investigate the modern counterpart to the
early oral bard (1933: 179-197). His work in this area revealed that the oral
bard spoke a formulaic language which more or less provided him with the
means to perform for hours on end. In other words, the oral bard has in his
repertoire stock phrases and episodes which assist memory and allow him
to string together long narratives. The results of this early research pointed
to the fact that oral poetry utilized mnemonic devices, repetition, rhythm,
formulaic phrases, and rhetorical devices such as the simile, chiasmus and
synchysis as a means of assisting the memory of the bard.

Havelock used the research of Parry to advance further conclusions
about the nature of oral poetry within its cultural setting. Havelock
discovered that, in addition to what seems to be merely entertainment, oral
poetry provided a definite cultural function (1963: 165-193). Literary
highbrows are often impatient with the long discussions in Homer which
seem to be merely instructional. Long passages on how to navigate a ship,
hold an assembly, or even to prepare a meal seem to have little artistic value
from the modern literary perspective. However, as Havelock has shown,
such passages may very well stand near the heart of oral poetry. Havelock has constructed a biological model for oral societies which suggests that the oral reserve of information is, on a cultural level, similar to the genetic code in a living cell (Havelock, 1978: 10-11). Just as the cell is programmed to ensure the survival of the organism, so oral poetry served to store cultural and technical information which guaranteed the survival of the tribe. In oral societies, there is no possibility to write down information useful for the survival of the community. Rather, such information had to find its way into the collective memory of the tribe (Havelock, 1978: 38). To ensure the recollection of vital information, it was necessary that such information be repeated in a form that would assist the memory. In this regard, it is easy to understand the role of oral poetry as a means for ensuring the survival of information which was vital to the maintenance of the community. Information had to be recorded in the form of oral poetry if it was to remain a part of the oral culture. Furthermore, the nature of such encoding demanded that all information should be memorable. In other words, the poet must perform in such a way that an identification takes place between the speaker, the information, and the audience. Such information was not limited to technical knowledge but included as well the behavior of the members of the oral society. Thus, the oral project had a twofold thrust: both to encode practical knowledge and to promote a type of ethos which was considered to be useful for the survival of the tribe. Havelock notes that "a culture must have an archetypal linguistic statement which preserves the identity of the tribe and makes it function. In oral cultures this is done through poetry." (Havelock, 1963: 41)

In order to facilitate the retention of cultural information, the oral
performance had to be engaging. It had to be aesthetically pleasing to find its way into the collective memory. To effect this process of memorization, a kind of identification had to take place between the speaker and his audience (Havelock, 1963: 45). "Any poetized statement must be designed and recited in such a way as to make it a kind of drama within the soul both of the reciter and hence also of the audience" (Havelock, 1978: 45). Such dynamics lead to an oral synthesis in which a complete indentification is obtained between the message and its audience. In societies conditioned by textuality and printing the word is normally conceived as a sign which points to some objective reality which may be divorced from the word itself. No such dichotomy is in evidence in the oral situation. Rather, the signifier is directly linked to the signified so that the hearer is led through the dynamics of the oral performance into a direct link with the content of the oral message. Frawley has termed this the iconic stage of language when words appear to have the power to convey the presence of the signified (1987: 4-5).

Havelock has noted that the dynamics of oral presentation suggest that the medium of the message is as important as the message itself (1978: 38-39). Thus, we may conjecture that the type of material which finds its way into the collective memory is that which is best suited for oral delivery. Kelber has noted that such may be the explanation for the continued presence in orality of heroic figures (Kelber, 1983: 51). Because their actions are extraordinary, they tend to be encoded into the oral memory. This selective screening of information in orality brings us to Havelock's concern that in an oral society aesthetics may in fact be more important than ontology. What can be artfully said is more important than the truth.
This concern with the aesthetics of the oral performance leads inevitably to what Havelock terms a lack of objectivity in oral societies: "poetic memorization could be purchased only at the price of a total loss of objectivity" (1963: 45). Such a state of mind consists in the "chief obstacle to scientific rationalism, to the use of analysis, to the classification of experience, to its rearrangement in sequence of cause and effect" (Havelock, 1963: 47). Thus, the audience in an oral performance through the use of oral rhetoric tends to be swept up into an emotional and sensual reaction which inhibits objectivity. In such a setting, the effects of the oral performance tend to be overwhelming, almost physiological. Indeed, Havelock has suggested that the pleasure derived from the oral performance is not unrelated to erotic impulses thus emphasizing the sensual locus of oral dynamics (1963: 152).

Walter Ong has provided a useful summary of the dynamics of the oral setting. It will be worthwhile for our purposes to review Ong's summary. First of all, Ong has noted the characteristically additive rather than subordinative mode of expression in oral communication (1982: 37). This is the recently recognized triumph of the conjunction 'and' in oral modes of expression. In William Frawley's study, *Text and Epistemology*, he has statistically noted the connection between the use of subordination in syntactic arrangement and the rise of textuality with its concomitant possibilities for abstraction (1987: 96). It is this possibility of abstraction which thus leads to a subordination of one thought to another. Orality, in its preference for the collective storing of knowledge, tends rather to link ideas without any kind of subordinative linguistic qualifiers which serve to relate and evaluate one idea with respect to another. In the *Genesis* account of
creation Ong has pointed out this additive tendency in a passage of the Bible which most scholars will acknowledge is a residual piece of oral composition later incorporated into a textual fixation but essentially, in its original formulation, very much a part of the oral life world. There, Ong notes a preponderance of 'ands' successively linking the acts of God without respect to the qualifying notions inherent in subordinating conjunctions (1982: 37). The preponderance of additive composition is, of course, not to be found exclusively in the early Hebrew creation stories, but is rather a standard feature of oral composition. A similar observation may be made with respect to the Homeric epics in which the overwhelmingly paratactic structure favors the linking coordinating conjunction of the various Homeric words for 'and'. Distinctly lacking is the sophisticated use of subordinate clauses which utilize the complex verbal modes of the subjunctive and optative forms. Rather, the epic style serves to link rather than subordinate a train of ideas in its narrative composition. Subordination requires a perspective based on a certain degree of abstraction and objectivity which are lacking in the paratactic grammar of oral speech.

Closely connected to this first characteristic of oral expression is Ong's observation that oral style is aggregative rather than analytic (1982: 38). Once again, we see the prevailing tendency of oral composition to add to, rather than to abstract from, a string of events. "The elements of orally based thought and expression tend to be not so much simple integers as clusters of integers, such as parallel terms of phrases or clauses, epithets. Oral folk prefer... not the soldier, but the brave soldier; not the princess, but the beautiful princess; not the oak, but the sturdy oak. Oral expression thus carries a load of formularily baggage which high literacy rejects as
cumbersome and tiresomely redundant because of its aggregative weight" (1982: 38). This tendency toward an aggregative style thus reflects orality’s essentially non-analytic nature in which various attributes and epithets are not subordinated to larger issues of the complexity of characterization. As Ong has indicated, the time necessary to pause for analysis would tend to disrupt the smooth continuity of the oral performance which depends on a quick and immediate response on the part of the audience. "Without a writing system, breaking up thought—that is, analysis— is a high risk procedure" (Ong, 1982: 39).

The next characteristic of oral composition noted by Ong is that of redundancy (1982: 39). In contrast to writing which establishes an external line of continuity in which the reader, should his concentration be broken, may refer back to the text to re-establish this line of continuity, the oral performance must rely on the direct assimilation of the narrative’s vital elements of information. Taking into account the acoustical difficulties in establishing a linear form of continuity, the oral setting requires a high degree of repetition to ensure the assimilation of key information. In addition, the dynamics of the oral performance are such that a break in the narrative would be inadvisable for the flow of the performance, so that repetition allowed for the bard both to reinforce what had already been said and to think about what he would say next. Thus, the repetitive style of Homer, far from being a violation of artistic norms, was seen as a standard feature of oral composition. We may also suggest that the lack of linearity was not simply due to a demand on the part of the acoustical medium to reinforce information but was due to the lack of distancing which writing creates. A strict chronological narrative is something that is only possible
once distance and abstraction are available through the externalization of the written medium. We may thus note that almost all epic poetry begins *in medias res* with a strict attention to chronology noticeably lacking. Literary critics have traditionally remarked that this technique of dropping the reader *in medias res* is an artistic device which heightens the interest and attention of the reader. It may very well, on the contrary, have been the result of a temporally limited perspective which is characteristic of oral thinking in general.

Ong’s next characteristic of orality is one which has been hinted at all along, namely that oral societies tend to be for reasons of self preservation and the preservation of a communal identity, conservative or traditionalist. "Since in a primary oral culture conceptualized knowledge that is not repeated aloud soon vanishes, oral societies must invest great energy in saying over and over again what has been learned arduously over the ages. This need establishes a highly traditionalist or conservative set of mind that with good reason inhibits intellectual experimentation" (Ong, 1982: 41). The repetition of practical information vital to the survival of a community had to be reiterated to remain dynamic and functional. Insofar as innovation represented a threat to the tried and true proven methods of the oral heritage, it was looked upon with scorn and thus greatly inhibited. As already noted, the conservative tendency extends beyond the preservation of accepted modes of technical operation in terms of the pragmatic concerns of daily life. There was as well a strong drive toward the preservation of the communal ethos with its accepted modes of behavior. In oral societies, this concern over the preservation of a type of social ethos is generally exhibited in the preponderance of oral maxims or proverbs which, in a highly
memorable form, preserve the conventional wisdom of the community, a wisdom which stresses prudence, caution and the shunning of innovations which threaten the existence of the functional harmony of the oral society (Havelock, 1978: 27). It is interesting to note this conservative aspect in some strands of wisdom literature which stresses the conventional wisdom of the community confirming the values of the community and shunning dangerous departures in prescribed patterns of behavior.

Ong's next characteristic of the oral situation is that its operates close to the human life world (1982: 42). All information is thus related to some context of concrete and immediate experience. The ethical norms of oral societies are always couched in a specific event close to the world of immediate experience. In epic poetry, this tendency can be seen in the manifold use of similes which serve to make unfamiliar situations familiar. Something foreign is always compared to something within the range of immediate experience so that it can be readily assimilated into the oral psyche. Argumentation, therefore, never rises to the level of abstraction but is always tied directly to immediate experience as the final arbiter of disputes. In this sense, case law and precedents have their origins in the oral preference for a direct appeal to tangible situations. Indeed, Brian Stock and Heiko Oberman have both traced the origins of canon law in the Middle Ages to its roots in the oral practice of deciding disputes in which oral precedents based on previous experience served as the basis for arbitration (Stock,1983; Oberman, 1963). Methods of instruction in the early Greek situation, as well as the non-literate world of the Middle Ages, tended to be experiential and performative. Such practical instruction most often took place in the master-pupil or apprentice relationship in which emphasis was
placed on practical experience acquired through the close scrutiny and hands on instruction of an oral master. Knowledge was thus not considered to be a form of abstraction and subsequent application but rather was directed toward the mimetic process of duplicating the skill of the master.

Ong next notes the agonistical tone of oral discourse. (1981: 43) This may be due to several factors. As note previously, Werner Kelber has observed that "the oral medium displays little grasp of the prosaic nature of ordinary life. What it remembers is not the ordinary occurrence, but what is in some sense extraordinary" (1983: 51). In this regard, we may note that oral poetry, in addition to its role as the preserver of the collective knowledge of the society, was also the primary means of entertainment. Thus, while the collective knowledge of the community was largely embedded in the oral norms of formulaic speech, the bard had also to entertain his audience. That is, the collective values of the society embedded in the oral repertoire had to be further validated in the context of amusement and entertainment which captured the attention of its audience. This was most pragmatically achieved in the context of the agonistic struggles of the epic hero. The epic hero who embodied all the values of the oral society was cast as the protagonist in dramatic struggles with his adversaries in which the drama of the survival of the oral norms were seen as pitted against the inferior values of his opponent.

Orality, therefore, has a tendency to reduce all conflicts to the arena of the black and white in which the good guy is readily and without question discerned and accepted. The agonistic mentality is one which Ong argues can be detected in almost any situation in which orality has survived. In connection with this, Ong notes the tradition of name calling in the black
ghettos as well as in other predominantly non-literate societies in which disputes tend to be directly confrontational and subject to the rules of the insult (1982: 44). Ong has argued that most, if not all, of the agonistic struggles of simple heroes whether in ancient Greece or in the modern day cowboy are the residue of an oral mentality. Indeed, it has been noted that in societies which are predominantly literate that the locus of argumentation tends to shift from the personal element to abstract issues (Ong, 1982: 44). In orality, all issues are personal and direct involving the oral hero's entire ethos as it has been embodied in his community. Thus, all threats to the individual involve much more, namely the threat to his entire community by which his own identity is established. This agonistic dimension of the epic hero is one which we have already mentioned in connection with the propaganda displayed on the broadsheets in the Lutheran movement in which, I have argued, Luther fulfills the role of epic hero supplanting the traditional role of the saints in that capacity. Indeed, the black and white polarity in which the broadsheets were cast tends to affirm this hypothesis and to point to the oral orientation of much of the Lutheran movement in terms of its acceptance among the non-literate masses.

Closely tied to the phenomenon of the agonistic struggle is the next category treated by Ong in which he asserts that the oral audience tends to be empathetic and participatory rather than objectively and emotionally distanced. "For an oral culture learning or knowing means achieving close, empathetic, communal identification with the known. Writing separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for 'objectivity', in the sense of personal disengagement or distancing" (Ong, 1982: 45-46). In this sense, all reactions on the part of the audience are wrapped up in the
communal response elicited by the oral performance in which the listener is not afforded the hermeneutical opportunity for intellectual abstraction; rather, he is encouraged by the communal nature of the performance into a complete identification, and thus empathy, with the oral hero. Ong notes that "the individual's reaction is not expressed as simply individual or 'subjective' but rather as encased in the communal reaction, the communal 'soul"' (Ong, 1982: 46). Texts, on the other hand, allow for a kind of emotional distancing that is not possible in the oral setting.

The dynamics of the oral situation thus favor a state which Ong has termed homeostatic (1982: 46). In the oral synthesis, words tend to be restricted to one primary meaning which is readily discerned in the context of the oral performance. This is not to suggest that perceptions on the part of the audience are absolutely uniform, or that there is in actuality a one to one correspondence between message given and message received. However, in the oral setting there is the perception that this is so. Different shades of meaning and lexical variation in general are something which Ong and Frawley have demonstrated is only possible once a culture reaches a degree of textuality (Frawley, 1987: 15). Indeed, the signal that such a stage has been attained is clearly marked by the advent of dictionaries in which various meanings can be recorded and to which they may be referred. Such a state of textuality is thus characterized by the emergence of hermeneutical activity in which the meaning of words embedded in texts must be subjected to the hermeneutical activity of deciphering the precise meaning of units of thought based on the use of hermeneutical tools, particularly the dictionary, although the externalization of grammatical and syntactic rules in the form of grammar books would be a corollary of the dictionary. Thus, in the
homeostatic situation of the oral setting, words are immediately discerned in the context of their oral medium. In this setting, there is a particular emphasis on the present. Indeed, it can be argued that oral societies in general operate almost entirely within the temporal domain of the present. As mentioned earlier in connection with the veneration of the oral epic hero and ancestral worship, the figures of the past are felt to be dynamically influential within the present situation. Oral societies thus have little or no concept of the past as distant and other. The memory of the past is kept alive through the oral medium in which all speech has this "presenting" quality. Likewise, insofar as orality is unable through abstraction and distanciation to view the past as past, there is a concomitant lack of a concern for the future. Oral presence is, therefore, an all encompassing dimension in the communal setting and thus limits any kind of abstraction that can view time as an external continuum in which the present may be placed in the context of preceding circumstances and the future can be viewed as the logical result of the potentiality of the present. The issue of presence has recently emerged as a very tricky issue in the philosophical and linguistic work of Jacque Derrida (1974). Derrida has shown that a residual concern for oral presence and a longing to return to the oral synthesis in which all divisions are merged into a metaphysically undifferentiated unity which ignores time is the chief flaw in the history of metaphysics in the West.

We will later take into serious consideration Derrida's critique of Western metaphysics and theology. For now, it will suffice to note that the issue of presence is currently a very important one which may, in fact, have its roots in a psychologically conditioned, unconscious desire nostalgically to
return to a state of undifferentiated unity not unlike Paul Tillich's category of dreaming innocence (1957: 29-30). Orality thus has a dynamic involvement with, and orientation toward, the present. Writing and textuality in general, insofar as they create hermeneutical distance, tend to complicate and defer the notion of presence. The issue of presence and absence in the Reformation, particularly as these categories apply to Eucharistic presence, I will later argue boiled down to a fundamental conflict between oral and textual ontologies, the former opting for presence the latter absence as the true arena for understanding the relation of the eucharistic elements to the ascended, absent body of Christ.

Ong's final category regarding the nature of oral societies is that they tend on the whole to reason and think situationally rather than abstractly (1982: 49). Here Ong's assumptions have been thoroughly documented in the twentieth century by the Soviet psychologist, A. R. Luria, whose research into the cognitive strategies of non-literate Soviet peasants has rendered significant conclusions. The oral mind, insofar as it is tied directly to the experiential world, is not able to abstract itself from the dimension of the concrete (Luria, 1976: 48-99). As noted earlier, orality always creates meaning through a direct appeal to present experience. To assist the memory, information often is presented in the context of a dramatic event. Thus, the oral mind thinks only in situational categories. Luria's research among the non-literate peasants focused on situations in which the oral mind was set the tasks of simple reasoning through conceptual categorization. The non-literate subjects identified shapes by giving them names of things which were the closest experiential equivalent. A circle was a plate or a bucket but was never assigned the geometrically abstract category of circle, even after
the concept had been explained to them. Likewise, a series of objects were presented in which the subject was asked to identify the one which did not fit, for example, a hammer, a saw, a block of wood, and a hatchet. Rather than think in terms of the common abstraction of tools and thereby rule out the block of wood as the object which did not fit in the series, the oral subject would, on the other hand, reconstruct a narrative situation in which all the items were made to be related. The tools were seen as necessary to build something out of the wood. In this way, all elements were made to fit together through the use of situational, as opposed to abstract, reasoning. In terms of the oral origins of early Greek notions of justice, Havelock (1978) has noted this same tendency toward situational thinking. Standards of justice in the early Greek oral setting were always concretely situational rather than formally conceptualized categories (Havelock, 1978: 233-248). In Luria’s research, once the subjects acquired even minimal literacy, they were able to perform limited tasks of abstraction with relative ease, thus affirming the thesis that the oral mind is severely restricted when it comes to the tasks of abstract reasoning. This kind of abstract reasoning was in fact one of the first things to emerge in the Greek world once the Greek language had been externalized through the creation of the alphabet.

Ong’s summary is the result of a high degree of compilation of research into the nature of the oral setting much of which can be attributed to the intiial work of Havelock concerning the transition from orality to literacy in ancient Greece. In concluding this summary, we must emphasize that perhaps the most important observation concerning oral societies is the practical non-existence of the concept of the individual. In the oral setting, the audience is encouraged to identify completely with the oral performance
in which are embedded all of the cultural norms. The oral synthesis must, therefore, be viewed as a communal activity in which all of the members of the oral community are participants. Furthermore, insofar as the reaction of the audience is itself a communal one, the role of independent hermeneutical activity is minimal. The efficacy of the oral performance is based on an unquestioning identification between the message, speaker, and his audience. Such an identification is not based on the hermeneutical distancing of the hearer from the speaker. In keeping with orality's preference for the homeostatic bond, the chief goal in such a setting is always the conformity of behavior. Individual departure from inherited norms is always shunned. Thus, we can see that in an oral society, the individual is always viewed in a subordinate role. His/her identity is obtained only in the context of the community not by idiosyncratic behavior. This is further reinforced by the nature of the oral performance itself in which the individual is enticed into a complete identification between himself and the oral performance. Through such a process of identification, the member of an oral society is less inclined to think of him/herself as an autonomous unit than part of a collective identity which shares a cultural basis in which unity is the primary objective and in which individuality is considered a threat.

Once language becomes externalized through the objective medium of writing, then the dynamics of orality are severely altered. Writing tends to create the objectivity of the reader. No longer dependent on a communal response, the reader is thrown into the arena of individual interpretation. The individual in the context of the written word must do for him/herself what the oral bard had done in the oral arena. Meaning and interpretation
are now decided by the individual in isolation from the tribe. Thus, we may observe that, when writing made its debut in Greek society, there was a concomitant shift away from communal response toward the validity of the individual as linguistic hermeneut. We can, therefore, begin to see the advent of individuality. Writing forces the reader into a context in which he or she alone must decide the validity of the written message. No longer able to rely on the group reaction to an oral message, the individual must now evaluate written statements on a basis other than the oral synthesis. This externalized and objective dimension created by the alphabet came to represent a direct challenge to the authority of oral speech. In oral societies, the bard claims an unquestioned authority as a didactic promoter of oral norms. Writing, on the other hand, tends to challenge such authority in favor of the objectivity of the individual.

In the history of Greek philosophy, this simple shift can be observed even as early as Thales. Thales was the first of the Greek philosophers to endeavor to come up with an objective explanation to natural phenomena (Copleston, 1962: 38-42). While his conclusion that water was the basis for material reality is now considered grossly obsolete, nevertheless, his basic modus operandi is one which has remained unchallenged in Western science. In the case of Thales, we can clearly detect the assumption that the individual has the interpretive skill to arrive at an objective explanation for the workings of reality. Such a skill does not depend, as in the oral arena, on the authority of the speaker but rather on the objective observer who operates in a context which is detached from oral authorities. Regardless of whatever erroneous conclusion at which he may have arrived, nevertheless, Thales is the first example in Greek history of an appeal to a power other
than oral. Thales' observations are not based on inherited norms but on the observations of an individual who has access to an objective form of representation, writing, which creates the objective distance necessary for scientific evaluation regardless of the primitive nature of the conclusions.

While it is possible to say that writing creates objectivity and allows for a critical orientation vis-a-vis the oral synthesis, nevertheless, we may also observe that writing creates alienation. In the case of Thales, we may observe that the breakdown in trust regarding traditional answers to the universe was viewed by him not as an obstacle but an opportunity, still that was not the universal reaction to such a breakdown. We must remember that the oral synthesis provided a comprehensive answer to almost every aspect of human life. Thus, when, in the case of writing, such answers are put to the test, the phenomenon of alienation is very often the response. When oral norms break down and are called into question, we can observe that, in spite of figures like Thales, the usual response was one of loss. The breakdown of the oral synthesis thus often created a vacuum. Orally conditioned audiences who had lost confidence in the traditional forms of orality were often thrown into a secondary project which sought to replace the kind of synthesis characteristic of orality while not ignoring the alienation produced by textuality.

Such a phenomenon can be observed in the case of the Pythagoreans. Pythagoras is usually afforded a prominent place in the history of Greek thought because of his mathematical achievements. However, there is another side to the Pythagorean issue which we must address in our consideration of the effects of writing on the oral mentality. W. K. C. Guthrie has observed that for Pythagoras things are numbers (1975: 15-16). On the
surface, it would appear that the Pythagoreans are promoting a system of rationality and objectivity, insofar as they held this almost religious awe of numbers. The key here, however, may perhaps be the notion of religious awe. The fact that numbers retained this numinous quality in fact suggests that the distancing factor we saw in its embryonic stage in Thales might not necessarily have been continued in the case of the Pythagoreans. Guthrie has suggested that the Pythagorean dictum that things are numbers indicates a view of language that is not that different from the dynamics of orality. Guthrie has discussed in some detail the early assumption in the Greek mind that things are connected to their names. In other words, the reality of a thing is intimately associated with its name. Naming a thing can thus evoke the reality of the thing. Using Frawley's categories, we would suggest that this is part and parcel of the iconic stage of language characteristic of orality in which there is no dichotomy between the word and its concrete referent. Guthrie argues that this view of language remained a significant factor in Pythagorean philosophy in spite of its seemingly rational approach to mathematics. However, we cannot ignore the fact that at the time of the Pythagoreans, writing was beginning to transform the inherited oral mentality. Thus, in the case of the Pythagoreans, we see a conscious attempt to cling to an aspect of early Greek linguistic culture which was more and more falling under a critical eye as writing began to create distance between the old view of language and an emerging textuality.

That the Pythagoreans gathered together into communities which emphasized not just the study of numbers but an entire way of life further suggests that an attempt was being made to re-create some lost or declining aspect of Greek culture. If the oral world was undergoing a challenge due to
the advent of writing, then we may easily postulate the presence of alienation and cultural loss. What we may observe in the Pythagorean community was an attempt to restore or return to the oral synthesis. Certain features of the community indicate that the oral word continued to be viewed as the arena of authentic language.

One may detect in the Pythagoreans an early form of mysticism. Many of the sayings attributed to Pythagoras are very cryptic and seem to refer to a kind of ritualism and superstition. In spite of the fact that the sayings of Pythagoras were written down, it is clear that the only domain in which they could be properly understood was that of the oral community and in the presence of an oral master. Part of the mystical side to the Pythagorean view is undoubtedly to be seen in their notion of the soul. The soul for the Pythagorean was immortal and subject to transmigration (Copleston, 1962: 47). The soul had an intimate link to the divine, and the material world seems to have been shunned in a kind of ascetic, perhaps gnostic, rejection. Furthermore, the soul is to be understood not in terms of individuality but rather as a sort of cosmic unity with which the individual must merge. As in orality, the notion of individuality seems to have been non-existent in the Pythagorean cosmology.

While Pythagoreanism is clearly not the same as primary orality, we may observe many common features. The notion that language has an intimate association with reality, things are numbers, is certainly a holdover from orality. In addition, the notion of soul as an undifferentiated unity is parallel to the distinct lack of individuality in orality. The difference appears to be that, in the case of the Pythagoreans, the growth of asceticism and distrust of the physical world perhaps is indicative of a growing sense of
isolation and alienation which must be healed by the restoration of unity found in the oral word and in the community of initiates. Thus, in embryonic form we can begin to see a pattern emerging which suggests that writing did not always lead to the kind of individuality and diversification which is characteristic of textual thinking but rather created a kind of alienation and loss which prompted a desire to return to an oral synthesis in which such alienation is overcome. As we progress in this discussion, we will see that this tendency towards a mysticism which emphasizes undifferentiated unity continues to show itself in times of alienation and the breakdown of the oral synthesis. While Havelock has shown the cognitive possibilities created by writing, we may suggest that this darker side of the effects of writing is virtually ignored by him.

On the other hand, a nostalgic desire for a return to the oral synthesis was not always the case. As we saw in the case of Thales, writing was seen as a cognitive vehicle for a more comprehensive and objective view of the world. In cases where textuality was viewed in these terms, we may witness an almost hostile view of oral thinking. Rather than seeking to restore orality in the wake of alienation, such a view tended to see orality's demise as a positive step in the progress of philosophical thought. Such hostility toward the oral mentality can be seen in the case of Heraclitus.

Heraclitus wrote in aphorisms. In orality, aphorisms are used to embody short, memorable sayings which usually contain some bit of conventional wisdom which reflects the collective values of the community (Havelock, 1978: 27-29). One would assume that, insofar as Heraclitus employed this genre, he was in harmony with the oral viewpoint. However, even a cursory glance at his aphorisms reveals quite the opposite. Far from
confirming conventional wisdom, the sayings of Heraclitus are extremely enigmatic and unconventional aimed rather at the deconstruction of conventional wisdom than its confirmation. Heraclitus said of Homer: "He should be turned out of the lists and whipped" (Frag. 42). Such a view of the most revered authority in oral Greece was certainly not conventional for his day. Heraclitus, then, seems to use orality against itself in a parabolic fashion.

Another feature indicative of Heraclitus' view of language can be observed in his admonition "listen not to me but to my logos" (Frag. 50) What is interesting about this saying in terms of the orality question is the fact that Heraclitus sees himself in a role far different than that of the oral bard. We noted earlier that the dynamics of oral delivery tend to create an undifferentiated unity between the speaker and his message. It was virtually impossible in the oral setting to divorce meaning from the oral performance itself. Heraclitus instructs us, however, to make the attempt to divorce ourselves from the speaker and to look rather to the content of the message. The view of the logos here is far different than the epic epos in that Heraclitus sees the logos as an objective reference point which should not be confused with the personality of the speaker. This separation of meaning from the speaker is the opposite of the view of language we saw operative either in the oral community or in the case of the Pythagoreans. Furthermore, it suggests the autonomy of the individual in hermeneutical matters. Each person is seen as having access to an objective logos which does not depend upon a communal, oral setting and an authoratative, muse-inspired bard but upon individual reflection.

This notion of individuality in Heraclitus can be seen in what may be
termed an incipient nominalism which sees reality as linked to the world of particulars and plurality. In the case of the Pythagoreans, we saw a project which, in stressing the unity of soul and the rejection of the plural world of the senses, indicates a desire to privilege unity over individuality. In Heraclitus, however, we see a celebration of diversity and individuality. Heraclitus argues that differentiation, separation, and distinction, even alienation, are integral factors in the unity of being. The unity of being is only to be understood as a tension between opposites. For Heraclitus, there is no flight from alienation but an incorporation of alienation into the fabric of the universe. Here, we may discern a connection between textuality and an appreciation for diversity, individuality, and alienation as the dynamics for the unity of reality. Such a concept of unity is far different from the undifferentiated unity of orality or that of mysticism.

Perhaps the most important saying of Heraclitus with regard to the shift in language from oral to written can be observed in his comment on the role of the God, Apollo, at the Delphic oracle. In that connection, he says that "the oracle neither utters nor hides its meaning, but shows it by a sign" (Frag. 93) This is not the place to discuss the role of the Delphic oracle in the history of orality-literacy questions. However, it is very interesting that Heraclitus in this saying regards the function of language as semiotic, a question of signs. In orality, language is not understood as a system of signs. Rather, words appear to convey the presence of the reality to which they refer. Only in some stage of textual development can we begin to see language understood as a sign system which points to, but does not embody, the reality to which it refers. All of this suggests that Heraclitus was perhaps the first Greek thinker to incorporate the dynamics of writing and
textuality into a new understanding of ontology and language. Furthermore, such a view emerges as openly hostile to the limited perspective of orality.

We noted earlier that the philosophical and hermeneutical possibilities created by writing were not always employed. The case of Pythagoras is perhaps a good example of a situation in which the alienation created by the advent of writing led to a secondary orality akin to mysticism. A more refined attempt to restore the unity of the oral synthesis, however, can be seen in the case of Parmenides. In contrast to Heraclitus, who saw diversity as a prerequisite for any talk of unity, Parmenides denied change and plurality on the grounds that they were purely an illusion (Copleston, 1962: 65). For Parmenides, being is a unity without distinction, and furthermore, it is absolutely present everywhere. This emphasis on ubiquity and indistinct unity in the case of being has much in common with orality. On the one hand, such an emphasis is sceptical of plurality, diversity, change, alienation and individuality. On the other hand, it stresses plenary presence with regard to being. Such plenary presence is, as we have seen, characteristic of orality in which there is understood to be no separation between the signifier and the signified. As noted, in orality there is a distinct orientation toward the present. Writing creates distance and objectivity. In the oral setting, we noted a lack of concern for a historical perspective in favor of the ubiquitous presence accessible through the oral word.

As in the case of the Pythagoreans, we cannot assume a simple orality in Parmenides, but rather a secondary project to assert the unity and presence of being in the face of what is obviously some sort of breakdown of the oral synthesis and the advent of alienation. We may also note that Parmenides wrote in hexameter verse, exactly the genre of Homer. And like
Homer and all oral bards, he asserts that the Muse is speaking through him in a relationship which denies the individuality of the author in favor of an allegorized, mythical God of oral authority (Frag. 1).

Our discussion up to this point suggests that the conclusions of Havelock regarding the breakdown of the oral synthesis were already present in some form even before the more systematic philosophy of Plato. Equally important for our purposes is to underscore the fact that such a breakdown of the oral synthesis did not always culminate in a thoroughgoing textuality. We have seen in the case of Pythagoras and Parmenides a project which, in the face of alienation, sought to restore some secondary access to the undifferentiated unity of the oral synthesis. Furthermore, we may note on a larger cultural scale that oral poetry continued to be a vital feature of Greek culture even as literacy became the norm. It is this continued attachment to oral poetry in fifth century Athens that will now be the focus of our discussion. Here, we must consider in greater detail Havelock's Preface to Plato. As we have noted, Havelock's main purpose in writing the book was to solve the problem posed in the Republic by Plato's rejection of the poets. In the Republic, Plato has given a picture of the ideal philosophical state in which the goals of a philosophically ordered society may be best attained. In considering the education of the young and the entertainment of the adults, Plato has, quite enigmatically to modern audiences, banned the poets from the ideal state, insofar as they represent a major obstacle to philosophical thinking (Rep. X, 595-601). Western culture, as we know, has been characterized by an almost idolatrous worship of Greek literature, particularly Greek poetry and chief among the poets Homer himself. Thus, it has been a perennial problem in classical scholarship to
understand Plato's denigration of what has proved to be the hallmark of Western literature.

However, after considering the nature of the oral setting and the mindset of the oral audience, we are now in a better position to understand Plato's growing scepticism toward the entire poetic tradition which was the product of early oral Greek culture. As we have noted, even after the dark ages of the Homeric period had subsided into a more urban setting in which the rise of the city state as over against the tribal structure of early Greek society had occurred, the Greeks continued to revere their oral poetic heritage. Even when the technical knowledge embedded in the oral tradition ceased to have practical application in the growing urban setting in which Athens was well on its way to attaining new methods of productivity through inter-cultural exchange and commercial trade, still the oral poetic heritage served as the chief means to an aristocratic education and the preservation of the oral ethos. After the invention of the alphabet and the externalization of language, there was, nevertheless, an inherently conservative clinging to the older values characteristic of the epic world. Thus, the entire poetic tradition which was subsequently subjected to written form continued to operate as the chief means of cultural identification for the Greek world. Granted that Greek education more and more began to incorporate the use of letters in its schooling of the young, still the main emphasis was placed on the verbatim memorization of the poetical works which had served as a culturally cohesive binder to Greek society (Havelock, 1963: 157). That is, even as literacy was on the rise, there was a marked preference to maintain the oral norms which had been handed down through generations of oral transmission. The oral aspects of
language, therefore, continued primarily to function as the main arena in which educational activity was conducted. The student in such a setting was not taught logical skills based on abstraction but rather the verbatim retention of the major poets.

On the larger scale, oral poetry, even as it ceased to function as it did in the primary oral setting, still served to entertain Greek adults in the form of dramatic festivals in which we see the role of the dramatist as supplanting the older function of the wandering Homeric bard. Here, we may also observe that the function of the poet was restricted by the demands of his audience for a certain type of poetic release. As noted earlier, the oral performance is chiefly characterized by what has been termed the oral synthesis in which the speaker, audience and content of the performance tend to merge into an undifferentiated unity in which the individual is swept into an emotional state of reception. Havelock has suggested that such oral performances, as they were transformed from the Homeric setting to that of the dramatic festival, served as a significant channel for emotional release and purging (Havelock, 1963: 157). It is not within the realm of our discussion to consider Aristotle's theory of tragedy, but we may note in passing that Aristotle's category of catharsis, or emotional purging, was characteristic of the reaction of the audience. Indeed, we may suggest that as the practical function of the oral performance necessary to communal preservation began to decline as Greek society advanced through intercultural exchange to a level of technical sophistication which made the practical knowledge embedded in oral poetry obsolete, a real psychological need arose to address the problem of alienation which ensued as the result of the breakdown of traditional modes of life and heroic values. Thus, the
genre of tragedy with its highly emotionally charged themes tended to fill the void created by the pressures of change in the Greek setting of the fifth century. Thus, as the advent of literacy and cultural inter-change brought new threats to the continuation of traditional values, the alienation thus created was addressed by the dramatic performance of the festivals held for the competition of the tragedians.

In the oral performance both of epic poetry and tragedy, the same dynamics may be observed to have been operative, namely the passive identification on the part of the audience with emotionally charged dramatic representation in which the audience derived a certain amount of physiological and psychological release from the sensuous aspects of the performance itself. This is not to suggest that Greek tragedy served only this purpose. However, Plato's critique of the poets surely suggests that a high degree of emotional involvement was in evidence in the setting of the oral performance of the tragedies. It was this emotional indulgence which Plato insisted inhibited rational thinking.

Thus, in the Greece of the fifth century B.C., society both in terms of its education and public entertainment was to an overwhelming degree still dominated by an oral perspective. In this setting, the aurally receptive audience was, through the medium of the oral performance, emotionally drawn into an undifferentiated unity. This oral poetic experience served as a psychological safety valve for the pent up tensions created by the alienation resulting from the demise of the oral synthesis brought about both by the advent of writing and by the rapid degree of change which swept through the Greek world after the Persian wars. The rise of alienation in Greek society is in many ways analogous to the breakdown of the
Medieval oral synthesis. In such a setting, both in the Greek world and the world of the Reformation, we may note two significant reactions. One reaction was to seek nostalgically to return to the oral synthesis in the face of alienation created by the rise of textuality and inter-cultural exchange. In the case of fifth century Athens, this can be seen in the tenacious persistence of oral poetry in the educational system, but we have also seen the attempt to restore the unity of orality in the case of mysticism. The other reaction can be characterized as a willingness to incorporate the dynamics of alienation into a cognitive, philosophical, and theological program which sought to use the dynamics of alienation as a means for a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of reality. In the Greek setting, Plato, following the trajectory which begins with Thales and Heraclitus, may be seen to have embraced the challenge of the latter. Indeed, as Havelock has noted, Plato saw the disintegration of the oral synthesis epitomized by the emotionally passive, and hence rationally unreflective, stance of the audience as a positive break which gave rise to the possibility of philosophical thinking (1963: 207).

As noted above, the oral synthesis is for the most part incapable of abstraction and analysis. As Luria discovered, such cognitive skills are only possible once a degree of literacy is attained. Thus, in the Platonic setting, we may note that Plato viewed the disruption of the oral synthesis as a positive force, insofar as the new rise in textuality created the possibility for intellectual abstraction and judgment. Plato's rejection of the poets, as Havelock has shown, must therefore be seen in the light of Plato's general concern for the limited cognitive and epistemological strategies of the oral synthesis.
Havelock has illustrated the continuing persistence well into the fifth century of the conservative tendency of orality by a consideration of the aristocratic values of the Greek comic poet Aristophanes (1963: 158). Aristophanes not only lampooned the new sophistical method of Socrates but in general denigrated the values of the new learning characterized by an emphasis on literacy and writing. Aristophanes thus criticized the new innovations toward literacy as a threatening break with the more traditional methods for the instruction of the young, methods of instruction which placed a significant stress on the oral memorization of those poets in the Greek heritage who best represented the collective values of the older oral ethos. Aristophanes quite rightly saw the advent of the new learning as a significant threat to the traditional locus of authority within societal structures, insofar as the locus of authority was undergoing a shift from the passive retention of the oral norms toward a hermeneutical arena reinforced by literacy. Such an arena viewed the individual as the locus of interpretation and thus the validation of truth and value. The individual came to be seen as prior to the community. That the new learning did in fact create such a disruptive possibility cannot be denied. But it was also the result of this breakdown of traditional norms which Havelock argues made possible the new epistemology and ethical insights of Plato.

As noted earlier, Havelock has demonstrated the situational and concrete nature of the oral Greek society's standards of justice and morality. In that setting, actions were deemed to be just which conformed to pre-established patterns of behavior which were illustrated in the context of concrete precedents. Justice was never elevated to the stature of abstraction in which the verb "to be" could be linked to categorized
predicates (Havelock, 1978: 233-248). Justice was only conceived of in concrete precedents which in their oral formulation directed the attention toward a formulaic narrative concerning a socially accepted, concrete pattern of action and behavior. As the influence of literacy began to invade the oral mentality, Havelock notes a concomitant rise in the use of the copulative verb "to be" in the Greek language. Thus, in the oral setting, we may note a highly restricted use of such verbal dimensions. The traditional use of "to be" in the oral setting tended toward the existential with its emphasis on the concrete. It was only after the advent of literacy and textuality that there began to appear in linguistic usage the verb "to be" as a prediciative copulative link which both created and reinforced categorization and conceptualization. The direction of focus shifted from justice seen as embodied in a particular proverb or narrative to justice conceived as an abstract prediciative category which allowed for such statements as "justice is -." This shift, resulting from the triumph of the verb "to be," Havelock traces directly to the new linguistic possibilities for abstraction and distance created by the advent of the externalization of linguistic phenomena through writing.

The break, therefore, with orality represented for Plato the possibility for a new consideration of values and truth based on categories which transcended oral authority. In contrast to oral authority, these abstract categories became the new focus of attention in the hermeneutical project which saw the individual as the center of interpretation in the analytical evaluation of inherited oral norms.

One of the most important categories for Havelock to emerge from this new shift in hermeneutical issues away from the oral synthesis and toward
the individual was the development of the category of the soul in Platonic anthropology (1963: 197). Havelock sees an important connection between Plato’s notion of the immortal soul and the growing emphasis on the autonomy of the individual. The problem of the immortal soul is, of course, a perennial one in theological circles. Earlier, in the case of the Pythagoreans, we saw the notion of an immortal soul as part of a project which was intimately linked to orality’s predilection for unity and the non-existence of the individual. It is thus interesting to see Havelock suggesting that Plato’s philosophical category of the immortal soul was not one which had its roots in any form of Greek mystery religions such as Orphism or Pythagoreanism, as some have argued, but was the direct result of a new epistemology made possible by the rise in textual thinking (Ricoeur, 1967: 161-174). As we shall see, the concept of soul in Plato proves to be markedly different from the concept of soul in the project of mysticism.

David Klauss, a student of Havelock’s, has studied in depth the notion of the soul before Plato (1981). His research has confirmed Havelock’s hypothesis that the notion of an autonomous, individual, immortal soul is one that is distinctly lacking in the Greek vocabulary before the rise of textual thinking characterized by Platonic anthropology. The key here is the notion of individuality in connection with the immortal soul. Soul in the case of the Pythagoreans was an undifferentiated unity which saw individual existence as a feature of alienation. Again, the oral setting tends toward a passive mode of synthesis between the speaker, the message, and the audience. In terms of the oral performance, the individual is absorbed into the synthesis created by the speaker to the degree that an emotional and subconscious identification is attained between the individual and the collective values of
his oral society reflected in the oral message itself. The demands of the oral society clearly override the need for an autonomous individual, insofar as autonomy and individuality were seen as clear threats to the culturally cohesise harmony of the oral synthesis.

Thus, the concept of the individual as an autonomous entity was one which came into being, according to Havelock, as a result of the distancing factor inherent in textuality. The standards of criteria in hermeneutical matters thus tended to shift away from the oral synthesis toward systematic categorization based on conceptual data that was accesible to the individual through analytical thinking apart from the inherited norms of the oral synthesis.

The doctrine of the immortal, individual soul thus gave validation to the growing shift in hermeneutical authority which placed such authority within the epistemological structure of the individual as over against his society. To attain this complete autonomy, it was necessary to postulate the inherently valid criteria of philosophical judgment within the domain of the faculties of the individual soul. Thus, the individual soul operating in the transcendent arena of the absolute forms was able through the direct access to those transcendent forms to make value judgments for her/himself. Such judgments were based on philosophical evidence held up to the light of the forms as ultimate categories of analysis instead of the passive unreflective categories of immediate acceptance characteristic of the oral setting.

The immortal soul, in terms of its absolute autonomy vis-a-vis oral authority, was seen to have ready access to the philosophical categories necessary for sound philosophical judgment. But the access to those categories was directly related to the possibility of the soul to break with the
oral synthesis and its concomitant emphasis on conservative and unreflective concrete standards of evaluation and justification of inherited norms. Therefore, insofar as Plato's philosophical program was predicated on a shift in final arbitration away from the oral synthesis toward the autonomy of the individual in philosophical hermeneutical reflection, Plato, not unexpectedly repudiated the traditional manner of education which reinforced those older static norms of ethical judgment. The postulation of the immortal, individual soul was, therefore, strategically aimed at a dismantling of the oral locus of authority in favor of an individual locus which looked toward transcendent criteria as the final arbiter in philosophical validation. The notion of the immortal soul thus gave to the Platonic project a stable reorientation which both validated the legitimacy of the individual and at the same time directed the individual toward a transcendent standard for philosophical activity. In this sense, the notion of the immortal soul has both an internal and external dimension, but its external dimension is not directed to the physically external but rather to the trans-temporally external standards of philosophical predication of the forms as those are internally accessible to the individual in philosophical activity. Havelock sums up the shift by noting that, in light of the poetic oral heritage, individuals should learn to "separate themselves from it; they themselves should become the subject who stands apart from the object and reconsiders it and analyses it and evaluates it, instead of just imitating it" (1963: 47).

The problem of the nature of the soul in Platonic thought is a complex one and has a complex history. Religious thinkers of the type of Harnack, but including such recent thinkers as Ricoeur, have tended to see in the
category of the immortal soul in Plato a flight away from the validation of a proper theological understanding of the unity inherent in a Hebraically oriented notion of the essential unity of body and soul (Ricoeur, 1967: 161-171). Looking chiefly at its possible Orphic and Pythagorean origins, Christian theologians have thus tended to equate all Platonic psychic categories with a type of mysticism. Such mysticism seeks to escape body-soul dichotomies in the soul's retreat from the prison of the body in which the soul finds final solace in a return to an undifferentiated unity in which the soul is no longer troubled by somatic concerns. Such a view of the soul sees the body as the source of corruption and as an inhibiting factor in the soul's longing to be free of earthly encumbrances. It would behoove us, therefore, to digress for a moment on the development of the concept of soul in Plato's anthropology.

Charles Partee has noted three distinct stages in Plato's development of the concept of soul (Partee, 1977: 56-58). The earliest stage in the Platonic dialogues is characterized by a strict body-soul dichotomy in which it indeed appears that Plato's notion of soul has much in common with Orphic and Pythagorean mysticism. In a strict body-soul dichotomy, Plato's Socrates emphasizes the tainting results of contact with the body. If only the soul were free from bodily encumbrances, it would be able to participate directly with the world of the forms with which the soul longs to merge as the domain of its authentic home. The body is seen as a prison for the soul and as such appears to be regarded as evil. On the surface, it would appear that such a notion of soul has much in common with Orphic and Pythagorean mysticism and indeed with later gnosticism, insofar as the body is seen as a corrupting influence on the soul. The soul itself is not seen as the primary
agent in the performance of evil. It is only the influence of the body which
entices the soul toward evil acts. To be free from the body is seen, therefore,
as freedom from the sinful desires of the flesh which stand in opposition to
the true psychic enterprise of escape and freedom from bodily concerns.

In an important article, "Psyche as Differentiated Unity in the
Philosophy of Plato," Robert W. Hall has likewise turned his attention to the
complex problem of the soul in the development of Platonic psychology and
anthropology. He notes various stages, as does Partee, in the development of
Plato's doctrine of the soul. Hall, however, argues that, even in this early
stage of Plato's exploration, the problem of a simple undifferentiated soul is
complicated as early as the *Phaedo* which appears to be a classic exposition
of Orphic and Pythagorean psychology (Hall, 1963: 63-65). This complication
arises from Socrates' insistence that it is only the ethical soul that will be set
free from bodily considerations. Thus, unlike the gnostic tendency to ignore
ethical behavior as a limitation of the soul created by bodily existence, even
in the earlier stages of Plato's consideration, the ethical conduct of the
philosopher *vis-a-vis* his body is essential for the life of bliss which follows
the life in the body. It is thus possible for unethical souls to remain
unfulfilled even at death. So, we may conclude that, even in the early
stages of Plato's notion of soul, a simple escape from the body is not
sufficient for happiness in the life hereafter. This alone should give us
reservations for setting Platonic psychology merely within the framework of
mysticism.

Partee next considers the phase in the Platonic development of an
understanding of the soul which appears to be characteristic of the middle
dialogues (1977: 58). Here Plato begins to speak of the soul as a tripartite
structure. The emphasis on ethical conduct leads to an understanding of divisions in the soul which include both the appetitive and passionate element in addition to the rational. Had Plato adhered to the notion of the soul as comprised of the rational only, we would have, as Hall has shown, a clear schema in which the soul was primarily conceived of as an undifferentiated unity akin to the Orphic or Pythagorean understanding of the true nature of the soul (1963: 64). In such a schema, the rational element is seen to be encumbered by bodily concerns which inhibit rational contemplation of the forms. In such a schema, separation from the body would indeed result in a simple return of the rational spark to the over-soul of the universe in which individual activity is swallowed up in the over-soul's unity. Such a unity is marked by its undifferentiated nature in which the concept of the individual is swallowed up in the cosmic sea of the rational over-soul set free from the alienating dimensions of bodily existence.

However, such a simple return to an undifferentiated psychic unity is complicated by Plato's introduction of the tripartite structure of the soul. In the tripartite structure of the soul the concerns of the rational, the appetitive, and the passionate are integral to an overarching concept of soul in which each element is seen to have its particular function in the overall makeup of the soul. Once again, stressing the ethical dimension of psychic conduct, Plato in the middle dialogues focuses rather on the proper harmony of the three functions as the arena for the actualization of psychic health. Therefore, the concerns of either the body and the passions cannot be ignored in the development of the philosophical soul which is the goal of the philosopher in Plato's Republic. Rather, the true philosopher must learn first
to accept, and then to regulate, the demands of each element of the psyche in order to attain psychic health.

As Partee and Hall both indicate, the notion of differentiation becomes a growing concern in the development of Plato's understanding of the soul. There is a marked emphasis on the importance of ethical behavior which does not suggest a flight away from the body so that the soul may retire into the secure union of passive assimilation into a cosmic over-soul; rather, the stress is increasingly on the role of the ethical conduct of the individual as that conduct is carried out on the bodily plan. Plato's focus on the tripartite or differentiated nature of the soul appears to be concomitant with this rise in ethical concerns. The body thus comes to play a vital role in the philosophic life insofar as it is the arena in which the philosopher is to attain the state of psychic harmony which will be continued in the afterlife.

In considering the third and final stage of Plato's development of the notion of soul, both Partee and Hall consider the notion of the soul in the Timaeus in which the soul is described as a principle which brings about cosmic unity. Here, as Hall suggests, there appears to be a reversion to the older Platonic concept of an undifferentiated unity in the nature of the absolute soul (1963: 78-81). However, a careful reading of the Timaeus shows that even here the soul, insofar as it is the locus for the creating of world harmony, must have within its structure not only the concept of identity but that of difference as well. In other words, for the purpose of the actualization of being, the principle of difference must be located within the domain of the soul itself. Thus, even in the Timaeus, Plato cannot be criticized for a notion of soul which favors a simple return to an undifferentiated state which shuns the differentiation characteristic of
somatic existence. The principle of differentiation is already elevated to the level of the psychic, so that differentiation functions as the arena in which psychic actualization occurs. The Platonic soul, therefore, far from having its roots in the trajectory which begins in Pythagoreanism and Orphism and perhaps can be traced right through to gnosticism, is characterized by a unity which is predicated on differentiation and a proper ethical attitude toward the world and the demands of bodily existence. A proper life in the body is, therefore, crucial to the attainment of happiness in the Platonic schema and thus validates the relation of soul to body as the proper arena in which psychic heath is realized.

Hall's article intended to show that the doctrine of immortality in Plato, precisely because it contained this element of differentiation and ethical somatic concerns, was primarily a doctrine which stressed individual immortality as opposed to the undifferentiated state of the Pythagorean soul. In terms of the latter, immortality was seen as a dissolution of the individual soul in terms of a return to, and assimilation with, the cosmic over-soul of which the individual was merely an alienated element trapped in a body. The importance of individuation in the tripartite schema of the Platonic soul thus emphasizes the personal, ethical conduct of the individual and therefore suggests an immortality which is based on differentiation which stresses a proper use of the body. Instead of shunning the body as a prison, Plato viewed it as the necessary arena in which this state of psychic harmony was to be actualized together with eternal consequences. Even when the soul is set free from the body at death, it retains this tripartite division and thus continues to function on the basis of a unity that is predicated on differentiation and distinction in which the three faculties of
the soul, including the dimension which dealt directly with the body, namely
the appetite, continues to be a distinct characteristic of the soul's inherent
nature.

Therefore, even if we see in the early stages of Platonic psychology an
inherent body-soul dichotomy, we must concede that, viewed in terms of his
overall development, the notion of the soul in Plato is not one characterized
by a strict rejection of bodily existence, but rather one which views
positively the body as the locus of actualization for the ethical soul. Such an
actualization is a prerequisite for happiness in the afterlife of the immortal
soul.

Other aspects of Plato's philosophy appear to possess this positive
appreciation for the role of the body in self actualization. Here, we may look
either to the *Phaedrus* or the *Symposium* as examples. In both of these
dialogues, the vision of the absolute beautiful or the absolute good is
predicated first on a bodily encounter with those absolutes as they are
encountered in particular incarnations. Thus, contact with the particulars in
any given category of the forms is the basis upon which the categories are
extrapolated. Such an extrapolation cannot be attained *in vacuo*. True, the
philosopher must not be content with only the physical representation of the
beautiful, but must rise to the level of the abstract in order to appreciate the
ideal. However, we must again stress that it is only through the particulars
of sense experience that the soul has access to the criteria for performing
this abstraction. If Havelock is correct in his hypothesis that the ability to
abstract is characteristic of a textual, literate mentality, then we are justified
in our assumption that the formation of the categories of the abstract forms
was based, and even forced, by a direct appeal to sensible data. Through
the medium of writing, these sensible data were able to be categorized. In
the process of categorization, the universals become fixed through a
consideration of the particulars.

We may conclude, therefore, that Havelock is on the mark when he
asserts that the development of the concept of the individual soul was
primary among the contributions of Platonic philosophy, insofar as it
confirmed the autonomy of the individual and stressed the transcendent
nature of the criteria by which philosophic judgments are made. This
location of authority in the individual breaks down the undifferentiated
synthesis of the oral mindset. In this sense, orality in many ways has a
psychic ontology more akin to Orphism, Pythagoreanism, and mysticism in
general than does Platonic philosophy, insofar as the former stressed a
return to an undifferentiated unity in which the pain of the alienation of the
individual, particularly as that alienation was accentuated in the growing
demise of fifth-century Athens, found its cure in a simple return to what we
cannot term otherwise than a state of dreaming innocence. In such a state,
the ethical concerns of the individual are minimized. Plato's relentless
emphasis on the ethical as the locus of psychic actualization thus stood
firmly in the way of such a simple ontology, epistemology, and ethics.

In Platonic psychology, therefore, the separation of the knower from
the known, made possible by the hermeneutical distance which resulted
from the externalization of language, was a fundamental step in the
development of Platonic notions of the soul. This separation of the reader
from the text, and the hermeneutical dynamics which ensue, entailed,
therefore, an additional separation of distinct properties in the soul itself. In
the tripartite divisions, we may observe a faculty of sense perception which
deals directly with sense data as well as an intellectual faculty whose function is to interpret and assimilate sensual data based on the noetic criteria of the transcendent categories of analysis contained in the forms. Furthermore, there is the passionate element which is concerned with the motion of the will in operating in accordance with the patterns of the forms as perceived by the intellect. This tripartite division is itself made distinct in the relationship of the soul to the external world. Thus, the division between the knower and the known was necessary for the realization of the concomitant divisions in the soul. These divisions made it possible to function in the new arena of alienation from the inherited norms of the oral society. The new psychology thus may be seen as directly related to the new dynamics of perception and cognition made possible by the externalized word which functions as an objective phenomenon and thus places upon the subject certain hermeneutical demands which are met by the tripartite functions of the soul.

The Platonic soul, therefore, is complex in its nature and involves a specific relationship to the somatic element akin to textuality. Plato’s notion of soul, then, is not one which represents a flight away from the anxieties inherent in the breakdown of the oral synthesis. On the contrary, his notion of soul is one which views the interaction with the somatic realm of the text as one which is fundamental for the proper development of the soul in its quest to rise to a notion of the good based on particular experience of the good in the sense world.

As we have shown in the discussion of the works of Hall and Partee, the concept of soul in Plato may have indeed involved stages from a simple understanding of soul as undifferentiated unity which stands in opposition to
the body toward one which appreciates division and differentiation in regard to the soul's relationship to somatic existence. If the concept of soul is one which was subject to constant revision as the dynamics of textual thinking more and more began to invade Plato's considerations, we may look to Plato's student Aristotle as a sort of summation and refinement of what remained only a sketchy hypothesis for Plato. To introduce Aristotle into this discussion poses perhaps certain hazards, insofar as he is traditionally viewed as taking stances which represented a radical departure from the master. Nevertheless, in the light of certain modern scholarship, we may in fact be able to discern a continuum which places Aristotle more directly in a philosophical trajectory that both includes Plato and goes beyond him in hammering out the textual consequences of Platonic psychology.

It has generally been the consensus that Aristotle represents a more physically oriented approach to epistemology and psychology than does Plato. His criticism of the forms is well known and need not be rehearsed here. What should be noted, however, is the growing awareness in scholarship that the psychology of Aristotle, particularly as it is seen in the *De Anima*, cannot be subject to the sort of reductionism that has been characteristic of previous scholarly trends. In this regard, we may look to the work of Hugh Lawson-Tancred. Lawson-Tancred's recent edition of the *De Anima* with commentary and introduction has comprehensively reviewed the traditional work on Aristotle and has noted two distinct camps of interpretation (Lawson-Tancred, 1986: 111-116). The one may be generally summed up as the idealist school which strains to see in Aristotelean psychology a preference for the substantial existence of soul apart from the body; the other may be termed the empiricist school which
sees all psychic phenomena as rising directly from empirical concerns. As Lawson-Tancred explores the complexities of the text in his commentary, it becomes evident that neither school has done justice to the problem. Indeed, it is Lawson-Tancred’s argument that both the empirical and the idealist interpretation are both valid in interpreting particular aspects of Aristotle’s notion of the soul but that a synthetic approach is required to do full justification to Aristotle’s position. It is not necessary at this point to consider all the minutiae of the *De Anima*. It will rather suffice to note that the two dimensions, one directed outwardly toward sense data and the other directed inwardly toward the noetic function of judgment, are very much in line with the notion of soul as a differentiated unity which was the main focus of Hall’s article on the soul in Plato. In fact, it appears that the *De Anima* is in many ways a refinement of the position toward which Plato was moving in his conceptualization of the tripartite structure of the soul based on the dynamics of separation inherent in the cognitive dimensions of an externalized linguistic medium. Aristotle’s notion of the soul thus contains an important aspect regarding the interaction of soul with sense data in the formation of the categories used for judgment and analysis, but at the same time posits a high degree of psychic autonomy in the soul’s relationship to the somatic world.

The synthesis of Plato and Aristotle, while in modern scholarship is a relatively novel approach, was not foreign to the ancient schools. A fact often overlooked is the harmony between the thinkers, something which was taken for granted by the neo-Platonic schools. Plotinus, for one, has incorporated the two thinkers into his system in such a way that it is now irresponsible to view neo-Platonism as having less regard than Plato for the
experiential and somatic dimension of human existence. Indeed, if we had
the space to digress, it would be the argument of this study to suggest that
the project of neo-Platonism, insofar as it incorporates the notion of
differentiation into its psychological schema represents a genuine locus on a
trajectory that begins with Plato, is refined by Aristotle, and directly
assimilated by the neo-Platonists, at least of the Plotinian type. A quick
scanning of the textual references to Aristotle in the edition of Plotinus by
Paul Henry and Hans Rudolf-Schwyzer reveals that Aristotelean concerns
were as important in the shaping of this neo-Platonic philosopher as were
Platonic concerns.

To sum up our consideration of the Greek philosophical tradition in
light of Havelock's work on Plato, we may conclude that the psychology of
Plato was directly related to the new cognitive demands of the separation of
the knower from the known brought about by the breakdown of the oral
synthesis resulting from the advent of textuality. Furthermore, the concept
of soul corresponding to the dynamics of this breakdown was one which saw
division in the soul as essential to its proper functioning. Such a division
includes an appreciation for, and dependence on, the relation of soul to
body. The alienation which ensued as a result of the breakdown of the oral
synthesis was seen positively as the establishment of a new arena for
epistemological considerations. This new epistemology viewed such a break
as presenting new opportunities for the schematization of a complex
structure of the soul which accepted the dynamics of alienation as a
precursor to the actualization of that structure. The neo-Platonic tradition,
insofar as it accepted and incorporated the insights of the Platonic and
Aristotelean schools, may be thus seen as a continuation of that functional
schema which takes into consideration and does not reject the somatic element of human existence. It is this tradition made possible, as Havelock argues, by the advent of textuality that we wish to take seriously in our consideration of the general paradigm of orality-textuality concerns and the possibilities for new cognitive strategies which the invention of writing created for the human arena. The corresponding doctrine of soul is thus one which takes seriously the role of the body, while also stressing the autonomy of the soul in hermeneutical issues. It is the attention given both to dependence and autonomy which marks the Greek conception of soul.

However, we would be remiss if we suppressed a significantly different trend which arose in the wake of alienation created by the demise of the oral synthesis. As we have suggested, the advent of writing often appears to usher in a concomitant rise in the phenomenon of alienation. As the traditional norms of Greek society began to crumble in the face of the new demands placed on the individual by textual thinking, there was not always a resulting assimilation of alienation into the functional psychological make-up of the average Greek. Rather, the void created by the breakdown of traditional standards in many cases created a psychologically devastating degree of alienation and a sense of loss resulting in a high degree of anxiety and psychosis. E.R. Dodds has written an interesting book entitled The Greeks and the Irrational (1968), and another work, Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety (1965), in which he explores the dimension of anxiety and the irrational in the critical period of the Hellenistic age. During this period, there was not always an easy transition from the break with an oral ethos toward a dynamically vital and comprehensive view of the soul which incorporated the dynamics of alienation as the foundation for the creation of
a more profound understanding of the world. The work of Dodds has shown that the Hellenistic age to a great extent took refuge from the problems of anxiety and alienation in various flights of religious mysticism (1968: 270-282). Under these circumstances, there was far less appreciation for the possibilities created by the disruption of the oral harmony. Thus, the impact of textuality and the destruction of the oral ethos in many cases, far from rendering the psychic schema of the Platonic and Aristotelean schools which had fully assimilated textuality, created an atmosphere of anxiety and restlessness. To solve the condition which thus arose, the growth of the mystery religions became an important factor in addressing the problem of alienation. The answer thus turned out to be in essence a flight away from textuality and the demands it placed on the individual toward a kind of mysticism which functioned as a vehicle for restoring the lost oral identity characteristic of the older ethos. The mystery religions of the Hellenistic period may be seen, therefore, as a means of creating a group identity nostalgically restoring the older synthesis of the oral setting. In the mystery religions, there is presented the opportunity for the individual to be released from the anxieties of individuality in a psychic merger with the mystic community. That the initiations were secret and oral is highly suggestive of the kind of ontology promised therein, namely an ontology which was characterized by an undifferentiated unity and by a merging of the individual, alienated soul with the group identity of the oral ethos as it now came to be embodied in the oral setting of the community.

It is also interesting to note that the initiatory procedure of the mystery religions was something which could not be entrusted to writing. Writing in fact was seen as the chief enemy to the maintenance of the purity
of the communal mystical experience. Thus, in the wake of alienation brought on by the advent of textuality and the breakdown of the oral synthesis, it is interesting to note this rise in secondary orality, a form of orality complicated by the advent of textuality that nevertheless privileges the oral word and community as the authentic domain for psychic identity. Such a psychic identity is very much analogous to the older, primary oral ethos, insofar as the interests of the individual are submerged into the overriding concerns both of the oral community and of an oral ontology. The individual is thus swallowed up into the identity of the mystic community in which the notions of separation and individuation are foreign. The individual loses his/her personal, individual identity in a pantheistic, gnostic blending with a communal soul in which individual existence is denigrated in favor of cosmic unity.

In terms of a development of a concept of the soul, we may thus note an interesting bifurcation that becomes prominent in the Greek situation directly or indirectly resulting from the invention of writing and the breakdown of the oral synthesis. On the one hand, we have the Platonic-Aristotelean school which views the breakdown of the oral synthesis and the resulting alienation as positive features in psychological development and unity, a unity predicated on differentiation and distinction with a positive concern for the soul’s interaction with the body. On the other hand, we see a tendency to shun and deprecate the alienation created by textuality and to address the problem with the pharmakon of mystical experience. The individual plagued by alienation may retreat from this fragmented, differentiated psychic state to the synthesis of a secondary oral community which, through its religious initiation, makes possible a
merging of the alienated psyche with an amorphous cosmic oversoul, thereby restoring the psychic dimensions of the oral synthesis.

In reconsidering the role of Greek philosophy in the formation of Christian theology, it may be argued that the Platonic-Aristotelean model, insofar as it transmitted a view of the soul which was predicated upon division and subsequent relationship, not simply in the psychic but even in the ontological realm, presented to the framers of the creeds a more comprehensive and accurate model for the rendering of the Christian message than did the Pythagorean or Gnostic forms of psychology. This is something which we must take into serious consideration in our attempt to evaluate the overall influence of Greek thought, especially as it came to function in its resurgence in the Reformation. In this regard, the emphasis on autonomy and individuality and a concern for transcendent criteria for the validation of truth was more a characteristic of the Platonic-Aristotelean tradition than is usually granted. Indeed, the dynamics of the oral setting of the mystery religions with its concomitant denigration of the individual in favor of an oral synthesis turns out to be in the final analysis more in keeping with the oral dynamics of the Medieval-Catholic, oral synthesis or of late Medieval mysticism. Such a synthesis is much more easily linked to an oral ontology regarding the issue of presence in the Eucharist than is the textually based Platonic-Aristotelean model with its concern for the individual and the hermeneutical arena in which he or she operates. But even in the Reformation, which may be said to be in many ways analogous to the Greek setting of the breakdown of the oral synthesis, we may note two divergent reactions. On the one hand, there was in the case of late Medieval mysticism and in Lutheranism a program to recreate the oral synthesis in
the face of its demise resulting in large measure through the advent of
textuality following the invention of the printing press. In this regard, we
may suggest tentatively that the Lutheran program of *sola fide* was more in
keeping with the phenomenon of the mystery religions than was the more
textually oriented theology of Erasmus, Zwingli, Bucer, Melanchthon, and
Calvin. The other reaction, however, was to incorporate the dynamics of
alienation into a more comprehensive theology of the word which took into
consideration the positive dimension of the incarnation of the Word into
textuality, an incarnation which allowed both for the autonomy of the
individual and the transcendent hermeneutical orientation toward aspects of
interpretation which transcended the oral arena.

There is, thus, something provocatively in common between Greek
philosophical psychology and that of Reformation figures such as Zwingli,
Melanchthon, and Calvin. Indeed, the rise in textual thinking, while largely
the result of the invention of the press in the Reformation, represents a
cognitive and epistemological dimension that is not solely a result of
printing but rather is indicative of the psychic complexities characteristic of
the dynamics of writing in general. The press, as we have seen earlier, could
serve either project, either to reinforce and to re-create an oral mentality, or
fully to assimilate the cognitive demands of writing into a comprehensive
theology of the Word. This textually oriented theology did not take offense
at the phenomenon of alienation from the Medieval, oral synthesis but
utilized the dynamics of alienation as the basis for a more profound
understanding of the way in which the Word could function.

Thus, the transition from orality to literacy and textuality, as we have
seen it occur in the Greek setting, can be applied to the Reformation with
equal insight into the theological dimensions of the manner in which words were conceived to function.
CHAPTER THREE

ORALITY, TEXTUALITY, AND AUGUSTINE

Before returning to the question of orality-textuality in the Reformation, it will be necessary to have in view a theological model which incorporates the dynamics of textual thinking within the specific setting of Christian theology. So far, we have explored the problem only from a philosophical and linguistic perspective. But the dynamics of textuality, as seen in the development of the Platonic, Aristotelean and neo-Platonic tradition, had a dramatic influence on the development of early Christian theology.

While it is true that we could look to a number of strands of Christian theology as representative of the influence of the Greek textual traditions, I have decided to focus on one theologian in particular, namely Augustine. This for several reason. First of all, Augustine is the first important theologian to carefully document his relationship to the Platonic tradition. That Augustine owed a considerable debt to neo-Platonism in freeing him from the delusions of the Manicheans is well attested in Book IV of the Confessions. His treatment of the overall significance of Platonic philosophy permeates many of his works including the De Civitate Dei in which he notes that “Plato’s philosophy is closest to our own” (De Civ. VIII. 5). Second in our criteria for choosing Augustine is the fact that the transition from an oral to a textual perspective can be clearly detected in the various stages of his
theology. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, will be to show how Augustine's theological development incorporates all the stages which we have outlined in the Greek situation with regard to the breakdown of an oral ethos or synthesis. In the initial stages of his life, we will argue that his linguistic orientation was that of primary orality. Next, the alienation of his textual encounter with Classical literature leads to a crisis of alienation. In the face of such a crisis, Augustine sought refuge in the Manichaean community which in many ways, we will see, is analogous to the trajectory which we have ascribed to the Greek mystery religions. There, we observed the attempt to restore in the face of alienation the security of the oral synthesis through initiation into an oral community. Next, we shall consider Augustine's Platonic phase in which the textually oriented philosophy of Plotinus deconstructs the synthesis of the Manichaean community and thus leads Augustine to the textuality of Scripture as the basis for the formulation of a new theology and psychology. This shift in theological and psychological perspective is one which takes seriously the alienation created by textuality in the formation of a dynamic anthropology predicated on distinction, separation and otherness. The oral anthropology of the Manichaean community had stressed the notion of an undifferentiated soul which must escape the tainting of the physical world in its flight to return to its original undifferentiated unity prior to the alienation resulting from creation and its contact with the body. In contrast to this, Augustine's theology takes seriously the ontological priority of differentiation which leads him to profound insights into the nature of the Trinity itself. The Trinity represents for Augustine the ontological basis for the priority of distinction and differentiation as the basis for a relational, not an undifferentiated, unity.
Next, we are led to a consideration of Augustine precisely because in the wake of the resurgence of textual thinking, theologians in the Reformation looked first and foremost to Augustine as the archetype for their theological stance. In many ways the revival of Augustinian thought is synonymous with the Reformation itself. I will argue that this is primarily due to the fact that Augustine more than any other early theologian has dealt comprehensively with the phenomenon of the incarnation in terms of textuality. The Word of God is for Augustine essentially a textual phenomenon and his theology is based on this premise. Thus, it appears natural that, after the invention of the press when textuality begins once again to dominate the theological arena, Reformation theologians should look to Augustine for guidance and insight.

There is a final consideration for dealing with the theology of Augustine and the influence of Platonic thought on the formation of his theology. The impetus for this comes from certain modern trends in philosophy and literary criticism based on the insights of the French philosopher, Jacque Derrida. Derrida in the post-modern era has more comprehensively dealt with the implications of textuality, presence, and absence than practically any other thinker to date. The implications of Derrida's insights are not limited to the arena of the purely philosophical. Theologians influenced by Derrida have noted a theological preference for what Derrida has termed the persistence of logocentrism in Western thought (Altizer, 1982). Roughly described, logocentrism is the attitude taken according to Derrida by most of Christian theology which has been influenced by the Platonic tradition. Derrida believes he has isolated a purely oral ontology in Plato which privileges oral speech above textuality. It is this
Platonic preference for the oral word and its preoccupation with "presence" that Derrida believes has tainted all of Western thinking particularly as it has influenced Christian theology and its preference for the oral kerygma.

Susan Handelman’s book, *The Slayers of Moses* (1982), has outlined in detail the Derridean position regarding logocentrism in Christian theology. It is the argument of Handelman that with Christianity there has resulted an incarnation into the text of the oral ontological assumptions of logocentric thinking (1982: 89-90). In other words, the great triumph of Christian theology according to Handelman is the utilization by Christian theologians of the concept of logocentrism as the incarnating of an oral ontology. According to Handelman, the Platonic tradition represents a split in linguistic phenomena between the signifier and the signified. The meaning of the signified is thus settled on a metaphysical plane and then incarnated into the text to create a system which emphasizes one literal meaning. This she contrasts with rabbinical hermeneutics which tend to see Scripture as subject to an infinite degree of associations and meanings. For Handelman, therefore, the theology of Augustine is tantamount to an apotheosis of logocentrism in the West. Insofar as the Augustinian tradition underwent a revival, logocentrism was thus incorporated through the Reformation directly into the mainstream of Western philosophy right down to the modern era. Handelman thus argues that the Augustinian tradition continues this fatal schism in Western thought between signified and signifier. Augustine’s distinction of the *signum* and the *res* is indicative according to her of a general split in Augustine’s psyche which privileges the *res* over the *signum* or orality over textuality.

I believe that there are several valid criticisms not only of her
assessment of Augustine but even in terms of her own Derridean methodology. It is not the purpose of this study to challenge directly the insights of the Derridean school. However, I will argue that an in depth look at the Greek situation, especially as it has been presented by Havelock, reveals that this split which Handelman criticizes in Augustine does not necessarily result in the privileging of the oral over the written. In fact, Handelman's summation of Rabbinic hermeneutics and its preference for multiplicity in meaning is already on the road to an intertextual mode of thinking which sees texts as commentary on other texts in an endless chain or inter-referentiality. That the state of inter-referentiality is the final development in the transition from orality to textuality is argued for by Frawley (1987: 48-55). Thus, rabbinic hermeneutics is already predicated on a textual orientation toward which the Greek situation was in the state of development. It is true that in certain types of mystical thinking, as we have noted, there was a preference for extra-textual validation in the oral community of the mystery religions of which Manichaeanism is a type. On the other hand, Platonic psychology views as primary the textual mode of linguistic phenomena as the arena for a working out of a more dynamic hermeneutics. Thus, Handelman's critique of Christian theology, as it may be seen in the more heretical modes of Gnosticism, is perhaps valid. However, the strict charge of logocentrism in the case of Augustine and even in Plato himself, is perhaps misdirected.

Because Augustine figures as a key both for the direction of subsequent theological developments in the Reformation and because he is the target of modern critical thinking. I have concluded that Augustine will provide the best framework in which to explore the dynamics of orality vs.
textuality in the context of theological considerations. Our conclusions will thus provide a convenient model for re-assessing the Reformation in terms of the shift from orality to textuality as the rise in the availability of texts had also a corresponding rise in a resurgence of Augustinian thought.

In considering the cultural context of Augustine's life, we must keep in mind that he falls in a period which was in many ways analogous to the Hellenistic age which witnessed the breakdown of a culturally cohesive oral ethos. As we have noted, such a breakdown gave rise to a state of psychic anxiety which sought relief in various modes of mystical thought. Likewise, the fourth century saw a similar breakdown in the ideals of Roman culture (Cochran, 1957: 114-176). The threats of invasion and the fragmentation of social networks thus can be seen to have created a similar situation in which a high degree of anxiety was present. Consequently, there was as well a variety of religious models which addressed themselves to the psychological phenomenon of alienation in an attempt to restore some sense of identity in the wake of the demise of a long established tradition of cultural and social definition (Cochran, 1957: 295).

North Africa was often a destination for Roman aristocrats fleeing the turbulence of social upheaval and thus became a melting pot of alienated landowners who were seeking in some way to maintain or to re-establish a modus vivendi in order to cope with the anxieties produced by the disruption of their cultural identity. Carthage in particular became a second home to these cultural exiles and as such we may see manifold expressions of ways in which the dispossessed sought to heal the anxieties of alienation resulting from the shock of displacement.

Thus, Carthage may be seen to have functioned as a secondary Rome.
The educational system to which Augustine was introduced there was in many ways in keeping with the system of Roman education popular throughout the empire. The cultural code of classical literature was seen as the embodiment of the cultural ethos which had united the society of the Roman empire. Thus, there was in the educational system a marked desire to maintain the cultural norms which had functioned so well for the preceding five centuries. These cultural models were for the most part instilled in the young by means of education which were highly reminiscent of the older Greek, conservative, oral model. That is, in spite of the increase of literacy throughout the empire, Roman culture tended, like the Greek, to continue to stress the oral word as the primary vehicle for the transmission of cultural values.

In this setting, as in the Greek setting of the late fifth century B.C., a great deal of stress was placed on the oral reception of authoritative poetic images which were orally disseminated through educational instruction in which recitation and memory were the key modes of transmission (Lewis, 1966: 287-294). As noted earlier, the Greek educational setting emphasized a methodology which encouraged through the mimetic process the passive reception of cultural values through the rote memorization of poetic authorities. Likewise, in the Carthaginian setting, education consisted largely of the mimetic recitation of significant authorities, in many cases poets whose works in some way espoused the sort of values which the empire wished to inculcate and to maintain. However, in the Carthaginian setting in the wake of the growth of anxiety and alienation, there was also in the educational program stress placed on those poetic images which tended to speak to the anxieties associated with an alienated psyche. In such a
setting, the role of the drama cannot be ignored. In considering the Greek situation, we noted that, as the oral ethos declined, the role of the dramatic festivals tended to operate as an outlet for the anxiety produced by the breakdown of the oral, cultural unity. In the educational system in Carthage, an emphasis was likewise placed on those poets from the classical repertoire who could function in this same capacity. Thus, in Carthage there was a great deal of attention paid to dramatic art forms which re-enacted the type of anxiety laden situations which were the themes of Greek tragedy. Even outside of the strictly dramatic Greek models, Augustine notes that there was a similar attention paid in Roman literature to those authors who had most accurately portrayed the emotions of psychological suffering and anxiety (Conf. III, 2, 2).

In considering Augustine's education, we may therefore observe a high degree of emotionally charged material which the student was expected to memorize and imitate. Augustine tells us that the students who received the most attention were those who could recite the oral poetic passages with the most pathos and sense of empathetic identification (Conf. I, 17, 27). Similar to the modern school of method actors, Carthaginian students were urged to identify with the feeling portrayed by the poetic passage to be recited. Through this process of emotional identification, students could recreate the pathos of the author's sentiment. Such a mimetic process tended to create the sort of synthesis characteristic of the oral setting, particularly insofar as that setting stressed an unreflective identification between speaker, meaning, and audience. The young students were praised for their skill in dramatic re-presentation which used as its criteria of success the attainment of emotional participation on the part of the audience.
Those students who could portray the dramatic themes so as to invite and excite an emotional response were considered to be the best and were thus highly praised for their achievement. Augustine notes how in these early days he completely poured himself into the model of the perfect student and excelled in this arena of dramatic portrayal. We are, therefore, led to conclude that in his orally based rhetorical education Augustine was learning how to assimilate himself into an oral ethos which prized the psychologically pleasing aspects of complete identity with the oral message (Conf. I, 17.27).

Insofar as Augustine excelled in this paedagogical enterprise, we must view such success as the maintenance of a certain type of response to the overall setting of cultural alienation which characterized Carthage of the fourth century A.D. That the ideals of dramatic representation, with their concomitant concerns for an educational program which sought to restore through emotional re-presentation the dramatic themes of the Roman poets, were the standard for the day further indicates the degree of anxiety which permeated North Africa. Indeed, this was characteristic of all of the empire as the traditionally accepted social cohesion was disrupted by the political challenges of the day.

Even outside of the educational arena, Augustine found himself in a similar situation in terms of his cultural environment. He notes in The Confessions the delight which he experienced in going to the theatre (Conf. III, 2.2). There, he was able to experience the dramatic representations of themes laden with the pathos of alienation and anxiety with their persistent appeal to the emotions. At the theatre he could escape into a complete identification with the dramatic oral performance in which the audience was swept into a passive mode of direct assimilation so that emotional
participation and direct feeling with the forms of suffering portrayed could be obtained. In such an arena, the audience was dynamically drawn into a complete union with the dramatic presentation so that s/he was made both to feel and to identify with the emotions portrayed on the stage. Such a psychological process was seen to function both as a means for cathartic entertainment and to address itself to the larger problem of alienation as Carthage came to embody all of the anxieties of this transitional period. These anxieties were not exclusively the result of orality-textuality tensions, but they show, nevertheless, the failure of orality to deal comprehensively with the pressures of change and social upheaval.

In his book *Text and Epistemology*, William Frawley has characterized the oral stage in linguistic development as iconic (1987: 8). According to Frawley, the oral mind must always think in terms of pictures or icons which represent concrete instances of experience. All language at this stage is marked by a distinct preference for the concrete. Thus, the initial stages of symbolic representation in graphic form which correspond to this concrete mode of non-textual thinking are always iconic. That is, all attempts at graphic representation take the form of a one to one correspondence between image and some aspect of concrete experience. The image is thus used to evoke the presence of the concrete to portray an element of experiential reality. The point of all this for our purposes in this particular discussion is the fact that the oral mind operates on the level of imagistic thinking. Thus, in the oral arena spoken words have a direct imagistic orientation. Oral speech, therefore, is designed to conjure up visual images in its major project of rendering the presence of the signified. We may, therefore, see an intimate link between an oral ontology and an iconic
or imagistic orientation which places emphasis on the visual element. It is this link between orality and visuality which we may contend provided for the natural marriage between the oral performance and visual elements in dramatic presentations. The oral message, insofar as it refers to the concrete, is reinforced by the visual image. The visual image thus assists the oral word in the complete rendition of the presence of the signified in which a direct identification between speaker, message, and image is obtained.

We must therefore characterize Augustine's early orality as likewise beset with a sort of visual orientation which helps to explain his emotional addiction to the theatre. Augustine would later identify this phase of his development with the Pauline expression "the lust of the eye" (Conf. III). The visual and the oral go hand in hand in creating an ontological orientation that sees reality only as a concrete phenomenon which has direct impact on the experiential realm of the emotive aspects of the human psyche. The images portrayed on the stage have a direct emotive appeal which supplements the full impact of the oral word and reinforces its basic sensual locus. We noted earlier a similar understanding of the nature of images in the Reformation. Images on the broadsheets in the Lutheran realm were meant to fulfill this iconic function of supplementing the oral word and to provide it with a concrete orientation. In terms of ontology and theology, we may thus question the full ramifications of a theology which is largely oriented toward such a one-dimensional axis. This we will consider later. But it is well worthwhile to begin to see the ramifications on the theological plane of oral/visual strategies.

To return, however, to the situation in fourth century A.D. Carthage, we may thus see, in its educational dimension and in its cultural
entertainment, the attempt both to retain the oral cultural values of the older ethos and to promote the oral arena in which the tensions of the breakdown of the older ethos could be resolved in an emotional release. Such a release was attained through the dramatic performance of the type of oral poetry which most lent itself to a direct emotional identification between audience, speaker, and the emotional anxieties which characterized the period.

Augustine tells us in *The Confessions* how he frequented the drama because of his addiction to this passive mode of unreflective, emotional indulgence (*Conf. III, 2, 2*). The experience of the theatre was one which reinforced the oral mode of communication which placed great stress not so much on the prosaic exposition of truth than in the destructively pleasant experience of being overwhelmed by the oral manipulation of the emotions. Indeed, Augustine’s experience of the theatre is remarkably analogous to Plato’s critique of the effects of oral poetics on the individual psyche. As we noted earlier, Plato’s critique centered on the fact that the oral performance, through audience manipulation by means of sensual pleasing rhetorical strategies, tended to dwarf the individual’s reflective powers. The poetic performance thus encouraged a kind of emotional self-indulgence in which the individual was encouraged to place feeling over rational reflection. The oral synthesis was thereby obtained in which the differentiated, alienated psyche was released from the demands of a rational consideration of the complexities of reality created by alienation in favor of a passive identification with the feelings portrayed on the stage. We noted earlier how the drama in fifth century B.C. Athens tended to fill the psychological void created by the advent of textuality in the Greek setting
which tended to disrupt the cultural, oral synthesis of an older ethos. Likewise, in Carthage the stage appears to have served a similar purpose, namely to create a kind of psychological, emotional release from the pain arising from the breakdown in the oral ethos. Thus, Athens and Carthage have this one thing at least in common: the oral performance of the drama was aimed at a sensual, emotional appeal which provided the opium for escaping from the intellectual demands placed on the individual by cultural demise and alienation.

It is not surprising, then, to find that, in the advanced stages of the educational process, emphasis was placed on the acquisition of oratorical skills as the basis for personal success. Here we may note that yet another common thread unites the world of fourth century A.D. Carthage and fifth century B.C. Athens. In the case of the latter, we may again look to Plato's critique of the oral word, this time not simply in the dramatic representation of emotionally charged material regarding human suffering and alienation, but rather the emergence of the pseudo-science of oratory. Plato's critique of the orators is, practically speaking, identical with his critique of the poets and for similar reasons (Guthrie, 1971: 51-54). The oratorical training which was offered by the various sophistic schools focused entirely on persuasive technique as opposed to the question of truth. The sophists professed to be able to teach an oratorical technique by which the clever and instructed speaker could learn to manipulate his audience by exploiting the potential of the oral dynamic in an attempt to sway public opinion to go in his favor. Heavily involved in the political arena, the clients of the sophistic schools of oratory learned how to manipulate public policy not through the rational explication of the logic of a particular political policy but rather through the
medium of audience manipulation. This kind of oral manipulation endeavored to create an emotional identification between speaker and audience in which the emotional appeal of the speaker created an immediate sympathy with the speaker's cause rather than an intellectual assent to the logic of his proposal. In such a setting little emphasis was placed on the value of autonomous individual reasoning; rather, the goal was simply to attain emotional consent and identification in which there is no separation between the individual and the program espoused. Skill in the technique of persuasion was thus the goal of the orator's education both in Athens and in Carthage. Augustine's Carthaginian education culminated in the acquisition of oratorical skills which were predicated not upon the attainment of truth but rather on the priority of emotional assent based on manipulation and oral persuasion.

Here we see clearly, then, Augustine's oral stage in which the oral word and its consequent concern for the power of oral speech emotionally to capture and control audiences was paramount. Augustine was wholly caught up in this overwhelmingly oral arena. And in such a setting it is not surprising to see him relate in The Confessions the degree to which he was enslaved to the emotions in every aspect of his life (Conf. IV, 1, 1). At this stage, he was not at all concerned with philosophical truth but only with the sophistic techniques of oral persuasion which placed priority on the manipulation of feelings as the true and authentic locus of human existence.

If we are right in drawing analogies between Carthage and Athens, we must also acknowledge the failure in both cases for the dramatic oral performance to address itself to the depth of loss and alienation in the individual psyche. While the drama did serve as an emotional release, still
something more was required to deal successfully with the overwhelmingly devastating effects of the loss of the oral synthesis. In the Hellenistic world, we saw the flight to the mystery religions which offered a more successful means for coping with the isolation and alienation characteristic of the age.

In fourth century A.D. Carthage, we may also note a proliferation of mystery religions, chief among them the religion of the Manichaeans, which offered a similar escape from the pressures of an alienated existence. The ontological dynamics of the Manichaean and apparently of all Gnostic projects is chiefly characterized by its material concrete conception of deity (Brown, 1967: 46-69). Indeed, orality always has a concrete, experiential orientation. If the Gnostic enterprise offers an escape from the manifold diversities created by the fragmentation resulting from alienation, we must therefore keep in mind that the reality thus offered is always conceived of in materialistic categories. The soul is a fragmented piece of concrete being which is trapped in the evil and opposing reality of evil. The Manichaean ontology is thus one which is conceived of in material, concrete terms and thus possesses much in common with what we have seen to be characteristic of an oral ontology in general. In Plato's critique of the oral ontology of the poets, we there noted his concern that the chief referential category of truth turned out to be the sensual plain of the emotions. Truth was determined by its direct appeal to emotional responses which were predicated directly on the concrete, experiential world of emotional experience.

Such an ontology clearly sees all of reality as on the level of physical substantiability. For the Manichaeans, evil was a substance and good was a substance on an ontologically equal footing (Manschreck, 1974: 67-70). In the Gnostic cosmologies both evil and good possess an equal degree of reality
suggesting that what is required of the individual is not so much the elimination of evil from the volitional plane as an escape from it in a return to the undifferentiated state of psychical union in which no separation is to be found. Indeed, the notion of separation is anathema to the Manichean cosmology. Thus, a simple return to an undifferentiated unity is the primary goal of the Manichaean community. Such a union is predicated on the process of oral initiation into the community in which the most important levels of linguistic reality cannot be entrusted to textuality but are only authentic in the realm of the oral initiation into the community based on the transmission of secret knowledge from the "guru" to the initiate. Such a degree of secrecy is indicative of the high degree of potency thought to be operative in the oral medium. In that medium the alienated soul may find release from the anxieties of alienation by a return to the undifferentiated unity of the oral community which serves largely as a secondary, nostalgic replacement for the void created by the demise of the older, oral ethos.

At this particular junction in Augustine's career, we may see the Manichaean community as a locus for salvation which did not significantly offer a break with the major tendency of the oral orientation of the Carthaginian world but rather offered a more complete experience of the oral ontological unity which was shattered by the breakdown of the cultural synthesis of the late Roman republic. That there is little difference philosophically between the two traditions should now be evident. Both offer a return to an undifferentiated state of psychic unity based on the dissolution of alienated divisions. Both seek such a union through the oral medium in which the intellectual powers are temporarily shut down so that "the more authentic language" of the emotions may be operative. The only
difference appears to be that the Manichaean program is a more self-conscious attempt to attain an oral synthesis which is well aware of the dynamics of alienation present both in the cultural demise of ancient Rome and in the alienating impact of textual thinking.

In connection with Manichaeanism, we may also note that Augustine was largely attracted to the Manichaean community because of the oratorical powers of Faustus, the leader of the local Manichaen sect (Conf. V. 3, 3). Augustine's own oratorical training, as we have suggested, led him to an appreciation for the rhetorical skills of Faustus. Indeed, the oratorical locus, with its privileging of the dynamics of oral speech, may be seen as the chief attraction for Augustine of the Manichaean message. Augustine's major criticism of Scripture at this particular juncture in his spiritual development was precisely that it lacked the kind of oral eloquence which his education had emphasized (Conf. III. 5, 9). In spite of the figurative nature of Scripture, Augustine felt that it lacked the chief quality of oral rhetoric with its major project of the full elicitation of emotional interaction. For Augustine at this stage, language was valued less for its power to convey information than to delight the hearer so that a complete emotive response is obtained. Thus, his oratorical education made him a prime target for the oral manipulation characteristic of the Manichaean Faustus. In this regard, we may observe that Augustine was for the most part attracted by the oral skills of the Gnostic master rather than by an intellectual appeal of the validity of the truth of his message.

The precise nature of Gnostic, oral communities is one that has been shrouded largely from the view of scholars. This is in part due to the nature of the community itself which had always maintained a strict degree of
secrecy with regard to its initiatory practices. Augustine, like many of the novitiates of Gnosticism, never was allowed into the immediate inner circle of the Gnostic rites. Thus, in large measure the work of scholars has been confined to hypothetical reconstructions regarding the ultimate ontological and theological thrust of the Gnostic project. Recent scholarly work, however, has made inroads into this ontological dimension which will help us in illuminating the theological orientation of such Gnostic, oral communities. In this regard, we may note the in depth studies of Elaine Pagels into the nature of Gnosticism. Pagel’s study of Gnosticism reveals a theological setting which stresses the immediacy of the logos (1979: 132-3). In the Gnostic world, the logos is seen as an intimate element in the structure of reality. The Gnostic program thus sees divinity as intimately tied to all of reality in a kind of pantheism which sees the ubiquity of the divine in every aspect of human existence. As we have noted, there was likewise a dualistic concern with regard to the nature of evil in which evil is understood to have an ontological status equal to the divine. But in Pagel’s assessment of the Gnostic enterprise, closely connected to every instance of evil is the notion of the ubiquity of the divine. The Gnostic mode of salvation, therefore, sees the undifferentiated unity of the divine nature present in spite of evil throughout all aspects of reality. As I have argued, such a pantheistic-dualistic orientation, while nevertheless oxymoronic, implies a concrete understanding of the nature of divinity which sees the materialistic nature of the soul and the necessity for a quantitative merging of soul substance with the overall substance of the divine.

Pagels has provided useful insights into the nature of the Gnostic communities and has shown that there is a distinct emphasis in Gnosticism
on the immediacy of the divine presence attainable through the *logos*. The individual thus has within himself/herself the potential for an immediate awareness of divinity, divinity not understood as a separate transcendent category, but rather as an integral part of the self. Indeed, the self is conceived as truly divine and the recognition of this fact leads to the awareness of salvation. This notion of immediacy lends itself readily to the understanding in orality of the immediacy of the oral word. The oral word is thus conceived as the key to the attainment of divinity in the self in which the individual segment of divine reality is re-united to the overall divine substance. Again, this is a union which stresses ubiquity and undifferentiated unity in which the individual, alienated soul finds union with the cosmic whole. Thus, immediacy and plenary divine presence are the major characteristics of a Gnostic theology based on the nature of the oral arena as the authentic access to the divine.

In a very perceptive analysis of the community operative somewhere behind the *Gospel of Thomas*, Karen King has explored the nature of that community (1987: 48-97). In the incipit of the *Gospel of Thomas* the reader is instructed to find the interpretation of the sayings of Jesus contained therein. Immediately, we are struck with the aversion to textuality contained in such a caveat. The text of the *Gospel of Thomas*, even from the perspective of the writer of the Gospel, is not sufficient for salvific knowledge. Rather, the reader must find an oral hermeneutic to supplement the alienating dimension of the text. The written word is not sufficient in the Gnostic scheme for the conveyance of the divine message. Rather, the immediacy and full presence of the divine word is to be found only within the context of the oral community. Textuality is insufficient for the task.
Karen King has shown that such an access to the hermeneutical key for understanding the Gospel of Thomas was to be found only in the notion of the kingdom which, in the oral setting of the Thomas community, was conveyed through the rite of Baptism. Here the initiate received a secret oral training into the arcane aspects of divinity (1987: 67-69). The oral setting of the Baptismal catechism functioned as the hermeneutical key for understanding the enigmatic void created by the Gospel text. Only in the community could one find the healing synthesis which had the potential for addressing the void represented by the text. Only the oral community of the kingdom was the authentic domain in which the divine could not only be discerned but also be understood as an integral aspect of the individual.

The anthropological schema behind the Gnostic communities stressed an initiation into an oral community in which the individual was seen to merge his/her divine spark with the divine ubiquity present in the oral community. The precise nature of this Baptismal setting is made more explicit in the book, *There Is No Male and Female* (1987), in which Dennis MacDonald has outlined a cosmological background to the theology of baptism. This Gnostic cosmology links the baptismal rite to an understanding of unity based on the archetype of the primordial Adam before the fateful separation which resulted in the creation of the sexes (MacDonald, 1987: 26-33). Eve was separated out of this undifferentiated unity of the primordial Adam. In this Gnostic conception, the origin of evil is located not with Eve's consorting with the serpent but rather with the separation of a unity inherent in Adam before the separation of the sexes occurred. Thus, in the baptismal setting of the Gnostic community emphasis was placed in the rite on the restitution of this undifferentiated unity.
possessed by Adam before the creation of Eve. As we have suggested throughout this study, such an ontological conception of the undifferentiated nature of union is quite in keeping with the oral enterprise which stresses such a union between speaker, message and hearer. The work of Pagels and King suggests that such a scenario behind the Gnostic community was in fact the case.

If we may apply these insights into the Gnostic community of the Manichaean congregation headed by Faustus, we may thus underscore the oral dimension of that community and its preference for the type of oral ontology which we have outlined above. It would thus appear that Augustine's move toward Manichaeanism was one which had its roots in his oral training in Carthage. However, his oral training proved to be ineffectual in removing the alienation characteristic of the age. Likewise, we also may note that his graduation to the Manichaean setting simply furthered the oral implications of his Carthaginian oratorical training to include a specifically religious answer for dealing with a psyche fragmented by the crisis of alienation resulting from the breakdown of the oral synthesis of late Roman culture. However, this move to Manichaeism also failed for Augustine.

While Augustine was not completely satisfied with the doctrine of the Manichaean, as certain remarks of his suggest, nevertheless the Manichaean cosmology provided him with a view of reality which, insofar as it was in keeping with the general trajectory of his oral conditioning, proved to be satisfactory enough in providing him with a justifying rationale for his personal life. Augustine's bout with sensuality during this period is well known and in part we may conclude was justified by his Manichaean
cosmology. Such a cosmology identified the true self with the imprisoned divine spark which must be re-united with the divine substance in the context of the oral community.

In contrasting the Gnostic conception of the nature of the soul with that of the Platonic model outlined earlier, we may note that Manichaean theology saw the ultimate goal of the soul's liberation as a re-unification with soul substance free from the contaminating influence of somatic contact. The true divine self was seen as a reality independent of the body and, insofar as it had contact with the same, was subject to contamination. Free from the confines of the body, either by death or extreme asceticism, the soul could find rest in a return to the undifferentiated and ubiquitous unity of the divine substance. In the Platonic model, on the other hand, we noted a distinct concern for the ethical conduct of the individual in attaining the actualization of the soul's tripartite structure and the harmony between the soul's basic divisions including its relationship to the body. This was a relationship which was seen to be not an incarceration but a proving ground of the soul's worth in its quest for actualization. It is well worth noting that the Gnostic conception of soul had little or no such ethical dimension indicating a distinct lack of appreciation for the soul's relation to the body except to see the latter as a hindrance.

It is important to see at this stage the connection between an oral ontology, at least as it appears in the Manichaean setting, and a lack of an ethical project as a major characteristic of the oral orientation to the sensual and emotive plane with its tendency to shun the kind of alienation which leads to ethical questioning and abstraction in the Platonic sense. In the face of alienation, a passive attitude is evident in which the soul is seen less as an
agent than as a passive recipient of the divine substance. In such a setting, it is perhaps easier to see Augustine’s sensual involvement less as a contradiction in his philosophy than as a possible consequence of an oral ontology such as that characterized by the Manichaean system.

Augustine had doubts about the ultimate truth of the Manichaean view, especially as he began to see certain scientific inconsistencies between Gnostic astrology and the more rationally verifiable results of secular astronomy (Conf. V, 3, 3-6). In one sense, his readings in secular science began to lead him to a general questioning of the relationship between oral rhetoric and truth. This scientific revision on the part of Augustine may have in fact been the first stage in the breakdown of his confidence in the oral ontology of Gnosticism. In considering the rise of rational science in the Greek situation, we noted how the advent of textuality led to the sort of abstraction which created the environment in which rational reflection could take place. This separation of the knower from the known led to a categorization of truth as something distinct from the mere level of sensual contact. Sensual data could be recorded, compared, and categorized according to universal categories which were themselves based on abstraction from the level of immediate sensual identification. That Augustine should have been influenced in this way by the reading of scientific texts in his questioning of the validity of Gnostic astrology perhaps indicates that he was already on a new trajectory toward the kind of abstract textual thinking that would eventually lead to his break with the Manichaean community.

Such a break, however, was not immediate, and Augustine’s life continued to be dominated by a concern for the rhetorical rather than the
textual categories of abstract truth. His profession continued to be that of the teacher of rhetoric and his concern with oratorical skill was what lead him finally to hear Ambrose in Milan (Conf. V, 14, 24-5). Just as Augustine had been led to the Manichaean community by the eloquence of Faustus, likewise, he was led to the Christian Church by the reported eloquence of Ambrose. Still enamoured by the sensual delight of the oral word, Augustine, having heard of the eloquence of Ambrose, decided to experience that eloquence first hand. If, however, it was the eloquence of Ambrose the preacher that first led Augustine into the arena of the Church, it was decidedly not the eloquence of Ambrose which led him into a serious reconsideration of the validity of the Gnostic schools.

Certainly, Augustine was impressed by the oratorical skills of Ambrose, but what led Augustine to a serious review of Manichaean cosmology was, however, his introduction to the neo-Platonic circle of which Ambrose was a part (Conf. VII, 9, 13-16). Here, it will be worthwhile for us to review the textual orientation of that circle. Peter Brown has shown the high degree of literary activity among the Milanese neo-Platonic group which witnessed a revival of Platonic and Aristotelean texts as those texts became prominent in Latin translations many of which were done by the hand of the famous Platonist, Marius Victorinus, whose name appears in The Confessions (Ryan, 1967: 90-91). The fourth century thus underwent a type of textual revival that was not unlike the revival of Greek learning in the Rennaissance. As those texts became more and more accessible, traditional oral assumptions began to fall under the scrutiny of textual revision as the insights of neo-Platonism were seen as a means of philosophically clarifying the traditional assumptions of Christianity. Brown
notes that the philosophy of Plotinus had been so absorbed by Ambrose that it is possible to detect in his sermons an abundance of direct quotes from Plotinian treatises (1967: 94). Such an intimate use of Plotinus suggests a high degree of assimilation on the part of Ambrose of Plotinian themes and further suggests that his association with the Plotinian texts was something far greater than a casual one. The Milanese circle, in contrast to the Manichaean community, was marked by a high degree of intellectual sophistication, a sophistication based on an in depth association with textual heritages which privileged the written word of the Platonic and Aristotelean traditions over the orally based rhetorical schools of Augustine's Carthaginian education.

To underscore the extent of Ambrose's textual orientation we may thus note the highly suggestive scene in *The Confessions* in which Augustine records his surprise at Ambrose's silently scanning a text (*Conf.* VI, 3, 3). Such an observation might be regarded for the most part as insignificant. However, in the context of orality-textuality considerations the fact that Ambrose was reading silently is perhaps of monumental significance. As scholars have noted, the method of reading in antiquity continued to be oral even after the advent of textuality through the medium of writing (Saenger, 1982: 367-414). The written word had still to be rendered in its oral dimension in order for assimilation to take place. The silent reading of texts was something of a rarity. In fact, this particular observation regarding Ambrose's silent reading of texts is one of the very few in all of antiquity. The debate regarding the practice of silent reading has been long and heated, but we may note here that certain scholars have suggested that the phenomenon was in fact in evidence in certain situations where a
high degree of textuality had been obtained (Saenger, 1982: 373-375). In other words, the fact that Ambrose was reading silently may in fact indicate that, in spite of his oratorical skill, his basic linguistic orientation was one which had moved from a strictly oral understanding of the manner in which words were primarily conceived to function towards a textual understanding and all that implies in terms of ontology, epistemology, and theology. We have already suggested that there are certain affinities between Platonism and a textuality which in the final analysis privileges the written over the spoken word. In such a setting, we may note a marked denigration of the values and occurrences of rhetorically, sensually pleasing oral devices as the arena of comprehension shifted from the ear to the eye. In this setting, the hermeneutical importance of the written word took precedence over the mere sensual level of oral delivery. In the written mode, the content of the written context was decided on a level which transcended the immediate sensual identification characteristic of oral delivery in which meaning was instantaneous with oral reception. The nature of Plotinian style suggests that such a shift from rhetoric to prosaic, logical narration had already taken place. Plotinian style is markedly unpoetic and prosaic aimed rather at the visual scanning of the written word as a locus for hermeneutical assimilation than the immediate context of hearer and spoken word.

In fact, one of the chief facets of these neo-Platonic texts which surely must have struck Augustine the teacher of rhetoric was the distinctly prosaic style of the Plotinian treatises. Such a style would have appeared quite foreign to the basic methodology of an oratorically based training which depended entirely on achieving an immediate emotional response on the part of the aural audience. The Plotinian style of prosaic exposition of
philosophical positions was directed rather toward the arena of the epistemological categories of the Platonic structures of the tripartitie soul based on the autonomous function of the soul in the hermeneutical arena of the individual's assessment of truth and validity apart from the dynamics of a communal oral setting. Thus relying on the abstract categories of truth rather than the rhetorically pleasing tricks of the oral arena, the Plotinian treatises must have stood as a stark representative to Augustine of an almost revolutionary mode of linguistic reality, a reality based on the priority of a long textual tradition rather than the emotive arena of oral persuasion.

The notion that Plotinian thought must stand in constrast to an oral view of language is reinforced by the high degree to which Plotinus had incorporated into his philosophical treatises the textual traditions of his predecessors. Every treatise is laden with textual quotes and echoes of the preceding philosophical traditions. Such an inter-textual orientation suggests the degree to which neo-Platonism had become purely a textual phenomenon with the concomitant implications for epistemological and ontological stances.

The towering intellectual figure of Plotinus is one that has received regrettably little attention in the history of modern scholarship. However, it is our contention that, as the connection between textuality and Platonic thought gains acceptance, the figure of Plotinus will begin to receive this well deserved attention as the culmination of the textual potential of the Platonic-Aristotelean philosophical heritage. It is enough for our purposes to note that Augustine's experience with neo-Platonism was almost exclusively due to contact with the treatises of Plotinus and that in assessing Augustine's
relation to neo-Platonism we must look first and foremost to the Plotinian strands of that school. There we will find the kind of abstract textual thinking which enabled Augustine to separate himself psychically from the oral synthesis of the Manichaean community in his own development toward a textual orientation which finally culminated in his text-based theological understanding of the incarnation. Such an understanding both incorporates the insights of the Plotinian school and goes beyond them in ferreting out the textual implications of an incarnational theology.

If the ontological categories of the Manichaean cosmology were essentially derived from its basis in the nature of the oral word, then such an ontology cannot be divorced from the physical reality in which that medium of the oral word was operative. It is thus a necessary consequence that, insofar as the oral word produces a physical synthesis of hearer, speaker, and message, its formal cosmology should therefore declare the divine to be of a physical substance against which the rival substance of evil is opposed. Augustine tells us in _The Confessions_ that it was precisely this understanding both of evil and of good which the neo-Platonic texts served to deconstruct (_Conf._ VII, 1-16). The nature of the written word, as we have suggested, tends to disarm the sensual and emotive power of the oral word and in so doing likewise deconstructs irrevocably the cosmological and ontological assumptions which are based on the priority of oral speech. What Augustine began to experience, therefore, in his neo-Platonic period, was a sort of growing textual awareness of the manner in which the written word operates in contradistinction to the dynamics of the oral word. In textuality, Augustine's linguistic orientation shifted from the sensual level of aural receptivity to the hermeneutical level of linguistic reflection in which
meaning is not based on a sensually immediate identification between speaker, message and hearer. Rather, meaning in textuality is based on inter-textual phenomena which tend to strengthen and to excercise the hermeneutical powers of the individual. The individual, oriented toward a textual hermeneutic seeks for meaning and validation not in an instantaneous emotive response but rather in textual reflection. In hermeneutical reflection based on textuality, meaning is decided at the level of the text either by analytical subordination of ideas or by inter-textual references. This forces the reader beyond the immediate into the arena of 

Expression, to use a Derridean concept, in which meaning is an open-ended progression of the interrelatedness of text to text. Such linguistic dynamics force upon the subject a new locus of criteria for interpretation which bring into the forerground the transcendent categories of abstraction which are seen to work on a level far less immediate and emotive than the oral word.

What this implies is that Augustine in the face of neo-Platonism was forced to think textually and to reconsider his Manichaean ontology in light of other criteria than the immediacy of oral response. Augustine's textuality, therefore, forced him into the neo-Platonic arena of abstraction and analysis. Furthermore, it was on this basis that Augustine had then to approach theological issues.

In Augustine's neo-Platonic phase, we may therefore see a re-examination of the nature of reality on a level that transcends the immediacy of the sensual and emotive aspects of oral delivery and thus shifts the locus of hermeneutical attention away from that level to a trans-temporal dimension of reality which exceeds the limitations of the sensual word. Again, as we explore these issues, we must stress that such a
shift does not suggest a Gnostic flight away from the physical. Indeed, as we have seen, the Gnostic system merely entails the flight from one set of physical, concrete, emotive criteria to another. In Gnosticism, what is conceived as the soul’s flight from material bondage turns out to be in fact the flight from one aspect of somatic existence conceived as painful and alienating, to another aspect of concrete physical ontology understood as free from these painful, alienating concerns, i.e. the oral synthesis of undifferentiated sensual and emotional union through the oral word with the divine.

Augustine’s textuality, therefore, brings him into the textual, hermeneutical arena as the valid locus for the re-working of a more consistent and complex ontology which incorporates the dimensions of the written as opposed to the oral word. Such an arena is characterized by the separation of the knower from the known in which the subject, Augustine, came to see himself as distinct both from the immediacy of the oral word and the transcendent categories of universal truth to which all linguistic realities serve only as a sign. For Augustine, then, the opportunity to begin his relentless analysis of his interior self was made possible primarily by this objectifying dimension of the written word. The written word served to deconstruct the oral ontology of Manichaeism and thus provided the grounds for a new set of ontological and epistemological categories based on difference and division rather than immediacy and identity. That Augustine had experienced the phenomenon of cultural alienation is something which we have already indicated. However, this new attitude toward alienation which saw the ontological separation of the self from being as the basis for the existential reality of the individual was a slightly new twist. The
verification of this became evident to Augustine the more he delved into the textual traditions of neo-Platonism.

The influence of neo-Platonism on Augustine is perhaps most evident in a group of treatises which were written by him in Cassiciacum in 386 while he was preparing for Baptism in the Spring. During that period, Augustine retired to a quiet estate with several of his friends and his son, Adeodatus. Their days were spent in philosophical discussion of the implications of Christianity. These discussions were wide ranging, but one in particular has significant bearing on our consideration of the role of the neo-Platonic view of language in Augustine's development. This was the little treatise, De Magistro, which takes the form of a dialogue between his son, Adeodatus, and Augustine. The theme of the dialogue concerns the role of the magister in the act of teaching. Such a theme is significant in our consideration precisely because of the role that a magister played in the oral situation. *Imitatio magistri* is indicative of the relationship between master and pupil in the oral setting. The student would imitate the master as far as possible absorbing his words and lifestyle. The student would seek to identify himself fully with the oral training of the master. It is most interesting, therefore, that Augustine advances a view of education in this treatise that stands in marked contrast to the oral norm. As Robert Russell has pointed out: "The dialogue is given over to the refutation of the view that words can of themselves engender truth in the mind of the pupil. At first it might appear that Augustine's entire line of reasoning is directed against the very institution of teaching as this is commonly understood and accepted" (1968: 4).

The role of the magister thus inevitably involves the question of
language. In the oral setting, as we have noted, words are generally understood as having the power to render the presence of the signified. In Augustine’s discussion of language, however, he concludes that all words fall under the category of the sign. Augustine makes a sharp distinction between signum and res in which the signum and res cannot be so intimately bound that the presence of the res can be rendered by the signum either oral or written. Augustine notes that “we signify the things we speak of, and what comes forth from the speaker’s mouth is not the thing signified, but the sign by which it is signified” (De Mag.: 36). That Augustine felt compelled to clarify this point indicates that the opposite view of the function of words was the commonly held position. The fact that Augustine held a prescriptive which allowed him to see the separation of the oral word from the reality which it signifies indicates the growing influence of Platonic thought on his linguistic considerations. Furthermore, such a perspective stands in contrast to what we earlier observed in Augustine’s oral education and subsequent devotion to oral rhetoric with its persuasive emotional appeal giving the illusion of a direct indentification of word and thing. In his earlier stages, Augustine’s attention was directed entirely toward the sensual level of oral reception. In the De Magistro, however, we see a different Augustine, who sees the oral word not as an end in itself but only as a vehicle for access to a different order of reality. He says to Adeodatus, “Now, then, I would have you understand that the realities signified are to be valued more highly than their signs. For whatever exists for the sake of something else must be of less value than that for which it exists.” (De Mag.: 38) Words, therefore, serve only to invite reflection about realities. They serve only as reminders. Augustine’s view of memory,
moreover, is one which sees the memory not as the storehouse of the realities to which the words point, but rather one which sees memory itself as possessing only a trace of those realities. Thus, words stir the mind to reflection but such a reflection is not one that ends in the presence of the signified. Rather, language for Augustine is chiefly characterized by the absence or the trace of realities in a way that perhaps anticipates the linguistic philosophy of Derrida. Adeodatus sums up the discussion by saying "I myself have come to learn through the suggestive power of your words that words merely stimulate a man to learn" (De Mag.: 60). The notion of oral presence is at this stage totally lacking from Augustine's consideration of language.

Augustine's signs theory of language sets the stage for a later, more comprehensive discussion to be found in his treatise, De Doctrina Christiana. There, Augustine reiterates the signs theory of the De Magistro but with specific reference to Scripture. Here, even in the case of holy language, a distinction is maintained between the signum and the res. The goal of Scripture is, therefore, to stir the mind to reflection about God. While Scripture may do this more effectively than ordinary speech, Augustine never advances the view that Scripture has the power to render the presence of the signified in the way that suggests a return to an oral view of language. The sign remains a linguistic pointer that reveals an absence which demands hermeneutical reflection. There remains a distance which must be mediated by the hermeneutical role of the Spirit, but such a hermeneutic does not imply for Augustine the abolition of the distinction between signum and res.

In contrast to the De Magistro, the De Doctrina does appear to
express a softer view of the role of oral rhetoric. In a discussion of the different styles which Scripture employs, Augustine reflects on the rhetorical style. Here he observes that the speaker should entertain his audience and that the message is perhaps better received when it is artfully expressed. Augustine here appears to allow for oral rhetoric within the specific confines of religious instruction, and we might be tempted to see here an internal contradiction, namely that, while Augustine had long since broken from the oral arena, the power of the oral continued to operate somewhere in his psychological make-up. If such is the case, then we might see in Augustine the kind of duality which William Bouwsma has observed in Calvin (1988: 98-127). As we will see later, Bouwsma maintains that Calvin's theology possesses an almost schizophrenic attitude toward truth and rhetoric. In the final analysis, Bouwsma suggests that we cannot understand Calvin's theology unless we consider the rhetorical strategies operating perhaps unconsciously in the mind of Calvin. This position we will severely qualify in the last chapter. However, the relationship between truth and rhetoric is a legitimate concern in any study of Calvin and perhaps is parallel, as we will see, to Augustine's position. After seeming to accept oral rhetoric as a legitimate function in Christian education, Augustine, however, says of the Christian orator that "even in his speech he should choose to please by his subjects rather than by his words, and not believe that a thing is better expressed unless it is expressed more truthfully" (De Doc.: 231). For Augustine, then, the persuasiveness of oral speech must always bow to the corrective of truth, and, furthermore, must never be understood in any other way than in terms of the signum-res dichotomy. Thus, Augustine's approval of oral strategies is one that is conditioned by
textuality. Such a textuality is one which continued to stress the separation of the signum and the res as necessary for a proper understanding of the res in the same way that the knower and the known are separate in Platonic thought.

The Platonic influence as seen in the signs theory of both the De Magistro and the De Doctrina, thus, cannot be ignored in a consideration of Augustine’s transition from orality to textuality and the implications this had for his theology. We are therefore led to consider the controversy concerning the impact of neo-Platonism on the theological development of Augustine. In this regard, we need not rehearse the lengthy scholarship of those who have tried to claim him for one camp or the other. At this juncture, it is only necessary for us to recognise that Augustine’s association with neo-Platonism was the vehicle by which he was propelled into a new dimension of philosophical inquiry, an inquiry which was based on a long trajectory which had over the years incorporated a high degree of textual thinking. This textual perspective became the new basis for Augustine’s further considerations both philosophical and theological.

This is nowhere more evident than in a consideration of Augustine’s relation to the phenomenon of mysticism, especially insofar as mysticism is sometimes considered to be an integral aspect of neo-Platonic philosophy. We are in a position now, however, to critique the usual assumptions about mysticism on a linguistic basis which takes into consideration the impact of textuality. To view the mysticism of Plotinus, for example, on this basis presents a view of mystical union which is in sharp contrast to the predominant category of mystical experience as undifferentiated union with the divine. In the case of the latter, any distinction between self and divine
is dissolved. Such would be that type of mystical experience characteristic of the mystery religions of which the Gnostic trajectory now appears to be a part and to which the Platonic tradition stands in contrast.

Augustine, in following the path of neo-Platonism, tells us in Book VII of *The Confessions* that he was led through the Platonic texts to a brief "mystical" vision (*Conf.* VII, 17, 23). In that vision, he has a momentary glimpse of the divine. It would serve us well to examine some features of this vision as a key for understanding the insights of Augustine's neo-Platonic experience, especially insofar as those insights may be linked to a transformation in Augustine's understanding of the nature of linguistic realities as they are conveyed through the medium of the written word. Brown notes that the most influential treatise of Plotinus in terms of the vision in Book VII of *The Confessions* was most decidedly Plotinus' treatise on *Beauty* (1967: 95-100). This particular treatise, as we shall see, was most apt for the purpose of leading Augustine the orator to an understanding of reality which transcended the oral arena. As we have seen from Augustine's early training, the sensually beautiful aspects of the oral word were chief among his concerns. However, Augustine's sensuality spread into other areas than the purely verbal, although we may detect a common thread and indeed a unifying factor in all aspects of his sensuality. We have noted Augustine's delight in the visual aspects of the drama. That there is a correspondence between an oral orientation and a concomitant concern with the visual has been noted in connection with Frawley's analysis of the iconic stage in linguistic development. Thus, there appears to be this natural affinity between an orally oriented mindset and a concomitant visual locus for the concrete nature of language. As noted
earlier, the iconic stage sees all language as concretely referential, that is, every oral word has a concrete referent which in the oral arena can be conjured up by the oral word as through an icon. Such a conjuring renders an immediate emotive response corresponding to one's emotional attitude toward the concrete phenomena of experience. Such a concrete reference can be obtained either by means of the oral word alone or more completely when the oral word is presented in connection with visual supplementation. The visual element alone can be used to convey statements strictly on the concrete order of reality so that we are led to see an ontological equation which places both visual and oral elements in the iconic stage on the level of concrete experience and sees both as a system of strict one to one correspondence to concrete experiential reality. When Augustine, therefore, would speak of the beautiful at this stage of his development, he referred to a level of reality which possesses this experiential quality.

Augustine's own ideas of the nature of beauty in his pre-Platonic phase may be found in his little treatise De Pulchro et Apto in which he sought to arrive at the definition of the beautiful. In that treatise, Augustine defines beauty as a certain type of symmetry in which a kind of unity is obtained through the inter-relatedness of the parts with reference to the whole (Brown, 1967: 95). It is interesting to compare Augustine's theory of beauty at this stage with the dynamics of oral composition. In Homer and the Homeric Tradition (1958), a groundbreaking work by the Harvard scholar, Cedric Whitman, on the nature of the structure of the composition of Homer's Iliad, Whitman has identified a distinctly discernable proto-geometric structure to Homer's epic. The development of subject matter at the beginning of narrative units is symmetrically mirrored by the
subsequent treatment and reconciliation of those elements in the unfolding of the epic narrative. Such a manner of geometric construction has been identified by Ong as a primary means of oral composition which both aids the bard in oral delivery and provides a kind of framework of expectation that is highly pleasing to the oral audience (1982: 144). Furthermore, we have noted in an earlier section on the nature of the oral life world that there is a distinct preference for this sort of sensually pleasing rhetorical arrangement of words. The rhetorical use of synchrony and chiasmus are geometrical oral forms which delight the audience and ensure aural reception of the message. Great care is placed on the arrangement of words in oral delivery in which such arrangement is seen as equally important as the content of the message. How the speaker speaks is in such a context at least as important as what he/she says. It is thus fitting that at this particular stage in Augustine's development in which his oral training was most dominant that he should have defined the nature of the beautiful in such oral terms placing great stress on the geometrical structure of the nature of the beautiful. In Greek art, we may further note that the period of orality is marked by a concomitant concern for the geometrical symmetry in the visual arts. Such symmetry may be noted in the highly ornate geometrical patterns to be found on early vase painting. Only in the age of textuality does the art of Greece begin to incorporate individual distinctions which tend to violate the norms of geometric purity suggesting a general decline in the validity of the older view in favor of rendering the sort of realism which began to become prominent in the Hellenistic period. Furthermore, the nature of Hellenistic art in the period of alienation likewise reflects a concern for the individual distinctions of personal attributes to be
seen in the preponderance of the portraits portrayed in the art of this period.

As in the Renaissance, a rise in textuality had a corresponding rise in the concern for individual detail, a characteristic which we may now conclude was ushered in by a shift in orientation. This was a shift away from the priority of the oral synthesis in favor of the individual. Thus, Augustine’s aesthetic theories met a radical challenge in the treatise on Beauty of Plotinus in which the traditional view of beauty as symmetry underwent a direct deconstruction parallel to the growing shift in emphasis toward the alienating and individuating effects of the written word. As we have suggested, such a shift led Augustine to re-evaluate his aesthetics on the basis of criteria that transcended the immediate level of sensual and emotional response and the aesthetic oral factors which served to create such a response.

What the textual dimension of the Plotinian treatise on Beauty suggests is that the question of beauty is complicated once the considerations of textuality come into the picture. In textuality, the subject is separated from the kind of immediacy of response characteristic of the iconic stage in linguistic development. Here the subject can have the kind of hermeneutical distancing requisite for comparative analysis of one beautiful thing with another, nor is the aesthetic response solely attached to symmetry at the sensual level.

As we have suggested, Augustine’s sensuality could well identify with the physical level of concrete reference in regard to the physically pleasing aspects of beauty. What he was enabled to do for the first time, however, in his philosophical, textual reflection on the nature of beauty in the Plotinian
treatise was to consider the universal abstract category which transcended each individual, particular, concrete instance of beauty. Such a comparative, abstract analysis thus led Augustine into a new dimension of aesthetic critique which forced him to look at the common factor in all particular instances of the beautiful. The criteria which enabled him to pronounce something as beautiful he found to be in every instance the same (Conf. VII, 17, 23). He was, therefore, led to focus on a transcendent category of judgment by which he was able to make critical assessments concerning concrete factors in the experiential world. The concrete level of human experience did indeed convey one essential aspect of reality, but that reality was seen, when compared to the transcendent categories of universal truth, to be only a beginning point for the abstract consideration of the universal. We then begin to see developing in Augustine the kind of philosophical thinking which we saw characteristic of the Platonic, Aristotelean tradition and refined by neo-Platonism, namely that the universals were seen to be derived from the particulars but were somehow transcendent and prior, while having an intimate connection with the former for their proper conception. That proper conception was itself predicated on a kind of textual viewpoint which saw the physicai as a valid locus of origins for abstraction but went beyond it in its final analysis of the particulars through philosophical autonomy of the subject in viewing, evaluating, and assessing those realities.

The shift from orality to textuality in Augustine can be best seen in his treatment in Book VII of The Confessions in his consideration of the nature of the logos. There he equates the neo-Platonic understanding of nous to the pre-existent logos in the prologue of John's Gospel (Conf. VII,
9, 13-15). To understand this equation we must first digress on the ontological nature of nous in the Plotinian scheme. For Plotinus, all reality is seen as emanating from the One which he sees as the ultimate basis for all of subsequent reality (Ennead: V, I). All reality has whatever contingent existence it has precisely because of its relationship to the One. Peter Brown has noted the importance of this notion for the clarification of Augustine's understanding of evil (1967: 98-99). In his Manichaean phase, Augustine was inclined to see evil as a substantial reality which stood in opposition to the reality of the good. Brown further notes the ontological nature of that reality as a kind of rival physical substance of which the individual personal divine substance was an integral part (1967: 99). What was required of the individual was the recognition that divinity was an indivisible, undifferentiated part of the whole and that whatever evil the individual perceived in himself/herself was part of a rival material substance. The Plotinian view allowed Augustine for the first time to conceive of reality in terms different from a purely concrete, physical level. This enabled Augustine to see reality in a new way: as something both distinct from and yet a source of physical existence (Conf. VII, 5, 7). This made possible for Augustine to see ultimate reality as both related to, but distinct from, the physical world, such that he could understand the nature of evil as a derivative type of existence but one which did not rival the ultimate status of a transcendent divine.

In the Plotinian scheme all reality emanates from the non-physical reality of the One. The first stage in emanation is that of nous, or the intellect, which both emanates and is distinct from the One but depends on the One for its ontological status (Ennead V, I, 6, 40). Insofar as Augustine
equated the *logos* of John with the level of *nous*, it is significant for us to note that such a conception of linguistic reality stands in sharp contrast to the nature of the oral word. In the Plotinian scheme, the *nous* emanates from the One in a trans-temporal dimension and yet incorporates an ontological reality which is both different and distinct from the One. Thus, the linguistic nature of *nous* is such that it both transcends temporality and yet contains the notion of difference as an ontological basis for its existence.

If we are to equate this notion, as Augustine did, with John's *logos*, we are thus led to see the *logos* in its essential function as something which is both beyond time and points to a reality distinct from itself. It is both trans-temporal and distinct from the ground of being. Thus, the notion of separation and union are seen in terms that are diametrically opposed to the Manichaean conception of reality, a reality that insofar as it stresses an undifferentiated relationship between the self and the divine is more in keeping with an oral ontology which stresses an undifferentiated union between speaker, message, and audience. As we can see, both the Christian and Platonic view of the word suggests both a trans-temporal and differentiated status to the ultimate nature of the word.

On this basis, we may conclude that for Augustine the *logos* is not finally the same as the oral word of the Manichaean community with its privileging of an ontology which, insofar as it is based on the oral word, stresses the undifferentiated unity of the divine. Augustine, rather, sees the *logos* as an ontological basis for the notion of separation and subsequent relationship even within the Godhead itself.

The ultimate nature of linguistic reality understood in terms of textuality is therefore something which we may contrast with the immediacy
of the oral word. In the oral word, we noted a distinct preference for the immediate identification of medium and message. In the Christian and Plotinian view, however, the word is conceived as something distinctly referential. In contrast to the oral word, the textual word is characterized chiefly by the notion of referentiality which sees meaning as a phenomenon of difference and deferral. The divine logos in itself does not function as a vehicle for the creation of an oral synthesis in which meaning is seen to be blended and undifferentiated from its content. Rather, the divine logos is always something which points away from itself to the ground of being. Furthermore, this referential, and deferring nature of the logos is not something which is time-conditioned but is rather the ontological status of its true nature, a nature which is predicated on distinction and otherness as the basis for its own essence. In the oral synthesis, the word is conceived as an ontological analogy for the attainment of a type of synthesis in which division is beheld as an anathema. In the textual view of John and Plotinus, difference and distinction is seen as an ontological priority for the ultimate nature of all language, even divine language.

Thus, in summing up Augustine's neo-Platonic experience outlined in Book VII of The Confessions, we would have to say that it was not mystical in the usual sense implied by the term, that is, his experience of the divine was not one which abolished the distinction between subject and object. We may, therefore, conclude that such an experience was instrumental in his reconception of the ultimate nature of linguistic phenomena, a reconception which saw division and otherness together with referentiality and deferral as the ontological basis for a proper conception of the Trinity. Indeed, in many ways Augustine's notion of the Trinity was directly influenced by his
neo-Platonic experience, especially insofar as that experience led him to see
distinction, separation and referentiality as the proper basis for
understanding linguistic functions. Such an experience led him to the
reconsideration of the ultimate nature of reality and alienation. But he
came to see alienation not as an inherent flaw in the structure of the
universe to be remedied by a return to an undifferentiated union with the
divine. Rather, Augustine came to see the division, separation, and
distinction characteristic of alienation as an integral function of the Trinity
itself.

If we may regard Augustine's neo-Platonic experience as having had
this epistemological effect, we may thus also note an inherent failure which
Augustine himself indicates insofar as this neo-Platonic "mysticism" failed to
have a significant effect on Augustine's moral behavior. If neo-Platonism
was effectual in distinguishing the second person of the Trinity from the
first, it was equally unsatisfactory in rendering the operations of the third.
The third person of Trinitarian ontology and anthropology was to become
Augustine's major concern in the next phase of his ethical development. For
Augustine tells us that in spite of the insights of the neo-Platonic school, his
personal habits remained distinctly consistent with the sensuality
characteristic of his oral phase, that is, even after having seen the nature of
divine truth, he was nevertheless unable to respond ethically to it (Conf.
VIII. 1, 1-2).

Something more was therefore required for Augustine to respond
ethically to the demands placed on his ontology by the notion of separation
and distinction in the godhead, a third concept which would allow for the
reconciliation of divisions without abolishing them. Such a concept of the
Trinity, even as it is seen in its image in man, was to be found in the hermeneutical activity of the Spirit, for it was the notion of the Spirit which ultimately allowed Augustine finally to incorporate the ontological realities of neo-Platonism into an ethical response.

In this regard, we may look to another "mystical" setting, that of Book IX of *The Confessions*, in which Augustine records a similar vision to that of Book VI but with significant changes. It would serve us well then to take a closer look at that "vision". In Book IX of *The Confessions*, Augustine relates how he and his mother, Monica, fell into conversation while waiting for their return trip to Africa (Conf. IX, 10, 23-26). This conversation takes place while they were looking out a window into an interior garden within the villa at which they were staying. Thus, the image presented suggests on the metaphorical plane the kind of interiority which is characteristic of the interior orientation of textuality's locus of hermeneutical decision. This may be opposed to the external dimension of direct identification of word and meaning characteristic of oral delivery. The setting, therefore, of the conversation suggests a deep interiority and abstraction from the realm of immediacy and identification characteristic of the oral word. In fact, as the passage in question proceeds, Augustine relates how the two of them were led into a series of abstractions from sense experience in an attempt to arrive at eternal truth. In this setting, all the distractions of the sensually tantalizing world must fall silent in order for the interior voice to be operative. Here we may note direct textual echoes from Plotinus' *Ennead V*, I, 2. The exact phraseology of Plotinus is here echoed by Augustine in setting the stage for the intimate vision of "the region of abundance that feeds Israel forever on truth" (Conf. IX, 10, 24). Every element of the
physical world is invoked for its beauty. This beauty incites reflection toward a transcendent notion of beauty in which the particular instances of beauty participate but which transcends them to a degree which solicits a silencing of the particulars in a focused consideration of that transcendent, universal realm.

In comparing the Plotinian passages with the Augustinian, we should, however, note significant changes by Augustine with respect to Plotinus' verbal imagery. In the Plotinian passage the emphasis is on words which suggest visual imagery. The disturbances of the sense realm for Plotinus must be still in order to perceive the transcendent truth. For Augustine, they must fall silent. Plotinus, we may thus note, is straining with his intellectual vision while Augustine is reaching out with his "heart's mouth" (Conf. IX, 10, 23) For Augustine, the heart represents that aspect of the Trinitarian image in man that corresponds to the Holy Spirit, whose chief function has to do with the activity of the will in conformity with the intellect. Also, for every Plotinian verbal echo there is an equal emphasis on Scriptural quotes. It would behoove us therefore to reflect on the nature of this shift in verbal imagery and the nature of such a shift from the visual to the oral.

In the visual imagery of Plotinus we may note that in the act of vision a separation is always implied between the subject and the object. Here we are not of course referring to the kind of visual dynamics characteristic of the oral setting in which the visual elements have the power to conjure up a direct emotive response to concrete experience. Rather, the visual imagery of Plotinus suggests on the intellectual plane a separation of subject and object, a separation, furthermore, necessary for the proper viewing of the
objects of the intellect. Such a separation was viewed by both Plotinus and Augustine as a necessary stage in the linguistic transition which moves beyond the immediacy of the oral word to the kind of separation which views distinction and difference on the ontological plane as a necessary precursor for the proper understanding of reality. The failure of the Plotinian scheme, however, at least from the standpoint of Augustine, was that an unbridgeable gulf appeared to separate him from the very thing which would prove to be the satisfaction of the longing of his heart.

Thus, in considering Augustine's use of a shift in metaphorical language from the visual back to the oral, are we not faced with the problem of a nostalgic return to the immediacy of the oral word which would therefore represent a retreat from the dynamics of alienation back to a kind of secondary orality? Such a retreat was seen in the beginning of this chapter as the major criticism of scholars like Handelman, who would see in Augustine the privileging of the oral word. We are in danger of making such an assumption if we do not carefully review the context of his language. It is very important that we remember that the separation of the knower and the known and the concomitant changes that such a stance had for Trinitarian theology were paramount for Augustine. What is lacking, however, in the neo-Platonic model is not the question of distinction and otherness. This notion of distinction and otherness Augustine accepted as a valid prerequisite for further theological considerations. What Augustine found to be deficient, however, in the neo-Platonic view was the manifest ineffectuality of the neo-Platonic system to create the environment in which the dynamics of separation could be reconciled. At least they could not be reconciled in a manner that directly affected the Trinitarian makeup of the
image of God in man in terms of his ethical response to the demands placed on his existence by the transcendental categories of truth and goodness. While Augustine could accept the notions of distinction and otherness on an ontological plane, this alone was unsatisfactory on the ethical. Thus, when Augustine's metaphorical language shifts from the visual to the oral, we may note a distinct intention on his part to demonstrate the degree to which the realities perceived on the intellectual plane may potentially be realized within the domain of the functioning of the will. Here we may regard Augustine's oral metaphors regarding the heart's mouth as indicative of the degree to which the realities of the intellectual aspects of the second person of the Trinity may attain a direct and immediate impact on the ethical realm in terms of the realization of those standards. What Augustine's language suggests is that an identification is achieved not on the level of the intellectual in which the individual is seen to merge with the *nous* of the Plotinian scheme. Indeed, the *logos* always remains both transcendent and referential. What is suggested by his language is rather the identification of the will with the third person of the Trinity, the Spirit, whose function for Augustine was to actualize the intellectual vision contained in a proper understanding of the divine *logos*. That is, the will for Augustine, insofar as it is the analogue of the third person of the Trinity in the image of God in man must effectually reflect in ethical response the transcendent standards of the divine *logos* in the material world.

Thus, when Augustine speaks of the "heart's mouth," he indicates a conformity of wills, a union of the Spirit with the will of man which is instrumental in conveying the realities of the second person by means of the procession of the third. It is, furthermore, interesting to note that for
Augustine the completion of this is not seen by him as the result of some sort of salvific experience. We are thinking of the ethical views of Luther in comparison, who saw the ethical dimension as something which flowed as a natural consequence from justification. For Augustine, however, this exocentric focus of the will is seen as part and parcel of the experience of the realization of justification. What separates his Christian experience from that of neo-Platonism is precisely this ethical dimension in which the will is restored to its proper function of rendering the creativity of the Holy Spirit within the dimensions of somatic existence. Thus, for Augustine it is difficult, if not impossible, to separate justification from sanctification. The sanctified activity of the regenerated will is for him the very arena in which the damaged image of God in man is restored. The touchstone of this for Augustine is clearly to be found in his ethical regeneration in which his will was seen to conform with the creative will of the Holy Spirit. Thus, for Augustine the restoration of the image of God in man, the memory, intellect and will, is made manifest by the function of the latter and by means of the function of the latter. This is not, of course, to charge Augustine with Pelagianism. Indeed, for Augustine such a volitional response is wholly dependent on the phenomenon of grace. However, in contradistinction to theologians like Luther, the locus of the will for Augustine is seen as the dimension in which the reality of the transcendent *logos* is made manifest in an objective fashion.

In summary, then, we must see Augustine's use of oral metaphor with regard to the will, a metaphor which suggests a kind of direct union of the Holy Spirit with the will of man not as a nostalgic return to a secondary orality in which the personality of the individual is seen to merge or return
to an undifferentiated union with the divine, but rather as a means for expressing the intimate conformity of the will with the divine image based on distinction, separation and re-union. This reunion does not abolish the distinctions. Such a metaphor denotes both the restoration of the unity of the Trinitarian functions of the image in man and does not abolish the ontological necessity of the distinctiveness of the persons.

Thus, Augustine's textuality finds its full flowering in the actualization of the image of God in man. Such an actualization is determined by a kind of exocentric orientation which leads to the full utilization of the capacity of the will in conforming to the transcendent demands of the divine Trinitarian image. In contrast to his Manichaeanism, the body thus takes on a new significance as the locus in which the will is seen to function. Augustine's Trinitarian theology, therefore, culminates in a renewed focus on the importance of ethical conduct in the body as the means for participating in the creative function of the Holy Spirit. This creative function has as its result the actualization of ethical activity through the regeneration of the image of God in man. The somatic orientation of Augustine's theology is one which in the end sees the relationship of the will to the body as an integral part of the soul's salvation. The validation of the somatic locus is one which can be seen in Augustine's affirmation of the necessity of bodily ressurrection as a complete restoration of the arena in which the human personality was designed to function (De Genesi: XII, 35, 68). The somatic realm is, therefore, vindicated and seen as an integral part of psychic existence. Apart from the somatic realm, the will has no arena in which to function. If the unity of the Trinitarian image is to have its proper environment in which to function that environment is seen by Augustine as
necessarily containing a somatic dimension.

Augustine’s textual encounter with neo-Platonism can thus be seen as an integral factor in deconstructing the material ontology of Manichaeism by providing the basis for abstraction and separation from such an ontology in order to conceive of a transcendent reality which ontologically validates the notion of separation and distinction as an integral aspect of divinity in the Trinity. His Christianity, however, went even further in giving rise to the notion of the hermeneutical activity of the Spirit which provides the basis for the reunion of the damaged image of God in man. This notion of the Spirit, as we have seen, provides the basis for the reconciliation of divisions in the human psyche in a manner that does not violate the integrity and autonomy of each. Rather, it allows for harmonious function through the agent of the will in conformity with the Holy Spirit. Thus, Augustine’s textuality can be seen through his Christianity to have attained a far greater degree of assimilation and individuation than the project of neo-Platonism. The will, therefore, is restored to a new orientation both to the transcendent demands of the divine and the imminent demands of the somatic world which is seen finally as the locus of actualization for the restoration of the unified image of God in man. Such a reconciliation leads, furthermore, to a renewed concern for the somatic, especially as that is seen as the domain in which the Trinitarian image of God in man is understood to function. Such a somatic orientation is not finally like that of the Manichaeans in which distinctions of the personality must be abolished, but rather one which acknowledges both a transcendent orientation and a somatic direction which sees the primary significance of volitional activity as the chief locus of the manifestation of the relation of
the transcendent to the temporal.

Such factors as those outlined above must be kept in mind in any consideration of Augustine's influence on the Reformation. When Augustine came to serve as model for the restoration of theology in the Reformation, we cannot ignore this textual dimension in assessing his influence. This textual orientation which sees all human language as both transcendentally and inter-textually referential must be held up in contrast to the type of oral ontology which viewed the oral word as the proper locus for divine language. For Augustine, the Scriptures were primary precisely because they were seen as embodying the archetypal dynamics of all human language; that is, they reinforce a view of divinity which stresses the utter transcendence and separation of all language from its referents. Restoration is not found finally in the oral arena in which the oral word is seen to bridge the gulf of alienation, but is rather found in the hermeneutical activity of the Holy Spirit which unites the separated linguistic unit to its transcendent referent. Such a restoration is not seen as abolishing distinction but rather baptizes such a distinction as the basis for a more profound understanding of the notion of transcendence and otherness. The contribution, then, of Augustinian anthropology is not finally to see an identification of man's soul with the divine in a Gnostic blending with divine substance but rather to see the actualization of the creative aspects of the Holy Spirit in the conformity of man's will with the third person of the Trinity. Such a conformity preserves both the autonomy of the individual and the transcendence of the Divine.

In considering the resurgence of Augustinianism in the Reformation, we may therefore consider those strands of Reformation theology most
authentically Augustinian and textually based which promote the referential and textual nature of language. In this respect the separation of the signifier from the signified is seen as an integral aspect of all human language as opposed to the oral enterprise which seeks an identity of signifier and signified in which the presence of the signified may be seen as manifest and full both in the signifier and the subject. In addition, we must consider as authentic those strands in Reformation theology which see the locus of the will as the true arena in which salvation attains full actuality.

Thus, we may begin to critique the Reformation on the basis of the degree to which it incorporated the dynamics of textuality into its theology of the word. An Augustinian, textual theology, moreover, is one that does not privilege the oral over the written but sees the textual dimension as truly reflective of the transcendence and otherness of God. At the same time, it emphasizes a volitional response to that transcendence, a volitional response that does not seek to preserve the homeostatic and conservative status quo of orality but seeks rather to transform the world on the basis of the transcendent pattern to which the word of the text always points but does not fully embody.
CHAPTER FOUR

ORALITY, MYSTICISM, AND LUTHER

Chapter III has served to provide us with a theological paradigm for understanding the dynamics of orality-textuality in the theological system of Augustine. As noted, Augustine provides a useful framework in which to see the various stages of transition from orality to textuality precisely because all the developmental stages can be observed in the history of his theological maturity. Using the paradigm that has now emerged from our discussion of Augustine, we will now attempt to move toward the Reformation in order to see on a much grander sociological scale a similar paradigm in operation.

In the case of Plato's Greece and Augustine's Rome, we observed the onslaught of alienation in the wake of the breakdown of the oral synthesis. Such a synthesis was seen to provide a cohesive functional system for sociological interaction as long as the strain of external factors could be assimilated. However, in both situations there was a breaking point. Havelock has argued that in the case of Greece this was largely the result of the development of the alphabet and a system of writing which provided a direct challenge to oral norms. We have noted that other factors may have contributed to the breakdown of the oral synthesis, namely, economic and sociological chaos. Certainly this was the situation in Rome where the conventional wisdom of Roman culture was not equal to the task of addressing the problems of barbarian invasions, dramatic shifts in
population, and subsequent economic chaos. In the wake of such a breakdown, we have witnessed the advent of various forms of mysticism which appear to address themselves to the growing crisis of alienation by offering a kind of secondary return to the security of an oral ontology. In this mystical setting, the individual is presented with the possibility of returning to an undifferentiated synthesis in which the individual soul is seen to merge with the cosmic whole. Indistinct union with God, therefore, becomes the goal of such mysticism. Such a union has precise parallels with primary orality insofar as the individual ceases to view himself as an autonomous unit but rather as one with a larger social context which in the case of mysticism would be the community of initiates.

In this chapter, we intend to examine the rise of late Medieval mysticism and its impact on the Reformation particularly the theology of Martin Luther. Luther, we have already pointed out, seems to favor the oral word as the authentic domain of theological speech. Coming, as he does, in the wake of a theological and social crisis, it is very tempting to try to see parallels between Luther's theology and the kind of mysticism which flourishes in such a crisis. While some may consider Luther himself as the instigator of such a breakdown, we must remember that the preceding two centuries provided severe challenges to the structure of both Church and State.

Therefore, we intend to trace the rise of mystical thought in the late Medieval period looking for factors that may have influenced the thought of Luther, especially insofar as he may be seen to have privileged the oral word and all which that implies in terms of a theological perspective. By including Luther in the same context as mysticism, we must acknowledge that we are
on controversial ground. Scholarship is clearly divided over the issue, in spite of the fact that Luther twice edited the *Theologia Germanica* and wrote copious marginal notes on Tauler's sermons. While Luther may not have been familiar with Eckhart, Tauler was Eckhart's close disciple and whatever modifications he made on Eckhart's theology may have represented more the desire to escape persecution than to correct his master. In any event, Luther's association with Tauler inevitably involves Eckhart and the entire tradition of the German mystics. The general trend in scholarship has been to concede a point of contact between Luther and the mystics but with the dire caveat that Luther in the final analysis severely distinguishes himself from that tradition. Bengt Hoffman has asserted that a great deal of theological prejudice has contributed to this view of Luther's attitude toward mysticism (Hoffman, 1976: 25-37). However, we have in the case of Steven Ozment's *Homo Spiritualis* a very rigorous argument that Luther did in fact radically break with the theological anthropology of mysticism. Therefore, we will tread carefully and begin with a fresh consideration of the emergence of mystical thought in the later Middle Ages and then proceed to place Luther somewhere in that context, attempting to do justice to the insights of Ozment while not ignoring those of the orality-textuality paradigm.

Bernard McGinn has done extensive research on the phenomenon of mysticism in the late Middle Ages. In his article, "Love Knowledge, and Mystical Union in Western Christianity: Twelfth to Sixteenth Centuries," he examines the relationship between the faculties of love and knowledge in the process of mystical union. McGinn operates with a broader definition of mysticism than that which has been discussed so far in this study. He
writes, "All ideals of Christian perfection, and mysticism is certainly one of these, are forms of response to the presence of God, a presence that is not open, evident, or easily accessible, but that is always in some way mysterious or hidden. When the hidden presence becomes the subject of some form of immediate experience, we can perhaps begin to speak of mysticism in the proper sense of the term" (McGinn, 1987: 7). On this basis, McGinn can speak of Augustine, Gregory, Bernard, and Eckhart all as mystics. However, within this broad category he does make some significant distinctions. While it is possible to note in Western Christianity the discussion of the immediate experience of God, McGinn notes a significant change about the time of Bernard in which the notion of union with God begins to enter the picture. McGinn has argued that the notion of union with God is not to be found in the thought of Augustine, something which, on the basis of our investigation of Augustine’s thought in Chapter III, we can readily accept (McGinn, 1987: 8). However, McGinn argues that this is the case in spite of the influence on Augustine by Plotinus "for whom union understood as fusion with the one was crucial" (1987: 8). However, as we have seen, the influence of Plotinus may have been significant in the development of Augustine’s theology of separation. In any case, McGinn agrees with our conclusion that in Augustine there is no mention of an undifferentiated union with God.

In the case of Bernard, however, there begins to be a new interest in union with God. This can be seen in Bernard’s use of metaphors to describe the relation of the individual to God. He uses three such metaphors: a drop of water in a vat of wine, iron in a fire, and air transformed into sunshine (McGinn, 1987: 8). All three appear to suggest some sort of union with God
in which a confusion of substances seems to take place. In each instance, the substance appears to be subsumed by the higher substance, and the result would be an annihilation of the individual. According to McGinn, Bernard was well aware of these implications and carefully sought to protect himself from such a view (McGinn, 1987: 8-9). Bernard uses the Latin term *videtur*, which is usually translated "seems to," although strictly speaking it could be translated "is seen to." If the former is the case, then Bernard suggests that the individual only seems to merge with God while the autonomy of the individual in fact remains. Bernard clarifies this position further by stressing that the unity which transpires is one of a unity of wills (McGinn, 1987: 9). Such a unity by definition implies that the will, and hence the individual, remain intact and that a confusion of substances is not his position. This has been argued as well by Gilson, "The promised deification...is nothing less, but also nothing more, than a perfect accord between the will of the human substance, and the will of the divine substance, in a strict distinction of the substances and the will" (Gilson, 1940: 125).

As mentioned above, McGinn’s major focus in this article is the consideration of the roles of love and knowledge in late Medieval mysticism. In that connection, he analyses the role of of the intellect in Bernard, who seems to emphasize the passing over into love where true union can only occur. It would appear that the intellect must be ignored in such an ascent to deity. In terms of the orality-textuality paradigm, we noted the essential role played by abstract knowledge in separating the individual from the oral arena. The alienation which follows is mitigated by the hermeneutical role of the Spirit, which mediates between subject and object. Such a tripartite
schema we observed in Augustine to be essential for a trinitarian anthropology. We must, therefore, ask if Bernard's denigration of the intellect represents a significant difference between himself and Augustine. McGinn, following Gilson, argues that the emphasis on love does not necessarily indicate a depreciation of the role of the intellect (1987: 9). Indeed, in Bernard and latter in Bonaventure, McGinn has shown that knowledge plays an important role in the ascent to God (1987: 11). And furthermore, the intellect is not abandoned entirely when love takes over in the affective union with God. What can be seen, however, is a kind of intellectualized love in which the intellect is enabled on the basis of union to function on a higher level. In this sense, he is in agreement with Gregory who said that "love itself is a form of knowing" (McGinn, 1987: 9). Far from being abandoned, the intellect appears to achieve a higher relationship to deity, one in which the intellect is not seen either to be abandoned or to be merged indistinctly with deity. In short, we may assume that, in spite of his metaphorical use of the merging of liquids, Bernard preserves a distinction of faculties which is much in keeping with Augustinian anthropology. In support of this, McGinn has noted the passage in the Confessions where Augustine discusses the so called vision at Ostia, a vision which took place "with the entire heart's effort" (toto ictu) and with "a swift thought" (rapida cogitatione) (Conf. 9, 10, 2-3). The Scriptural basis for Bernard's schema is that of the Pauline text, 1 Corinthians 6:17, ("Who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with him"). Bernard's understanding of this text is that unity between the individual and God is one which is best characterized as a unity of wills. The human will is not seen to merge with God but functions in a unity of purpose while retaining strict autonomy. The
tradition of Bernard is, according to McGinn, carried on by the mystical theologians, Thomas Gallus and the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* (1987: 12-13).

If we can affirm a Bernardine tradition which seems to be in keeping with Augustinian anthropology, an anthropology which was largely shaped by a textual orientation, that tradition can be seen to have met with a strict challenge during the thirteenth century. McGinn points out that in the thirteenth century there arises an interest in substantial union with God, a union which suggests some sort of fusion between human and divine substance (1987: 14). While McGinn's article is for the most part insightful, he has failed to account adequately for such a shift. Here, he falls back on his misunderstanding of the role of neo-Platonism and suggests that "the neo-Platonic notions of union of identity or indistinction helped provide explanatory categories for some thirteenth-century mystics and their commentators" (1987: 14). As we have seen, Kristeller and others would suggest the contrary. The revival of neo-Platonism which resulted from the new availability of texts had far more in common with what we have called textuality. While it is true that Eckhart was familiar to some extent with neo-Platonic texts, the movement to which McGinn refers was supported largely by a popular base. Such a base cannot be expected to have been familiar with the neo-Platonic corpus; and, furthermore, this popular base may have been practically illiterate or only semi-literate. This new focus had a strong association with the Fee-Spirit heresy, a heresy that we will see was largely a popular, oral phenomenon.

At this point we would, in contrast to McGinn, wish to hazard another guess as to the origins of this new focus on indistinct, or undifferentiated,
union with God. In our previous discussions, we noted a similar mystical thrust which stressed an undifferentiated union with God as the goal of religious experience. Such a development was seen in ancient Greece and in Augustine's Rome. As noted, both developments occurred in periods of alienation when the oral cultural synthesis had suffered devastating blows. If the Free Spirit heresy represents a parallel to ancient precedents, then it would behoove us to consider the state of the Medieval oral synthesis at the time of the thirteenth century in order to discern whether or not such a breakdown is in fact the case. For this task we turn now to Robert Lerner's *The Age of Adversity: The Fourteenth Century* (1968). Lerner, like Brian Stock (1973), has posited a cohesive cultural synthesis which continued to function without major interruption until the fourteenth century. Stock's assessments, more than Lerner's, is based on the unifying dimensions of an oral synthesis which dominated Western Christianity for many centuries. While Stock is mainly concerned with orality-textuality issues, Lerner has focused on the more traditional socio-economic factors. In regard to the latter, he has shown that Europe was on the brink of turmoil throughout the period of the thirteenth century. In 1315, Lerner notes that a major famine had swept the land (1968: 10). This was due to an excessive amount of flooding which ruined crops to such an extent that the effects were felt throughout Europe. Conditions were so bad that in some cases there were reports of people eating their own children (Lerner, 1968: 10). Such adversity not only drove men to crime and upset the social order, but also initiated a period of renewed apocalypticism which predicted an imminent return of Christ and prompted the widespread belief that judgment had fallen upon the land for departing from the apostolic faith. In addition to
famine, Lerner points out that by 1291 the major trade routes had fallen to the Turks. This severely restricted the importing of essential products and thus curtailed economic livelihoods. In addition to these, Lerner has pointed to the internal political strifes which further threatened stability (1968: 39-72). Italy, Germany, England, and France all witnessed internal political strife which served to challenge the stability of the late Medieval period.

Perhaps the most devastating phenomenon to occur during this period was the Black Plague. Lerner suggests that, in spite of all the other adversities, Europe may have survived the turmoil had it not been for the devastating effects of the Plague (1968: 13). While records are in some cases unreliable, some estimates suggest that as much as fifty percent of the population may have been eliminated by its onslaught (Lerner, 1968: 14). The economic results of the plague varied. In some instances, the plague served to further the economic decline, but not in all. In some cases, there was a surplus of resources which led to pockets of economic boom which boosted salaries and allowed serfs to buy their freedom. As a result, there was a rising lower class whose voice was louder than ever before. The effect of all this upheaval was a combination of social unrest and a concern with the imminence of death. All of this served to present a major challenge to the established order in terms of both society and the Church. The synthesis which had been achieved throughout Christendom in one degree or another was eroding. People no longer felt confidence in the established forms of dealing with catastrophe. In this regard, the Church was of no benefit, for it too was undergoing radical changes. The fourteenth century witnessed the culmination of political challenges to Church authority. The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, the austere Interdict, and later, the Great
Schism all served to call into question the cornerstone of the Medieval hierarchy. The magic of the older system to maintain order had been undermined. People were seeking in the wake of its demise a more authentic and immediate answer to the chaos of the times.

This sketch of late Medieval economic and ecclesiastical history points to the inevitability of a renewed concern for a more dynamic means of synthesizing a period characterized by a growing sense of alienation, alienation in terms of the established cultural norms which we have suggested hinged upon a vast and comprehensive oral synthesis. In such a setting, we appear to have the right prescription for the advent of a certain kind of mystical attitude. This mystical attitude we have witnessed earlier. It may be characterized by a concern to restore a more dynamic form of orality in which the alienated individual may regain some sense of security by a direct appeal to an oral community. Such a community circumvents the traditional oral norms, now invalidated, in favor of a more immediate oral experience which stresses a return of the alienated individual to a sense of indentification and unity with some sort of cosmic whole. In this sense, we wish to suggest that what McGinn offers as a return to a re-reading of neo-Platonic texts may have in fact been an attempt to restore a lost sense of oral identity.

In contrast to the Pauline formula of * unus spiritus*, McGinn notes that the rallying point for the new focus on indistinct union with God was the prologue to the Gospel of John, as well as other Johannine texts (1987: 15). This phenomenon proves to be most interesting in light of the orality-textuality paradigm. Scholars are now beginning to acknowledge the wealth of oral material embedded in the Fourth Gospel. The prologue to the
gospel in particular seems to reflect the privileged ontological status of the oral word *in principio*. The work of Werner Kelber (1987) has shown that the writer of the gospel may have in fact had in mind a rigorous deconstruction of such notions of oral presence insofar as the narrative context of the gospel severely challenges the possibility of plenary, unmediated presence. Our purpose here is not to explore the textual intentions of the writer of the gospel but rather the mystical reading of the gospel and the manner that logocentric schemes could be read into the text. The fact that the writer may have intended otherwise does not prevent the reader from isolating themes which seem to support his/her position. That the gospel contains a considerable amount of oral themes both theological and ontological allowed the late Medieval mystics to cull a corpus of material that seems, when taken out of context, to support their views. Such is clearly the case with the prologue to the Fourth Gospel. Eckhart, for example, used the prologue as a vehicle for discussing the nature of true existence *in principio* which allowed him to develop a theory of emanation which became the pattern for understanding the relationship of creature to ideal and existence to essence (McGinn, 1981: 123-124). In his commentary on John, Eckhart asserts that "what is produced or proceeds from anything is precontained in it" (McGinn, 1981: 123). This may be said to be the heart of Eckhartian mysticism. Such a view allows for the denigration of existence in favor of a pre-creaturely status which contains the essence of any created thing or individual. In terms of an anthropology, the individual as creature is nothing. Existence in itself is nothing. It is only in the context of the pre-creaturely idea contained within the Godhead that anything can be said to partake of being. The goal of the mystic is, therefore, to return to this
pre-creaturely status in the Godhead. Time in this sense is an anathema, insofar as creation occurs in time. Time is thus denigrated in favor of direct divine presence.

This concentration on presence may be seen as a key feature of an oral ontology. As seen in primary orality, there is little or no conception of time as a linear progression. The notion of history, and a historical perspective, is distinctly lacking from the oral position. Of course, we cannot argue that the great Dominican scholar was as naive in this regard as a bronze age Greek warrior or an African tribesman. However, we can detect, even in periods of relative cultural sophistication, the rise of a mystical preference for the notion of immediate presence, especially when the culture is undergoing severe strains which challenge conventional wisdom and tend to spawn a sense of alienation. In such times, it appears that the mystical project is designed to fulfill in some secondary fashion a nostalgic longing for a psychological state in which the individual may escape isolation and the pains of individual existence in favor of a return to dreaming innocence in which the individual is not distinguished from divine presence.

We noted in the chapter on Augustine the mystical, oral community active somewhere in the background of the Gospel of Thomas. There, we saw in the context of the Baptismal rite the possibility to return to the status of pre-creaturely manhood before the separation between Adam and Eve occurred. In that setting, there was a clear preference for the very sort of mystical union which seems once again to be surfacing in the thought of Eckhart. That this is the case is perhaps even clearer in Eckhart's disciple, Johannes Tauler. In Steven Ozment's *Homo Spiritualis*, he has devoted a lengthy discussion to this very phenomenon in the thought of Tauler. In his
opening chapter on Tauler, Ozment notes the Eckhartian scheme of emanation and the preoccupation with the prologue to the Gospel of John as the proof text for a mystical theology of return to essential being and the denigration of existence as creature. "Tauler argues that before his flowing from God into createdness, man was 'one essential being' (e in istig wesen) with and in God." He writes further that "until this pre-created purity is re-entered, man remains alien from his origin-'uncreatedness in God'" (Ozment, 1969: 13). Clearly, Tauler viewed temporal existence as a kind of flaw which must be healed by a return to the indistinct union of the individual with his pre-created status in which the alienation resulting from time and creation is overcome. Furthermore, in Tauler there is the notion of a higher and a lower nature in man. The higher is associated with man's true being in God, the lower with man's association with time and creation (Ozment, 1969: 27). For Tauler, the higher nature remains in continual uninterrupted union with God in which no distinction occurs. Tauler calls this the grunt of the soul. "Here God is present more than in heaven and in all other creatures. Here is a place from which God never separates himself, for it is the place peculiar to God alone" (Ozment, 1969: 18). Tauler also speaks of the spark of the soul which never rests until it has returned to the uncreated ground out of which it flowed (Ozment, 1969: 21).

We can see here, then, in Tauler and Eckhart the understanding of the process of emanation which privileges existence in principio and depreciates existence in time together with the necessary conditions of temporal existence, chief among them, alienation.

In Eckhart, the pattern of emanation is predicated upon the emanation of the Son of God. Here again we see the prologue of the Fourth Gospel being
invoked. The Son emanates from God in the same manner that creatures emanate from the divine idea. There is thus both an external and an internal word, the latter clearly prior. Just as the Son emanates from the Father so do the individual souls emanate from the Father. Therefore, in the Eckhartian scheme the individual and the Son in a sense are equal. Eckhart writes "He gives me birth, me, his Son and the same Son" (McGinn, 1981: 126-9). The soul, therefore, in its emanated status is no different from the second person of the Trinity. This raises the question of Eckhart's understanding of the Trinity and here we see him at his most daring. McGinn writes,

If the soul is one with the divine ground in its principle (in principio), then it is not only identical with the Son being born but also with the Father begetting and the Holy Spirit proceeding from both. Further, since the divine ground, the absolute unity beyond the Trinity, has a certain priority, albeit a dialectical one, in relation to the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the ultimate mystical goal can be described as a "breaking-through" to indistinct oneness with the Godhead. As he puts it in the German Sermon 48, the spark of the soul is not content with the Trinity of Persons, not even with the simple divine essence, "but it wants to know the source of its essence, it wants to go into the simple ground, into the quiet desert into which distinction never gazed, not the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit." There God has promised to speak to the soul "with one, one from one, one in one and in one still one everlastingl.y." Throughout his works, but especially in the vernacular sermons, Eckhart insists upon the absolute oneness of God and the soul. "Between man and God, however, there is not only no distinction, there is no multiplicity either. There is nothing but one" (McGinn, 1987: 16).
At this point it is worthwhile to discuss the Eckhartian notion of the Trinity. As we have seen, Eckhart insists upon the absolute unity of God. This is a kind of unity which goes beyond any distinction. In keeping with his understanding of the process of emanation, Eckhart insists that the persons of the Trinity emanate from the ground of being in a subordinate manner which gives priority to the absolute unity. In contrast to Augustine's Trinitarian theology which gave a certain priority to difference and distinction in the Trinity as the basis for a relational unity mediated by the Holy Spirit, Eckhart insists upon a hierarchical structure in the Trinity which sees distinction as something subordinate to the absolute unity of the ground of deity. Eckhart's theory of emanation is often seen as derived from neo-Platonic categories, and indeed Eckhart often quotes the neo-Platonists. However, if we remember our discussion of the textual ontology of Plotinus and the role it played in the deconstruction of oral assumptions on the part of Augustine, we must acknowledge that in the Plotinian understanding of emanation the realm of *nous*, roughly equivalent for Augustine to the second person of the Trinity, is a process which occurred above time in the dimension of eternity. On this basis, Augustine was able to see differentiation as an integral aspect of deity itself leading to his understanding of the Trinity as a relational unity, a unity which is predicated on distinction, separation and otherness. This we have argued is, in theological terms, the basis for a textual understanding of Trinitarian anthropology. In such an anthropology the goal is not a dissolution of distinctions in a return to an undifferentiated unity but a mediation based on the role of the Spirit which validates distinction and separation as an image of the divine Trinity itself.
McGinn's article, "Love, Knowledge, and Mystical Union," considers the role of the faculties of love and knowledge in the ascent to unity. In the case of Bernard, Bonaventure, and others, he notes a distinct tendency to include both of these faculties even though love retains a certain priority. For the purpose of our discussion, however, it is important to see that in the case of both faculties a kind of objective orientation is retained in which the object of love and the object of knowledge are never seen to dissolve into an identity between subject and object. When McGinn considers the respective roles of love and knowledge in Eckhart, we may observe a radical departure from the traditional schema. McGinn has challenged the usual assumption that Eckhart is only an intellectualist mystic noting passages in which Eckhart stresses the role of love in the process of union (1987: 18). The difference in Eckhart, however, is the principle of identity. For Eckhart, to know something is to be one with it. Likewise, to love something is to be one with it. Eckhart's notion of unity here follows the outline of his Trinitarian theology. In both cases, that of love and knowledge, an identity between subject and object is understood to be the case. Such an identity between subject and object, knower and known, we may observe to be the very antithesis of the kind of textual perspective noted by Havelock in the Greek situation which led to the breakdown of the oral synthesis. For textual thinking to occur, subject and object, knower and known, must be viewed as distinct. For Eckhart to be advancing an epistemology of identity suggests a return to an oral ontology and its preference for indistinct or undifferentiated unity between subject and object.

In considering the notion of union in Bernard, we mentioned his use of a metaphor which compared such union to a drop of water in a vat of wine
Such language indicates a kind of union of substances that Bernard was careful and quick to clarify insisting that such a union was not to be seen as a substantial one in which the substance of the individual and God were seen to merge. However, many others picked up on the image without the necessary qualification of distinction between substances. McGinn's observation that in the thirteenth century there was a shift in mysticism toward the notion of indistinct union with God also has implications for the use of this simile which has a very interesting history in late Medieval mystical thought.

Rober Lerner has written a very interesting article, "The Image of Mixed Liquids in Late Medieval Thought" (1971), in which he traces the history of this simile. Lerner quotes the gnomic statement of Jorge Luis Borges: "It may be that universal history is the history of different intonations given a handful of metaphors" (1971: 397). What this statement suggests for Lerner is that it is sometimes possible to trace a significant course of intellectual history by following the re-interpretation of key images in the thought of major thinkers. On this basis, it is most illuminating to follow Bernard's liquid image.

Lerner, like McGinn, points out the strong caveat given by Bernard not to misunderstand the liquid image as suggesting an indistinct union between the soul and God but rather a unity of wills in which subject and object remain distinct (1971: 397-398). Furthermore, he points out that Bernard's use of the image was meant to suggest a kind of union which occurs in the afterlife but not in any sense on earth. "Still," he writes, "the effect of the simile could be heady" (Lerner, 1971: 398). To demonstrate just how heady this simile could be, Lerner has related an incident which was chronicled in
the thirteenth century by a Dominican *raconteur*, Thomas of Cantimpre, nearly a century after Bernard's death. The incident concerns a canon regular of Essoines, John Polinus. While preaching to the beguinage of Cantimpre, Polinus used the image of the inseparable mixture of wine and water, an image he clearly borrowed from Bernard, to suggest the union of the soul with God. One woman in the audience was so affected by the sermon, and perhaps the image itself, that she "bubbled over like new wine in an air tight container" burst a blood vessel and died right there (Lerner, 1971: 298). Several things can be observed from this one incident. Above all, we can note the effects of the dynamics of orality in preaching. The dynamics involved here are very much reminiscent of the oral intentions of the ancient bard. In discussing the role of the bard in ancient Greece and in Augustine's Rome, we noted that the successful orator was one who could elicit a total identification between audience, speaker, and message. In contrast to a textual mode of reception, the oral arena invites this kind of identification in which the audience is rapt into a kind of undifferentiated union with the orator's speech. Such a union occurred largely on the affective plane, in many cases leading to a temporary suspension of rational powers in favor of an emotional response that often proved to be overwhelming. What is interesting about the case of John Polinus is that his oratory was apparently so effective that the woman in question was totally overcome by his rhetorical powers to the point of suffering a stroke. Thomas of Cantimpre records the story with approval, suggesting that such powers of oral delivery were prized in spite of the possible mortal effects produced in the audience. In addition, it is very provocative that the simile in question expresses the kind of union that was the goal of the oral preacher. Oral
delivery depends upon an undifferentiated union between speaker, message and audience. It is, therefore, all the more interesting that the simile of unmediated union itself directly states the goal both of the speaker and his theology.

While the number of deaths resulting from oral rhetoric were rare, nevertheless, the use of such rhetoric was widespread and was even encouraged in the case of such preaching. Dominicans during this period were assigned to preach to female audiences usually attached to some beguinage. However, the established orders were not always prepared for the results of such preaching. What subsequently developed was an intense lay movement often involving women in which the notion of union was stressed to the point of heresy.

Female enthusiasm of this kind gained its own momentum and finally resulted in persecution. By the time of Mechtilde of Magdeburg and Hadewich, theories of spiritual Minne were being discussed, as well as the notion of a marriage or union with Christ occurring on earth. Whereas Bernard had deferred any possibility of union to the afterlife, the new focus in the thirteenth century increasingly became not simply an indistinct union with God but a union which was attainable even during one's earthly lifetime. Such a focus led to widespread persecution. One of the most famous of such persecutions occurred in the case of Marguerite Porete, a mystical beguine.

Marguerite is a clear example of the mystical use of Bernard's liquid image to describe a union of indistinction which may occur here on earth. While she does outline seven states toward glorification of the soul which reserve the final state for the afterlife, she nevertheless allows for a
preliminary union on earth in which the individuality of the soul is drained like a river pouring into the sea, another use of a type of liquid imagery suggesting an indistinct, or fused union of the soul with God in which separation is overcome. In keeping with what we have described as an oral anthropology, Marguerite's use of such imagery clearly views the notion of individuality as a form of alienation which must be addressed by a return of the soul to an undifferentiated union with the divine. Unlike Bernard, Marguerite has no qualifying language suggesting that the soul only seems to be so united. Rather, we may say that her notion of union with God is one which stressed the aspect of a loss of individuality in favor a blending with the cosmic, divine whole.

Marguerite outlined the seven stages leading to glorification in a work called *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. This treatise has been only recently restored to modern audiences by the work of Romana Guarnieri (1965: 501-565). Lerner notes in *The Heresy of the Free Spirit in the Later Middle Ages* that the dialogue was meant to be read aloud (1972: 201). This suggests a possible oral orientation on the part of its author, once again confirming the connection between late Medieval mysticism and an oral ontology of unmediated presence. What Lerner refers to as poor organization, repetition, and an almost formulaic mystical vocabulary would be detrimental to a textual mentality, but, as we have seen, such features are the norm in oral composition. Other features of the Free Spirit movement which have parallels in oral thinking are the use of secret words to convey chief ideas of the movement (Lerner, 1972: 148). In addition, Lerner notes the use of secret oaths taken by the initiates of the movement (1972: 148). While it is possible to argue that such secrecy was necessary to the survival
of the movement, one can also argue that secrecy is a vital part of the kind of mystical orality already examined in the case of mystery religions in Greece and later in the Manichaean community. When words are seen as units of power and presence, then they must be carefully guarded from the infidels and uninitiated.

Marguerite is considered to be one of the first proponents of the so-called Free Spirit heresy which stressed a kind of pantheism and antinomianism. Lerner has sought to soften these charges in the case of Marguerite, but we cannot deny that she was executed for holding such views and that her followers in the movement certainly went beyond her if in fact she exhibited, as Lerner suggests, a degree of caution especially with regard to antinomianism. Nevertheless, we may conclude that the fused union of the soul with God in which the soul is thought to be identical with God could conceivably pave the way for such heresies, as was clearly the case.

While scholars are usually cautious about including Eckhart in the Free Spirit movement, there nevertheless remain several common features between him and the movement. One of these is the use of the liquid image to express the soul's union with God. The best example of Eckhart's use of such imagery occurs in the passage where he states that "the soul becomes miraculously enchanted and loses itself, like a drop of water poured into a tub of wine, so that it knows no more of itself and imagines that it is God" (Strauch, 1919: 110). One might point to Eckhart's use of the word imagines (\textit{wenit}) to argue that Eckhart, like Bernard in his use of the Latin \textit{videtur}, is suggesting that the soul only seems to be, or imagines that it is, so closely united to God. This would appear to protect Eckhart from the heresy of
indistinct or substantial union with God. However, in another passage Eckhart states that "the soul is much nearer united with God than body and soul in man. The union is much closer than when a drop of water is poured into a vat of wine and becomes so transformed that no creature can discern a distinction" (Quint, 1963: 269). Here we have a clear case that Eckhart went much further that Bernard to the point of suggesting that the union between God and the soul is even closer than the union expressed by the liquid image. In the case of Eckhart, then, we seem to have an adaptation of the liquid image that argues for an indistinct union with God which would be quite in keeping with the Free Spirit notion of a kind of union in which identity is seen to take place between the soul and God.

At this point, we might also note that Eckhart's notion of the indistinct union with God very often takes place in his discussions of the Eucharist (Lerner, 1971: 406). Just as the water is converted into wine, the soul is converted into God. It would be an interesting task for scholars to pursue the use of the liquid image in relation to the oral dynamics of the Eucharist. So far, there have only been hints that Eckhart's understanding of the indistinct union with God is something which he derived from what is generally considered an orthodox point of view regarding transubstantiation in the Eucharist (at least from the standpoint of the Fourth Lateran Council). As noted earlier, Brian Stock has shown that the formation of this understanding of transubstantiation has a very strong oral basis. The controversy between Ratramnus and Radbertus can be seen as a struggle between oral and textual points of view with regard to the phenomenon of the Eucharist. In the case of Ratramnus, we may detect a distinctly textual point of view in which language is seen as referential. In this textual setting,
the words of the Eucharist are not understood as having any clear power to transform reality. Rather, they are linguistic signs which point to an absent, transcendent reference point which is neither contained in, nor transformed by, the power of oral proclamation. In the case of Radbertus, however, the language of the Eucharist is understood to contain the power to transform, and even to subsume, reality into another order. Such dynamics can be seen to be closely aligned to an oral understanding of the power of oral speech in which there is no strict dichotomy between signifier and signified. In this sense, Eckhart may be seen to have taken the oral implications of the Eucharist and applied them to the relationship of the soul to God. Just as there is no distinction in the Eucharist between the spoken words of institution and their referents, so there is no distinction between the soul and its esse idealis in the divine mind prior to creation.

An obvious example of Eckhart's close association with the Free Spirit heresy can be found in the Free Spirit tract, Schwester Katrei. The tract in question discusses the relationship of a sister, a term which Lerner argues was used in Strasbourg to designate a beguine (Lerner, 1971: 403), and her confessor. One manuscript identifies this confessor as no less than Meister Eckhart (Lerner, 1971: 403). In this tract, the sister in question strikes out on her own and leaves her confessor behind in an attempt "to follow a more apostolic life" (Lerner, 1971: 403). After a long period of wandering, she returns to her confessor for advice. He (Eckhart) advises her to rid herself of all desire and thereby she falls into nothingness. Lerner notes that "thereupon she is drawn into a divine light, 'heaven and earth become too narrow' for her, and she finally cries out, 'sir, rejoice with me, I have become God' " (Lerner, 1971: 403). Following this interesting account, there
is a discussion of the union between the soul and God which uses the liquid image: "some souls are so united in pure divinity that they can never be found again, just like a drop of wine in the middle of the sea" (Lerner, 1971: 403). Lerner argues that the discussion which follows the narrative was taken from a sermon of Eckhart's (1971: 403). What is interesting for our purposes is that the possibility of such a union was clearly to be understood as a part of earthly life. Such a union was not strictly a prerogative for the saints dwelling in the glory of the afterlife, but was a distinct possibility for advanced souls here in this earthly sojourn.

The Free Spirit movement was attacked on many fronts. To be sure, it was seen as heretical from the standpoint of the Avignon papacy. In light of our earlier discussion of the turmoil of the fourteenth century, we can see that the challenge of the Free Spirit movement, and of mysticism in general, was largely the result of the breakdown of the Medieval, oral synthesis. This synthesis met sweeping challenges on several fronts all stemming from the perceived ineffectuality of the established norms to deal with the chaos related to economic, political and social concerns taxed by the stress of external threats. The Avignon papacy was clearly on the defensive. However, as we have suggested, the controversy involved the failure of an oral system to meet the demands of an orally oriented society. The conflict was not necessarily between orality and textuality, but a form of orality which had through the centuries become stagnant and a form of orality which sought to restore the lost dynamism of the fossilized papal hierarchy.

But this was not the only front on which the Free Spirit movement was challenged. William of Ockham was also a harsh critic of the movement. Both Ockham and Eckhart found themselves at the court of Avignon to
answer the charge of heresy, but they came to be there on entirely different bases. Ockham’s more textual orientation threatened the supremacy of the transcendent authority of a centralized hierarchy based on an authority that largely appealed to oral tradition and a kind of ontology which placed the ideal above the particular. Eckhart, on the other hand, challenged the authority of the hierarchy not so much because he denied the authenticity of an oral authority, but rather because he represented a challenge to the particular oral authority of the centralized system of its administration. As we have seen in the case of the Eucharist, Eckhart was not strictly opposed to the position of the Church but only to its limited control of the dynamics of oral presence. The kind of union that was available to the individual on the basis of the Eucharist was one which, according to Eckhart, should have had a more universal access. The Eucharist was only a type of oral presence which was available, according to Eckhart, to anyone and at all times. Richard Kieckhefer has shown that the Eckhartian notion of union was one which stressed a habitual contact with God which was available to the individual at all times (1978: 203-235). In addition, McGinn has shown that such a union in the case of Eckhart has as its goal the notion of unmediated union with God. For union to be authentic it must occur without a mediator and habitually (McGinn, 1987: 15).

William of Ockham was critical of the Free Spirit movement and of Eckhart precisely on the grounds that the soul could have such an ontological access to God. Lerner has noted that Ockham held a dim view of Eckhart and the movement but was himself an object of the wrath of Avignon (1971: 404). To explain this, we must acknowledge that nominalism represented a threat both to the more controlled orality of the Church’s
hierarchy and to the more democratic orality of mysticism.

Indeed, Obermann has shown that the mystical project which sees the fall as practically indistinguishable from creation itself to be an anathema to nominalism (Oberman, 1963: 329). In this sense, the mystical project is one which sees essential reality as contained in the pre-temporal existence in the Godhead in relation to which the creature, as creature, is alienated. In the mystical project, this alienation is overcome by a retreat from creaturely existence back into the ontologically prior union with God which existed before creation and before time. Such a retreat can be seen to have much in common with the mystical schemes outlined earlier, particularly with that of the Thomas community which sought through the oral ritual of baptism to return to pre-creaturely adamic existence before the separation of the sexes occurred in the creation of Eve. We may conclude, therefore, that the nominalistic enterprise represented an anti-oral point of view which sought to work out the complexities of theology within and not prior to alienation as it exists in creaturely, temporal existence, an existence which stresses the importance of the individual over the transcendent ontology of a pre-temporal esse idealis such as Eckhart's.

The thought of Eckhart was carried on by his followers, most notably Tauler, Suso and Ruysbroeck, in spite of the dangers of persecution. Tauler on several occasions criticized the Free Spirit movement for its antinomianism but in other regards appears to hold a similar theological and anthropological stance. This is especially true in the case of indistinct union with God and the use of the liquid imagery to express that union. Tauler says that the essence of the human spirit is completely absorbed into the divine essence "just as a drop of water is lost in a great vat of wine" (Vetter,
Unlike Bernard, who employs the caveat "seems to," Tauler is explicit in this passage in stressing that "all distinction" is lost (Lerner, 1971: 406). Like Eckhart, Tauler makes the assertion that this indistinct union with God has its prototype in the Eucharist in which the elements are completely transformed (Lerner, 1971: 406). We have already discussed the oral implications of such a view. Furthermore, we may note that Tauler's oral orientation can be seen in his sermons. Josef Schmidt has noted that Tauler's sermons "reflect an oral pattern." He goes on to state that "Tauler relates to the everyday context of his audience. He presents points of reflection that are almost self contained units without caring too much for a strict logical disposition" (Shrady, Schmidt, Haas, 1985: 18). Previously, Schmidt has noted that "Tauler skillfully blends mystical notions with popular images, popular proverbs, and even down to earth exhortations" (1985: 16). In Chapter I, we saw the connection between orality and folklore in the Lutheran movement. Part of the success of the Lutheran movement can well be attributed to this utilization of a popular oral base. Furthermore, we noted Hillerbrand's observation that the theology of propaganda was not substantially different from Luther's own theology, thus implying a theological connection between Luther's oral orientation and the oral mentality of the popular masses. Here, we argue that the same principles can be observed in the case of Tauler. That Tauler utilizes the dynamics of orality suggests an affinity between his theology and an orality which is rooted in the oral folk mentality of his audience. Also, Schmidt's observation that Tauler employed proverbial expressions to engage his audience further indicates an oral preference in the theology of Tauler. We have already discussed the widespread use of proverbs as short oral units
which contain the oral norms of the community. All of this indicates that a very fine line, if any, separates mystical thought from oral thought in general.

In this regard, there appears to be little difference between Tauler and his teacher, Eckhart. Frank Tobin in his book, *Meister Eckhart: Thought and Language* (1986), has devoted considerable space to a discussion of Eckhart's style, particularly his style of preaching. One of Eckhart's favorite rhetorical devices is the use of chiasmus, or the a b b a pattern. Tobin writes, "Chiasmus occurs frequently in the vernacular sermons, so much so that it must be considered an essential part of the preacher's pattern of expression" (Tobin, 1986: 170). The use of chiasmus is one of the earliest oral poetical devices. We noted earlier the connection between the use of chiasmus and the proto-geometric style in bronze age Greece vase painting. That Eckhart and Tauler employed such oral devices in their preaching style implies a connection between their mystical theology and oral patterns of thought. Furthermore, the style of Tauler and its use of popular images to engage the audience demonstrates a project not unlike that of the oral bard whose goal was to attain complete empathy with his audience and a kind of oral synthesis in which identification without distinction occurs. In this sense, the speaker's indistinct union with the audience provides a prototype for the indistinct union of the soul with God.

It is this goal of indistinct union with God which continues to be the leitmotif of Eckhart's followers. The Flemish mystic, Ruysbroeck, is another good example. While Ruysbroeck did not use the liquid image to describe such a union, he nevertheless mentions a union without distinction as the goal of mystical thought. McGinn has noted that in the third book of
Ruysbroeck's, *The Adornment of Spiritual Marriage*, "he speaks of a union of essences that takes place in the Godhead, above the distinction of Persons, in a way that seems remarkably close to Eckhart" (McGinn, 1987: 19). The goal of the mystical ascent for Ruysbroeck is to rise to the level where the soul participates in the life of the Trinity. But the life of the Trinity is characterized as that place "where the three Persons give way to the essential and without distinction enjoy essential beatitude...There all the elevated spirits in their superessence are one enjoyment and one beatitude with God without difference" (McGinn, 1987: 20).

It should be fairly clear at this point that the mystical union of the soul with God, a union that is without distinction, had dire consequences for the notion of the Trinity as a relational unity. In our consideration of Augustine and Bernard, we noted that their understanding of union with God was one which did not abolish the substantial distinction between the individual and God. The union suggested by them implied a relational unity which respected the difference between the individual and God. Mediation between the individual and God was effected by the hermeneutical role of the Holy Spirit which unites, but does not abolish, subject and object. The pattern for such a union is to be found in the Trinity itself, whose union is predicated on a distinction of persons. In anthropological terms, such a distinction of persons is mirrored in the human personality with regard to the faculties of knowledge and the will. As seen earlier, both play a vital role in the soul's ascent to God, but never are the faculties dissolved into a fused union in which they are seen to dissipate. The image of God in man was thought to be patterned after the Trinitarian nature of God in which the distinctions of Persons provides the basis for a relational unity. In the case
of Augustine, we argued that such a Trinitarian anthropology had a certain textual basis in which the separation of subject and object, or knower and known, was essential. In the mysticism of the later Medieval period, when we observe the theology of mystical union which abolishes all distinction, we must sincerely ask to what extent this represents a return to an oral ontology and theology in which, as in the oral setting, there is not a strict distinction between knower and known, subject and object, speaker and audience. On this basis, we appear to have evidence to suggest that there is indeed a strong affinity between such mysticism and an oral ontology of indistinction.

Before proceeding to a discussion of Luther's relation to mysticism, we must consider the place of the *Theologia Germanica* in the mystical tradition. This is of primary importance in understanding Luther insofar as he twice edited the work for publication, and, apart from Tauler, nothing in the tradition was perhaps more influential. The close association of this work with the tradition is underscored by the fact that Luther assumed it was a work of Tauler's. While scholars have since argued that this is probably not the case, it is acknowledged that the work is very close in spirit to Tauler and was probably written by one of his close associates. The work itself does not mention the name of its author and seeks to preserve anonymity. It has been suggested that such anonymity was necessary in a time of persecution (Hoffman, 1980: 1-2). The author says only that the book was written by a friend of God and that the book was "spoken through" its author. While we can easily appreciate the need for anonymity in a time of persecution, we must also not ignore the fact that such a depreciation of individual authorship has a certain affinity to oral composition. In orality
the bard is always understood to be the mouthpiece for the muse. Individual authorship is not a concept understood to be operative in the oral arena. The bard is rather understood to be a mouthpiece primarily of the muse but also of the collective norms of the community. When the author of the *Theologia* asserts that the book was spoken through him, we may note an oral understanding of the nature of composition in which the individuality of the author is not essential. Furthermore, the anonymous author makes explicit reference to the "Friends of God," who we have already noted expressed a particular affinity with the Gospel of John. Insofar as the Gospel of John contains a great deal of oral features, this suggests that the author of the *Theologia* shared a similar perspective. Such a perspective is summed up in the Gospel's prologue which appears to give priority to existence *in principio* prior to creation. The goal of such a project, as we have seen, is to escape the alienation of temporal, creaturely existence in a return to a primal unity enjoyed in the Godhead before the separation of alienation occurred as a result of the emanation from God which is creation. Once again, creation is an anathema in such an oral schema.

The best example of this in terms of the *Theologia* can be witnessed in the passage which discusses the two natures of Christ's soul. We must quote this passage at length.

It is written that the soul of Christ has two eyes, a right eye and a left eye. In the beginning, when these were created, Christ's soul turned its right eye toward eternity and the Godhead and therefore immovably beheld and participated in divine Being and divine Wholeness. This vision continued unmoved and unhampered by all vicissitudes, travail, agitation, suffering, torment, agony-tribulations surpassing anything ever experienced.
in a person's outer life.

But at the same time the left eye of Christ's soul, his other spiritual vision, penetrated the world of created beings and there discerned distinctions among us, saw which ones were better and which ones were less good, nobler or less noble. Christ's outward being was structured in accordance with such inner discrimination.

Thus Christ's inner being, its vision through the soul's right eye, always participated in full measure in the divine nature, in complete bliss and joy.

But the outer man, the left eye of his soul, was involved in a full measure of suffering, distress, and travail. Yet this took place in such a way that the inner, right eye remained unmoved, unimpeded, untouched by all the travail, suffering, and torment that the outer man had to deal with.

It has been said that Christ, when bound to the pillar and beaten and when hanging on the cross, experienced all this in His outer man, while the inner man, the soul in its function as the right eye, rested in the same bliss and joy as it did after the Ascension or as it does at this very moment (Hoffman, 1980: 67).

While this passage does not explicitly state a docetic view of the incarnation, there are certainly docetic elements to it. The so-called right eye of Christ remains ever in its eternal abode and is unaffected by the miseries of this world. Indeed, the author of the *Theologia* deduces from this account the conclusion that we too should be so withdrawn from the external world. In keeping with the mystical paradigm of emanation in which creation is pre-contained in the Godhead in an indistinct union with it, the author stresses a return to such pre-creaturely existence as the goal of the religious life. The two eyes of the soul of Christ clearly demonstrate the favored status of the right eye and its orientation as the essential Christ
analogous to the *logos* eternally united with God in a Trinity which privileges the undifferentiated union of the persons above any form of distinction and difference.

Another recurring theme in the *Theologia* is the abolition of the notion of the self (Hoffman, 1980: 76). While it would appear on the surface that such a depreciation of the self has ethical value, when viewed in the context of the discussion of why the self should be depreciated, we must qualify the ethical implications of such a view. For the author of the *Theologia*, the self represents the alienation and differentiation which has resulted from creation. *In principio* all things were united in an indistinct union in the Godhead. The notion of multiplicity and distinction is, as we have noted, the result of creation which in keeping with this late Medieval mystical tradition is, as Oberman has shown, practically synonymous with the Fall. Multiplicity and distinction must give way to a return to essential unity. The self is a prime example of such a fall. This annihilation of the self leads the mystic to an awareness of essential unity in reference not to a created status but to a transcendent pre-creaturely state of indistinct union in the Godhead even above the separation of persons in the Trinity. When the author of the *Theologia* thus urges the mystic to view all created things from the same point of view, he means that all things should be seen in their essential unity prior to creation. In terms of temporal existence, they are not to be bothered with. Here, we see the basis for the mystical stance of *gelassenheit* which, to use the language of Heidegger, seems to imply a kind of letting being be but is really a kind of apatheic posture toward the temporal order. True being for man is to be found not in his temporal existence but only in a withdrawal from the world in which existence in time
as well as ethical action on that basis is non-essential. What happens in
time is unimportant to the status of the soul which must escape from time
anyway. The goal of the mystic is thus a form of detachment from the world
(Hoffman, 1980: 79). In this sense the spiritual person must view with
indifference what happens to him on the physical plane.

Earlier, we considered the economic, social and medical chaos which
had afflicted the Medieval world prior to the advent of the movements of
the Free Spirit and mysticism. Insofar as much of this turmoil was due to
factors beyond the control of the individual, it is easy to sympathize with the
desire to find meaning on some other level than the pain and alienation
associated with physical existence. However, from an ethical point of view
such a deprecation of the physical arena in which we all find ourselves can
too easily lead to a position of gelassenheit, or apathy, by which we may
shun all attempts to rectify the existing order. Hoffman has made a feeble
attempt to exonerate Tauler and the author of the Theologia from such
charges by insisting that Tauler preached a gospel of compassion (1980: 34).
But the message of such a gospel, while it did offer sympathy for the
suffering, was to counsel those in pain to seek a different orientation than
that which was the arena for their suffering. Tauler’s answer to the
problems of this world was merely to look to the glories of the next.

It is precisely on these grounds that such a mystical stance has met
with its sharpest critics. With respect to Marguerite’s The Mirror of Simple
Souls, Robert Lerner writes that “rather than immorality, it is the position
of passivity taken in The Mirror that is theologically most questionable....
The soul cares not for works of the body, works of the heart, or works of the
spirit because it is saved by ‘faith without works’ ” (Lerner, 1972: 205).
Lerner's quotation of the words of Marguerite very much anticipate Luther. Indeed, Hoffman points out that Reinhold Niebuhr criticized Luther's ethic on precisely this charge of passivity. Furthermore, Niebuhr sees such passivity as related to the influence of mysticism (Hoffman, 1976: 60).

Robert Caputo in his book, *Radical Hermeneutics*, has provided an interesting discussion of the ethics of *Gelassenheit* which he traces back to the mystical ontology of Eckhart (1987: 264-265). What is even more interesting for our purposes is that Caputo, following Nietzsche, has seen the continuation of that tradition in the theology of Luther (1987: 266). If Luther shared such a common ethic with the tradition, to what extent may he be seen to have shared a similar theology?

This brings us at last to a consideration of Luther's relationship to the tradition of late Medieval mysticism, and here we acknowledge that the discussion will proceed into a very controversial area. While Luther was expressly fond both of Tauler's sermons and the *Theologia Germanica*, which he twice edited for publication, there has nevertheless been a sustained attempt to disassociate Luther from the tradition. Here we may note the detailed study of Steven Ozment, *Homo Spiritualis: A Comparative Study of the Anthropology of Johannes Tauler, Jean Gerson, and Martin Luther (1509-16) in the Context of Their Theological Thought* (1969), regarding the relationship of the anthropological views of Tauler, Gerson, and Luther. Ozment's expressed purpose in this study is to demonstrate that Luther, while he was intimately associated with the thought of both men, radically breaks with the anthropology of each. Arguing that both theologians held a view which gave salvific significance to human dimensions, he proceeds to argue that Luther holds forth a purely exocentric orientation for man's
salvation which nullifies any anthropological resources inherent in the human soul.

In his analysis of Tauler, Ozment has reiterated the mystical notion of emanation from the godhead which locates man's essential being in principio following a certain mystical understanding of the prologue to the Gospel of John. For Tauler, as we have seen, essential being is to be found in a return to the precreaturely state even before the creation of Adam in which man enjoyed substantial union with God. In existential terms, man finds himself in a region of exile, separated from his true being. Nevertheless, man has the potential to realize his uninterrupted unity with God prior to creation. Ozment does point out that such a relationship to deity is, even for Tauler, not man's by nature but by grace, perhaps indicating the kind of anthropological dependence which could have been acceptable to Luther (1969: 43). However, even though this schema has a dimension of extra nos, it is invalidated according to Ozment because it can potentially be realized within the framework of man's earthly sojourn.

We must here emphasize that Ozment has no expressed objection to Tauler's theology other than the fact that Tauler locates the possibility of such a union with God within the temporal framework. If Tauler had deferred such a union to the afterlife, we must wonder whether or not Ozment would have launched such a polemic.

Gerson likewise receives a harsh treatment at the hands of Ozment. The anthropological scheme of Gerson, however, is quite different from that of Tauler. Gerson uses the term likeness to refer to the nature of union with God (Ozment, 1969: 55-58). For Gerson, man's union with God occurs on the basis of a restoration of the image of God in man which appears to preserve
distinction. In the anthropology of Gerson, the goal of the spiritual man is not to return to the state of Adam before creation, but rather to return to the likeness of God contained in Adam after creation but before the fall. For Gerson it is admittedly the function of the *synteresis* which prompts man to such a restoration, and it is on this ground that Ozment has launched his polemic. Ozment goes to great lengths in his attempt to prove that such an anthropology implies a dimension which, similar to Tauler, locates salvific activity within the human faculties thereby destroying the excentric, *extra nos* dimension which Ozment claims is central to Luther's thought.

However, a few words should be said in Gerson's defense. Gerson has been shown by Lerner to have been one of the strongest critics of the notion of indistinct union with God (1971: 407-411). Indeed, Gerson devoted a considerable amount of energy in attacking the position which asserts that a substantial union with God is attainable in this life or in any other. Gerson had charged that Ruysbroeck in his *Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage* had gone to the point of pantheism in suggesting that there was potentially an identification of the soul with God (Lerner, 1971: 407). Much of Gerson's critique revolved around the use of the liquid image which we have been discussing in this chapter. In general, Gerson rejected the use of any corporeal image to express the relation of the soul to God. Gerson even cites the example quoted earlier involving John Polinus in which the use of the liquid image prompted an emotional reaction on the part of a woman in the audience which resulted in a stroke and death. This, he notes, indicates the extreme danger in dabbling in such useless imagery to express a substantial union which is not only not possible but clearly heretical.

In his polemic, Gerson does not stop with those whose orthodoxy was
already in question. He even goes on to attack Bernard himself, who we 
have pointed out is not usually associated with the extremities to which the 
more unorthodox interpreters of this image went. Eckhart, of course, did not 

In terms of our discussion, we must also point out that Gerson 
maintained a strict Trinitarian anthropology very much along Augustinian 
lines. Gerson in no sense wished to dissolve the independent functions of the 
reason and the will, and he thereby suggests that the restoration of the 
image of God in man is one that preserves a distinction of faculties to mirror 
the Trinitarian makeup of the Godhead itself. If we wish to preserve an 
extra nos and Trinitarian dimension for orthodox theology, it would indeed 
appear that Gerson is the champion of such a theology.

When Ozment asserts that only in Luther is a true extra nos 
anthropology found, we must then take a second look. As we have noted, 
Ozment’s chief critique of Tauler is not that he implied a union with God but 
that such a union was attainable during one’s life here and now. Ozment 
goes to great lengths to show that Luther denied such a substantial union 
with God on earth, but that such a state may in fact be attained in the 
afterlife. This state of union, however, is one which can be enjoyed for 
Luther on the basis of faith. Indeed, Luther has stated that "Faith gives so 
much that the soul becomes identical to the divine word" (WA 7, 25). For 
Gerson, no such unity is possible either through faith or death. Who, then, is 
the true proponent of an extra nos anthropology?

At this point we would have to suggest that, when Luther inserts his 
marginal comment regarding faith in one of Tauler’s sermons, he is not 
rejecting out of hand Tauler’s anthropology. What he does do is defer
complete union to an eschatological event and in the meantime elevates the role of faith as a temporal measure for such a union. This becomes nowhere more evident than in Ozment’s discussion of the grounds of faith in Luther's theology. In this context, Ozment has discussed the role of memory and hope in Luther’s notion of faith. Ozment argues that faith based on memory and hope provides a kind of temporal, proleptic enjoyment of an eschatological union with God that is not unlike Tauler’s. For Luther, memory makes present the past works of God. Ozment notes that it is only through faith that these objects enter one's presence (Ozment, 1969: 113). The objects referred to by Ozment are God’s intervention in history. It is well worth asking at this point to what degree such a concept of memory is an oral or a textual one. In our discussion of orality in Chapter I, we referred to Frawley’s analysis of the role of memory in oral societies. In oral societies there is no notion of the concept of history as something distinct and absent from the present. In such societies, the role of memory is to make present the heroic figures and events of the past. Oral memory is reinforced through the constant repetition of past heroes and their deeds. In this context, the ancestors are kept alive and function as a living, vital presence within the current oral community. In connection with this, it is interesting to note the manner in which such past works of God are to be made present to the memory for Luther. Luther states that to remember is “sic enim memorari est semper laudare...toto corde, lingua et tota vita” (WA 3, 531.8 ff.). The key word here is lingua. It is through oral proclamation that such memory is attained. Clearly, there are striking similarities between Luther’s concept of memory and the phenomenon of memory in orality.

In contrast to such a notion of memory, we would remind the reader
of the Augustinian notion of memory outlined in Chapter III. There, we noted that memory for Augustine distinctly lacked this 'presenting' quality. For Augustine, memory is never more than a trace of what is absent. In the context of such an absence, the mediation of the Holy Spirit is required to fill the gap between presence and absence, but in no sense is there a trace of unqualified presence analogous to Luther's notion of faith in relation to the presence of God's work in history. For Luther, memory is an oral phenomenon, for Augustine a textual one.

Ozment underscores the oral nature of faith for Luther in a discussion of Luther's comments on Ps. 118: 105. Here Luther discusses the metaphorical language of the Psalmist in stating that "your word is a lantern unto my feet" (WA 4, 356. 7). In a peculiarly non-metaphorical hermeneutic, Luther tries to give a literal interpretation to a passage which most scholars would agree is a poetic example of the rhetorical, metaphorical phenomenon of the transferred epithet. Such an understanding would naturally assume that the psalmist transfers the notion of the illumination of the eye to the feet since the feet effect the manner of walking. Luther, however, laboriously circumvents such an interpretation with an attempt to explain the manner in which the word could in fact illuminate the feet. Since he understands this not to be a reference to the eyes, Luther asks how the word can illuminate the feet. His conclusion is that the word illuminates the feet because it is not a visual (textual) phenomenon but because it is a matter of hearing. This becomes, then, for Luther a kind of prooftext for fides ex auditu. For Luther, faith is a matter of immediacy and presence which are only attainable through the oral word, not the visual word, which he associates with the letter that kills. For Luther, textuality is always a
matter of separation and absence which must be supplemented by the more immediate and dynamic mode of hearing. For Luther, then, the notion of faith is a matter of presence. This kind of presence, while it is linked specifically to faith, indicates a kind of union that is not all that radically different from the tradition of Tauler, the mystics, and the Free Spirit movement.

In returning to the focus of Ozment’s study, we must then ask what is Luther’s final relationship to the opposing traditions represented by Tauler and Gerson. Ozment would have us believe that the anthropology of both defies the dimension of extra nos. For Ozment, there appears to be a development beginning with Tauler which is refined by Gerson and completed by Luther. However, our assessment of Gerson has demonstrated that his theology does not stand between Tauler and Luther but is radically different, especially regarding the notion of presence. We have seen that Gerson’s theology is quite in keeping with an extra nos concept. We would conclude, therefore, that Luther may in fact be polemical to both but on significantly different grounds.

In the case of Tauler, who follows Eckhart, we noted a theology of emanation which sees essential union with God as a pre-creaturely event to which the individual soul must return. Ozment has understood this to imply an essential union with God in the mystic anthropology. But to be fair to Eckhart, he views the creature as creature in terms that express a strict alienation, separation, and distinction from God. It is only in relation to man’s essential being that unity is seen to take place. From the standpoint of the creature, God is strictly extra nos. Luther’s understanding of extra nos is similar in that he too sees the creature in terms of sin as completely
alienated from God, but the possibility of restored union is attainable in faith. Thus, the goal of both the mystical tradition and that of Luther is a unity with God in which the "soul becomes identical to the divine word" (W A 7, 25). The difference is merely that Eckhart, more clearly than Luther, sees the union with God as a return to pre-creaturely existence in a kind of metaphysical logic which Luther does not employ. For both, however, God is, in relation to the creature as creature, extra nos.

To sum up Luther's relationship to Tauler and Gerson, we would have to say that Luther in the case of Tauler has certainly made notable adjustments. But such adjustments are perhaps best understood as a rejection of the more metaphysical elements which Tauler inherited from Eckhart in favor of a more dynamic orality. In mystical metaphysics, the final restoration of the soul back to essential union in the Godhead too readily attains the fulfillment of oral presence which results in silence. While the mystical ontology is clearly related to orality, it differs from primary orality in the assumption that the oral Word can be potentially so expressive that a consummation of oral presence can be achieved once and for all resulting in a culmination which sees silent meditation as the final goal. Silence is appropriate in such a scheme only because the oral word can be so potent and effective that all meaning is achieved and consummated. This final consummation of the oral word represents the highest degree of logocentrism in Derridean terms. Here, Handelman's critique of Augustine is much more apropos than it was in the context of Augustine. There, we noted that the logocentric enterprise, according to Handelman, understands the incarnation as the final consummation and fulfillment of oral presence. In terms of orality, then, Luther is much more aware of the existential
nature of the oral word. It cannot be so consummated in this world except in terms of constant reiteration and the reinforcement of the oral memory through repetition. If Luther separates himself from the mystics, it is not because he does not share with them an oral understanding of the word, but because he realizes in a more practical sense orality's dependence upon repetition.

In the case of Gerson, we must conclude that Luther separates himself from Gerson precisely because the latter's theology preserves too much of an extra nos dimension. 'Likeness' with God is still too far from the position of security offered by the more immediate sense of "the soul becoming identical with the divine word" attainable through oral proclamation. Thus, in summary we wish to offer a correction with regard to Ozment by saying that Luther's rejection of Tauler was not due to the latter's oral theology but to the fact that it was not oral enough. In the case of Gerson, Luther rejected him because his textual theology implied an ongoing separation from God which not even the oral word could bridge.

If a common thread can be found between Luther and the mystics on the basis of orality, then we must re-examine Luther's theology utilizing concepts that are relatively new to Luther scholarship. Such concepts have recently come to light in the attempt to understand the rhetorical basis of Lutheran theology. Klaus Dockhorn in his book, *Luthers Glaubensbegriff und die Rhetorik* (1973), first advanced the theory that Luther's theology was intimately connected to Luther's understanding of rhetoric. Using the rhetorical model, Dockhorn has shown that Luther's doctrine of faith has an underlying rhetorical stance which has determined the nature of his theology of faith. Dockhorn's work was pioneering and did not have the
benefit of the wealth of orality research that has come into the foreground since 1973. We will, therefore, proceed to a consideration of the work of the Danish theologian, Jan Lindhardt, whose book, *Martin Luther: Knowledge and Mediation in the Renaissance* (1986), incorporates the insights of Dockhorn while moving well beyond them on the basis of more recent orality research. Lindhardt has used the rhetorical model to suggest major implications that go well beyond the question of Luther to include a radical re-reading of Christian theology before Luther. Because the rhetorical model is relatively novel, Lindhardt found it necessary to retrace the major outlines of the development of Christian theology in order to place Luther in the rhetorical light. We would have to say at the outset, however, that Lindhardt's enthusiasm for the rhetorical model as an oral phenomenon has obscured his vision in terms of seeing the implications of textuality on certain rhetorical models especially in the Renaissance. He still assumes that "the use of writing is only to fix that which is oral" (Lindhardt, 1986: 94). His insights, however, with regard to the oral Luther are much in keeping with the major thrust of our own work.

In the early part of his book, Lindhardt has outlined the Platonic model in terms that agree with the basic research of Havelock. Lindhardt has shown that the most influential aspect of the Platonic model was the notion of the tripartite soul which stresses distinction and separation in the human faculties of reason, will, and their relationship to the body. Noting the advent of the concept of the ego in Greek culture he says, 'Homer knows nothing of this 'I'. For Homer man consists of a series of functions, that is, various ways of sensing, knowing, and acting" (1986: 17). Also, he notes an interesting lack of a pure verb for "to see" (1986: 17). Taken together, these
two insights suggest for Lindhardt that the early Greek mentality was characterized by a kind of unity that did not distinguish either between the self and the community or the epistemologically objective function of an "observing ego." Adopting something of a nostalgic position, Lindhardt implies that the split that occurs in Plato had an extreme downside insofar as it served to separate man from immediate experience, and thus of reality. This separation from immediate reality, Lindhardt argues, was carried over through Platonism into Christianity by Augustine, who retained the Platonic model. While granting that the notion of separation was characteristic of the Platonic model, we have reservations about a nostalgic view of the past that posits some kind of primal unity which must be restored and which the Gospel addresses. As we have seen, such a notion of separation was vital to a thoroughgoing Trinitarian anthropology and theology. Nevertheless, as we have suggested, because Lindhardt is so sympathetic to the oral point of view, he helps us to see oral connections in places where traditional scholarship might pass them over.

In regard to this last statement, we must take seriously Lindhardt's observation that the situation at the dawn of the Reformation more and more was characterized by a shift in the Platonic model. Rather than the model of separation, one of unity began to emerge. Such a model was, according to Lindhardt, very influential in shaping the theology of mysticism (1986: 31). In this regard, Lindhardt asserts that such a mystical model was more influential on the theology of Luther than most scholars are willing to acknowledge. Lindhardt admits that the traditional understanding of mysticism is one which sees the breakdown of a distinction between man and God and a kind of an annihilation of the self. Nevertheless, he argues
that the mystical approach is in fact extra nos insofar as its major premise is one of affectivity. In other words, the breakdown is not one which favors the egocentric dimension of man but the exocentric dimension of God. The major focus here is on the notion of an affective relation to God in which the individual adopts a passive stance coram Deo resulting in a kind of pathetic annihilation of self in favor of the power of the Other. In this relation, the individual does appear to dissolve. The separation of intellect and will are abolished and overcome in this all embracing affective response which demands a unified reaction on the part of the individual which is chiefly characterized by religious emotion. In such a reaction, reason is left behind as a hindrance to unity. In terms of the Eckhartian model discussed earlier, we may thus see a similar focus in which the creature as creature is nothing, but in the context of a passive relationship to a transcendent esse idealis, s/he has essential being. Such being, Lindhardt notes, is characterized by a kind of unity in which separation and distinction is an anathema. This leads to his conclusion that "all of these features of German mysticism of the late Middle Ages, that is, the understanding of man as a unity which is in turn determined by an affective state, the experience's character of assault, the renewal of identity...are feature's which may be discerned in Luther's thought" (Lindhardt, 1986: 36).

We have earlier pointed out on the basis of Lerner's research that the desire for immediate union with God may have been prompted by a breakdown in confidence in the oral system of mediation in the late Medieval church. The chaos of the fourteenth century generated a search for more effective forms of oral presence. Lindhardt has suggested another factor: the rise of an interest in rhetoric. Here, we must be careful to qualify
his assertions. Lindhardt's primary thesis is to demonstrate a renewal of oral rhetoric in the Rennaissance which would explain the oral stance of much of mystical and Lutheran theology. However, as we shall see in the last chapter, Kristeller and others have shown that Renaissance rhetoric had a peculiarly textual basis in most instances. We may agree, however, with Lindhardt in asserting that a kind of oral rhetoric did witness a renaissance and that it is this oral rhetoric which provides the model which he sees operative in Lutheran theology. It is this orally rhetorical tendency which leads Lindhardt to assert: "The rhetorical tendency in language also implies the tendency to regard man as a passive recipient" (1986: 58). This leads him to suggest further that, "The spoken and living word was held to be man's most important access to reality; and this dictum lends intelligible the fact that the hearer is a passive recipient. In whatever is heard, one's reception is namely governed by the voice employed, and by the rhythm and sequence of the words and thoughts which the hearer has no possibility to alter" (1986: 60). Oral rhetoric thus seeks to involve the hearer to the point that s/he is made to identify with the message. It is on this basis that Lindhardt says, "this in reality renders quite problematical the distinction between body and soul" (1986: 59). Lindhardt thus concludes that, "rhetoric presupposes an undivided individual. There is no sharp distinction between the reason, the soul, and the body. In this, rhetoric resembles certain kinds of mysticism. Man is regarded as receptive to the things offered him by his senses and by language. Moreover, this is the case to the extent that the individual is in the power of his environment and his (oral) language. Particularly the latter feature is of interest for our purposes" (Lindhardt, 1986: 60).
The purposes which Lindhardt refers to are precisely the attempt to demonstrate that Luther's theology has a distinctly oral, rhetorical basis and that the individual in relation to God is analogous to the individual in the oral arena. In this context, Luther can say that "the Holy Spirit is the greatest rhetor" (WA 40, 3) and that "the Church is a mouth-well not an ink-well" thereby reinforcing Luther's oral theology (Lindhardt, 1986: 97). Following the conclusions of Dockhorn, Lindhardt asserts that "Luther's faith is determined by affective states. Luther's variety of faith is a "pathetic feeling which is transferred and mediated in the ways prescribed by (oral) rhetoric" (1986: 64).

We have previously observed that in an oral context there is understood to be no separation between the speaker, the signified, and the signifier. On this basis, Lindhardt asserts that for Luther "speech is to be part of the speaker" (1986: 95) and that "Luther does not distinguish between the subject itself and the word as a derived designation for it" (1986: 90). On this basis, Lindhardt can argue that for Luther the incarnation must be understood in terms that suggest the Word has become sound (1986: 98). Indeed, Luther says that one arrives at the truth by "hearing and believing the audible word, verbum vocale (WA 43, 72). Again, Luther says that "the gospel cannot be understood by any other faculty than that of hearing" (WA 57.138).

If it is correct to view Luther's theology as having an orally rhetorical stance which implies a kind of immediacy between the individual and the word, in which a unity is created, then we can more readily understand some of Luther's assertions which have a highly mystical ring. When Luther says, "This faith connects me more closely to Christ than any husband could
be connected to his wife" (WA 40, 1, 286), we can quite possibly hear the echo of Eckhart's phrase: that the relation of the soul to God is much closer than that of the body to the soul, or when he asserts that the union between the soul and God is much closer than the union of two liquids. While Luther himself does not appear to have used the liquid image taken from Bernard, he does use another Bernardine corporeal metaphor to express union. This may be found in his use of the metaphor of iron in fire to show close identification and union. Luther's use of this metaphor occurred in the context of a discussion of the Eucharist (The Babylonian Captivity of the Church). Luther's understanding of the Eucharist appears to be closely drawn from an oral rhetorical stance in which words are thought to effect the presence of the signified. There is a very close identification between subject and object in the oral arena. This kind of close identification between subject and object is now seen to be characteristic of both orality and mysticism. Such notions of identification perhaps led Luther to a kind of theological and anthropological boldness. Thus, Lindhardt points out that for Luther "to believe is not to be Christian but to be Christ himself" (1986: 141).

We may conclude our consideration of Luther's oral stance by re-iterating Luther's boldest conclusion: "Faith gives so much that the soul becomes identical to the divine Word" (WA 7, 25).

If there is a connection between orality and mysticism, as we have endeavored to prove, then scholarship must re-open the question of Luther's relationship to mysticism. Clearly, Luther had a preference for the oral word in his theology of the word. On that basis we believe that a more intimate link between Luther and the mystics through Tauler and the Theologia
Germanica is in evidence. While Luther may have qualified his position somewhat vis-a-vis Tauler by glossing in "faith" for the mystical notion of synteresis, still the oral ontology behind the mystic system was not radically altered by Luther. Luther never openly attacks Tauler or the tradition with the kind of vitriolic denunciation he was so capable of with regard to his theological opponents. Finally, we may see much in common between Luther's ethical stance of passivity expressed in the Freedom of the Christian Man which denounces social change as a vehicle for the working out of salvation. Like the mystics, Luther asserts that salvation occurs on an extra-temporal order which need not radically affect the social or political arena. The cobbler need not know Greek to understand the Gospel. The oral gospel is sufficient. This kind of passive ethic we have shown to be part of the mystical tradition including the Free Spirit movement. Furthermore, the ethics of gelassenheit have been shown by Caputo to be a significant feature of Eckhart and the Theologia Germanica which, according to Nietzsche, have been handed down through Luther to the Western tradition. When considered in the light of oral research, we see that such a conservative ethic is characteristic of oral societies in which change in the social order is viewed with dire scepticism. Thus, when we consider the role of Luther in the history of Western thought and theology, we cannot ignore the implications of orality in his theology.

However, while we must acknowledge a high degree of orality in Luther, nevertheless we must give some consideration to certain features of Luther's philosophy of language which do tend to complicate the issue. In this regard, we must accept a certain degree of paradox on the part of Luther which we must endeavor to reconcile. Paul Althaus, for example, has
given the most impressive defense of Luther's orality backing it up with such quotations from Luther as "in the New Testament era it is not really appropriate to write books about the Christian doctrine," or "the New Testament should properly not be written but rather contained in the human voice" (Althaus, 1966: 73). But even Althaus concedes that there is a valid relationship between the written and the oral and that in the case of interpretation Luther does not permit a separation of the Spirit from the Word, including the written Word. There thus appears to be a tension in Luther between orality and textuality which will not allow the oral to completely supplant the written. Pelikan argues that "to continue to be the Word of God the oral Word had need of the written Word" (Pelikan, 1959: 69). It is the written word that provides the external standard by which error and heresy may be refuted. It, furthermore, is apparent that as the problem with the left wing radicals began to grow, Luther more and more came to assert the primacy of Scripture over against the spiritualists whose mystical leanings implied a direct unmediated access to the Spirit which made the written word unnecessary. In addition, we may note that, while Luther said it was not appropriate to write books about Christian doctrine, we in fact see an outpouring of literature on his part to combat the heresies of the enthusiasts. In fact, we may note yet another Pauline parallel with regard to Luther. In the case of Paul, as Kelber has shown, there are a number of oral features (1983: 140-183). But when it came to defending himself, Paul uses the written medium. Furthermore, Pauline theology, in spite of its oral features, began to establish itself on objective criteria that contradict oral presence. Paul insists that he preaches only Christ crucified. This emphasis on the objective closure provided by the finality of death
becomes for Paul the means of silencing his opponents who appear to have been the followers of the sayings tradition which stressed the voice of the living Christ. For Luther, we may also observe that a similar emphasis provided the means for dealing with the enthusiasts. Luther returns again and again to the *Theology of the Cross* as a polemical basis for combating his opponents.

Alistair McGrath has shown that Luther's understanding of the meaning of scripture is summed up entirely in his *Theology of the Cross*. Seeing its roots in the Heidelberg Disputation, McGrath has shown that the *Theology of the Cross* begins for Luther with a proper understanding of Moses encounter with God in which Moses is allowed to see only the backside of God (1985: 148-152). This became the major theme in the development of the *Theology of the Cross*, namely that we see only the backside of God, we see God only indirectly, only through a veil. This veiling of God is finally culminated in the cross which is the ultimate revelation of God. But the cross is a revelation which proves to be yet another veiling, for it is God revealed in contradiction. Thus Luther's theology of oral presence contained in the formula *fides ex auditu* is tempered by the *Theology of the Cross* in which we see a greater emphasis on absence which suggests a view compatible with textuality as we saw it in Augustine's signs theory. For Luther, like Augustine, it appears the oral and the written can only reveal the absence of God summed up in the *Theology of the Cross*.

Peter Meinhold has provided a thorough investigation of Luther's philosophy of speech. In his book, *Luthers Sprachphilosophie*, he notes that Luther sees a unity in the case of God between speech and act (1958: 11). However, when it comes to God's speech to man, insofar as God's speech must
be adapted to human speech, there is an inevitable veiling which takes place (Meinhold, 1958: 12). It is interesting to note that, according to Meinhold, Luther’s philosophy of language has in this regard a very Augustinian ring in that language for Luther remains a trace of something absent. This would apply to the oral as well as the written. In a discussion of the spiritualists’ movement which Luther felt compelled to fight, Meinhold has shown the spiritualists’ emphasis on the inner as opposed to the outer word (1958: 21-7). The spiritualists’ understanding of the inner word was one which had a mystical ring much akin to an oral ontology as we have outlined earlier.

What is significant for our purposes is Meinhold’s insistence that for Luther there can be no separation of the inner and the outer. The outer word, akin to our category of textuality, is a necessary arena in which the hermeneutical role of the Spirit operates. As Meinhold has shown, there is an essential unity in Luther between Word and Spirit. This would seem to apply chiefly to the external word of the written text of Scripture (Meinhold, 1958: 28-38). A proper grasping of the external word of the text is a necessary prerequisite for the authentic operation of the Spirit. Thus, Meinhold’s investigations suggest that Luther’s philosophy of speech is one which may not finally privilege the oral over the written. In fact, according to Meinhold, Luther could support certain features of humanism precisely because they provided a better access to the external word and therefore could facilitate the operation of the Spirit in its hermeneutical role of mediating between the text, man, and God.

At this point in the discussion, we are perhaps tempted to re-read all of Luther’s orality in light of these later observations and therefore to conclude that Luther’s insistence on oral presence, when seen in the light of
the *Theology of the Cross* is really an affirmation of absence; in short, a deconstructive tactic using orality against itself in the manner of Heraclitus or the Gospel of John. However, when we remember the historical development of Lutheranism, the theology of the broadsheet, the sacraments, and the catechism, we must re-assert that at least part of Luther remained to the end a thoroughgoing oralist. Nevertheless, we do concede that some part of Luther was never comfortable with this aspect of his theology, and it was this side of the Doctor which kept coming out in the *Theology of the Cross* and the continued veneration of the written scripture.

In many ways, Luther was a victim of a transitional period, a period which desperately attempted to cling to the vestiges of an oral life world which had provided a coherent and comfortable answer for many centuries, but also a period which knew the pain of alienation from that older synthesis, and a period which finally had to give way to the printed text. Luther must have been aware of much of this, and it was this awareness that perhaps made him the paradoxical figure that he will always remain: radically conservative, radically liberal, cold and warm, a monk and a married man, *simul iustus et peccator*. 
CHAPTER FIVE

TEXTUALITY, HUMANISM, AND THE REFORMATION

We move now in the final chapter to a consideration of the influence of humanism on theological developments in the Reformation. As is the case with nominalism, the term humanism has a wide application and denotes a great number of thinkers whose theologies were not always identical. When we considered the term nominalism, we noted that in some cases theologians who have since born the title, nominalists, could have diametrically opposed theological stances. Such conflicting views have led some scholars to question the validity of the term to apply to any sort of coherent category. Upon greater analysis by way of the orality-textuality paradigm, we found that there was perhaps more in common among the nominalists than scholars are willing to admit. The common denominator was found in their attitudes toward language itself. When considered from the perspective of textuality, even conflicting theologies are often seen to be closely aligned. The point is that nominalism itself possessed the common denominator of textuality which called into revision all sorts of traditional terminology.

Similar confusion exists in considering the wide application of the term humanism. Humanism admittedly had a plurality of foci and this very plurality has led directly to the problem of definition. Burkhardt's attempt
to see in humanism the birth of modern consciousness has been generally regarded as a failure (McGrath, 1987: 32). Similarly, other attempts to provide a general definition of the movement have proved to be inadequate. The one definition which has withstood criticism is sometimes overlooked because of its simplicity, namely the view of Paul Oskar Kristeller. Kristeller maintains that it was simply a concern for written and spoken eloquence that can be in almost every case predicated of the humanist movement (Kristeller, 1979). Sem Dresden, following the view of Kristeller, has further refined this definition to suggest that even in the case of spoken eloquence the humanists maintained a textual perspective (1975: 39-50). Spoken eloquence was thus always a matter of *imitatio texti*. Our review of the implications of a textual orientation over against that of orality leads us to the conclusion that Kristeller’s simple observation is quite profound. For, if it can be maintained that textuality is the common denominator of the humanist movement, then a whole host of implications follow.

Alistair McGrath is one scholar who has taken seriously Kristeller’s definition of humanism (1987: 33). Using it as a working hypothesis, McGrath has enumerated three common characteristics of the movement: travel, epistolary correspondence, and printing (1987: 37-38). All three concern the widespread exchange of ideas and emphasize comparative criticism as the basis for a humanist point of view. The free exchange of ideas demonstrates a distinct lack of traditional forms of dogmatism. This is not to say that the humanists always waffled on any particular issue but rather emphasizes the fact that comparison of traditions and texts were seen as the path to a more comprehensive understanding of truth. The humanists were first and foremost men of letters and the exchange of texts and the
promotion of the availability of texts was a primary concern for them. It is thus easy to understand that printing flourished in humanistic circles. While the invention of the press occurred in Germany, the first major presses were to be found in the humanistic centers of Northern Italy. Everywhere that subsequent presses were established, the humanists can be seen to have congregated. In Chapter One, we considered Eisenstein's thesis that printing resulted in major changes in early modern Europe. We qualified her thesis by suggesting that the characteristics she associates with a print mentality were already present in the nominalist movement. Printing in this sense served to further the nominalistic enterprise with its orientation toward texts. The same may be observed in the case of humanism. Humanism was a movement of the text, and while it was not solely the result of printing, printing did contribute to the dissemination of its major premise, that of the priority of the written word.

On this basis, we may suggest that humanism is the direct offspring of nominalism. Both movements share an orientation toward the written word. Furthermore, we may detect certain linguistic assumptions behind this orientation. Dresden has shown that behind the humanistic perspective is the assumption that texts provide a more immediate access to the core of Christianity than the tradition of oral assumptions (1975: 140). He has even gone so far as to suggest that in the case of Erasmus the Christ of the written text was more real that the actual living Christ (Dresden, 1975: 139-140). In this sense, texts were seen as the basis for a more profound contact with reality than ever could be accessible through living contact. Texts provide the opportunity for revision and reflection. Such repeated textual association was considered by the humanists to be more authentic than the
original oral voice. The text became almost sacramental, and Dresden has pointed out the metaphor of *manducatio* in connection with the humanists' understanding of how to assimilate a text (1975:144). A text must be chewed, that is, read and re-read, in order to be properly savored. Zwingli, for instance, had so chewed on the Greek New Testament that he knew it in its entirety by heart. Furthermore, insofar as there were no oral bards of the Greek New Testament, we must assume that this was done in private in the company of the text itself.

This project of absorbing the text had ethical implications. To fully absorb the text one must emulate it. The reader must strive to emulate the text. Dresden has noted that this was not in the case of the humanists mere imitation, but rather the attempt to rival the text (1975:144). Having absorbed the text, the writer must seek to equal it in a fresh way. This subtle shift from mere imitation to emulation suggests a linguistic perspective which sought to go beyond the *signum* to the *res* but in such a way that the *signum* was seen as an indispensable key for access to the *res*

Dresden has shown that this was the case in Rennaissance rhetoric. The text became the model for eloquence. In contrast to oral rhetoric as seen in the chapter on Luther, humanistic rhetoric held up the text as the model for imitation. Whereas orality has as its goal the *imitatio magistri* the humanists had the goal of *imitatio texti*. Furthermore, such an *imitatio* was not merely linguistic but had ethical implications. The text became the model for reshaping reality in general which included a profound ethical impetus for the reshaping of the Church and society (McGrath, 1987:42). The text of the New Testament was, therefore, not seen from the Lutheran perspective of *fides ex auditu* and *sola fide* but from a textual perspective
as an external paradigm for morality. In this sense, McGrath is quite right to assert that the humanist project was one of lex Christi as opposed to the Lutheran understanding of fides ex auditu, a predominantly oral perspective, although, as we have shown, not without certain textual complications.

We have previously argued that Luther, the Theology of the Cross notwithstanding, remained an oral theologian in many aspects. We are thus led to assume that, when Luther came into conflict with other reformers (Eramus, Zwingli, Bucer, Calvin), this is perhaps best understood as a conflict between orality and textuality. Bucer, McGrath points out, was initially sympathetic to the Lutheran cause, but this was so only because Bucer assumed that Luther was operating from the same textual perspective. When we see Bucer departing from Luther on the basis of the lex Christi as opposed to the more oral understanding of fides ex auditu, we can only conclude that it was the humanistic perspective which led him to do so. Perhaps Bucer did not understand the full implications of the Theology of the Cross. Our analysis has shown that perhaps Luther himself was not aware of the implications. Nevertheless, it is interesting that the division in the Reformation between Luther and the humanist reformers inevitably involved a question of the proper reading of the text. There was, as McGrath has indicated, a conflict between the humanist reformers and Luther. We may legitimately ask, was this not a conflict between orality and textuality?

We have in Chapter Four shown that Luther was, perhaps, moving toward a textual orientation while nevertheless retaining certain oral features. However, insofar as Luther remains an ambiguous figure with regard to humanism and textuality, we are left with the difficult problem of how to assess Melanchthon. Scholars have argued both ways on the
question of the relationship between Luther and Melanchthon. As Manschreck notes, there appears to have been a genuine friendship and mutual admiration (1958: 182). No open break between the two men can be cited with clarity. However, while Luther may have been ambiguous regarding humanism and textuality, Melanchthon was clearly in the humanistic tradition. Furthermore, as we shall see, Melanchthon was every bit the humanist that Calvin was. So, was Melanchthon purely a crypto-Calvinist, as some maintain, or did Luther and Melanchthon agree in times of Luther’s soberer moods? We may never know the answer to this question, but we know that there was no open break between the two and that Melanchthon, after the 1521 Loci Communes, was increasingly and openly expressing theological positions that were in harmony with the humanists. McNeil has mentioned that Luther once confided that if Calvin’s Little Treatise on the Lord’s Supper had been known to him, perhaps the whole controversy with the Swiss could have been avoided (1954: 153). Was there a soft, humanistic belly to Luther’s strong oral stance regarding the real presence in the Eucharist. We cannot say decisively, especially in light of Luther’s anti-humanistic position taken in the controversy with Erasmus.

Nevertheless, at least in the case of Melanchton, the Lutheran camp could have sympathies with the growing textual perspective of humanism. The revisions of the Loci Communes and the Variata to the Augsburg Confession bear a strong humanistic stamp. While Luther himself may not have given a hearty assent, to be effective the Reformation had to establish a textual orientation, i.e. sola scriptura. But sola scriptura implied certain humanistic assumptions which Luther was either not willing or ready to
assert in his own persona. Therefore, we will not attempt to settle the issue of the relationship of Luther and Melanchthon, but we will argue that an analysis of Melanchthon's treatise, *De Anima*, places him squarely in the humanistic tradition influenced by the Northern Italian Platonism of Marsilio Ficino which was itself associated with a great Augustinian revival resulting from the increased availability of the authentic corpus of Augustine.

The revival of texts in humanism led to a renewed interest in Augustine. To be sure, the increased availability of Augustinian texts reflects a sympathetic reading of the Bishop of Hippo. As we will see, such a sympathetic reading may have a great deal to do with the textual orientation of Augustine himself. One might argue that Augustine had always played an important role throughout the history of Christian theology. What is different about the humanists' interest in Augustine? To answer this, we must briefly trace the history of Augustine's influence. William Bouwsma (1975: 3-60) and Alistair McGrath (1987: 86-93) have both noted the problematical history of Augustinianism. Both scholars suggest that there was a very early inclination to divorce the essence of Augustinian thought from the actual context of Augustine's writings. In this sense, the profound and complex theology of Augustine was reduced to a set of propositions which were considered to be the heart of Augustine's theology. The *Decretum*, 425 propositions set down by Yves of Chartres, became the definitive embodiment of Augustinian positions which in turn became the focal point of theological speculations in the Medieval Church. This formulaic distillation of Augustine we may now argue was in keeping with an essentially oral ontology which for many reasons sought to manage
strategically the body of theological paradigms. That the scholastic tradition, in spite of certain textual assumptions, tended to remain oral in its ontological and theological programs is something which we have already discussed. Thus, even in the Augustinian tradition, it was the formulaic Augustine, not the textual Augustine, which played an integral role in Medieval theology. It was not until 1506 that a definitive edition of Augustine's works became available. Up to that time Augustine was known largely through a formulaic summary divorced from the actual texts of Augustine's works. Textual echoes of Augustine appear widely in the works of Melanchthon indicating that, even before his association with Wittenberg, he had been exposed to the newly available texts of Augustine through his connection with Northern Italian circles. This of course raises the larger issue: did Luther have the same exposure to Augustinian texts? One would assume so, but the Augustinian Cloister was often the last place to be affected by the revival of Augustinian texts. The Augustinians of the Cloister were very often tied to the oral background of the formulaic Augustine. Was Luther a formulaic or a textual Augustinian?

The controversy regarding Luther's exposure to the authentic corpus of Augustine is still a matter of debate among scholars (McGrath, 1987: 118-120). McGrath, however, has noted an incident which occurred in the early stages of the Lutheran movement which may shed some light on this subject. McGrath relates an incident involving a dispute between Luther and Carlstadt regarding Augustine. McGrath notes that the dispute could have been easily resolved by a quick reference to the text. What is interesting for our purposes is that no authentic texts of Augustine were apparently available in Wittenberg either in the libraries of Carlstadt and Luther or the
University. Carlstadt had to travel some distance to purchase a copy of the relevant text in order to settle the issue. Both Luther and Carlstadt initially seemed to have based their arguments on some kind of Augustinian tradition. This little incident in connection with our consideration of the oral orientation of Luther's thought suggests that Luther may have been more formulaic than textual in his consideration of Augustinian theology. Indeed, we may suggest that the Augustinian cloister was perhaps the last place to feel the impact of the textually pure re-reading of Augustine. The textual Augustinian focus was rather a product of the humanistic schools emanating from Italy.

If Luther may be regarded as more a formulaic Augustinian than a textual Augustinian, then it would behoove us to consider in greater detail the nature of those theological trends which were based on such a formulaic as opposed to a more textual reading. Partee has noted that scholastic theology, which followed the formulaic Augustine, had a marked preference for a consideration of the being of God as over against the knowledge of God (1977: 28-30). It is this theology of presence that therefore tended to dominate the scholastic arena. As we have noted earlier, the notion of presence is one which flourishes in a context of orality. The point to be stressed here is that scholastic methodology and its continuation in the mysticism of Eckhart tended to stress a sort of immediacy and presence which can only be ascribed to an oral metaphysics and theology. The reduction of Augustinian theology to a set of orally manageable criteria in many ways resembles the "sayings" tradition of the gnostic communities. In such a setting, we remarked that the collection of sayings served only as a sort of negative vehicle for the more authentic setting of the oral community.
The hermeneutical key was not to be found in the written text of the sayings but rather in the sacramental context which included a secret oral training into the essential meaning of the sayings. In the scholastic tradition, it is likewise worth noting that the formulaic distillation of early Christian theology had to be supplemented by a parallel concern for oral exposition. In this sense, it is easy to see the connection with such a methodology and what later developed as the general program in the schools for academic debate. Thus, Luther's ninety-five theses should be seen less as a textual, narrative exposition of his theology than a kind of sayings collection which had to be further validated in the arena of oral debate. It is well known that the theses were intended by Luther as a springboard for academic discussion and in this sense did not represent any major departure from scholastic methodology. Indeed, the text of the theses was probably not intended at all to represent the major locus of his theological intent. That major locus is rather to be sought within the forum of the oral debate. Even in the early stages of Luther's struggles with Rome, it is interesting to note that the primary arena in which his theology was first set forth was not that of the text, but rather the oral debate, first with Eck and then others.

While not considering the problem from the standpoint of the tensions between orality and textuality, nevertheless Alistair McGrath has argued persuasively that there is a marked difference between the Lutheran movement and the Reformed movements which had a more humanistic and Augustinian leaning (1987: 199-201). McGrath has shown that Luther's program should be seen more as a development within, rather than a radical break with, the world of late Medieval theology. The real break is rather to be seen in the theological movements most influenced by humanism. It is
this humanistic influence which McGrath has argued was noticeably lacking from Luther’s program. From our perspective, it is perhaps easier to argue that such a dichotomy between humanistic and non-humanistic tendencies in theology are perhaps better understood from a consideration of oral vs. textual prejudices. As we have shown, the humanistic trends represent a more textually and linguistically sensitive understanding of reality that is in many ways a continuation of the Platonic-Aristotelean textual traditions.

The issue of humanism, however, is one that requires further clarification in light of William Bouwsma’s perceptive analysis in the article, "The Two Faces of Humanism" (1975: 3-60). Bouwsma has shown that it is necessary to consider two distinct aspects of humanism in the Renaissance, the one he terms Stoic, the other Augustinian. As will become evident as this digression develops, Stoicism bears a marked resemblance to secondary orality. On this basis, we would challenge the classification of this movement as humanism based on the definition of Kristeller which underscored the humanists’ concern with the printed word. Whether a legitimate branch of humanism or not, a noticeable revival of Stoic thought did occur in the Renaissance. Furthermore, Bouwsma has given us a useful outline of the movement (1975: 4-8). As noted by Bouwsma, Stoicism was characterized by a view of the logos which stressed the ubiquity of the logos. The stoic logos was seen as an ordering principle which permeated all of reality. It was an integral principle in nature which insured the divine governing of the cosmos. The Stoic logos thus represents a kind of static order which merely requires a passive reception on the part of the individual. In the cosmic scheme of Stoicism, time is conceived in cyclical terms. In this sense, there was a marked indifference to any notion of history as a linear progression
representing a significant direction for human society. The ethical posture of Stoicism was thus passive and apathetic. Indeed, apathy, *apatheia*, was the goal of the Stoic philosopher. Complete and unquestioning acceptance of the divine order immanent and ubiquitous in nature was the only proper ethical response to the human situation. Such an ethical stance appears to stand for the *status quo*.

While it is not possible to demonstrate the direct influence of Stoicism on the thought of Luther, nevertheless, we may note certain common features. Luther had a similar understanding of the ubiquity of the word. Furthermore, we have noted the criticism of scholars concerned with ethical questions regarding the impact of Lutheran ideas in the ethical realm. Akin to the passive ethics of the Mystical tradition, Lutheranism likewise appears to have this sort of Stoic acceptance of the divine order inherent in the world. Such a stance seeks less to change the social order than to promote a passive acceptance of current social strata as divinely ordained. In this sense, the Lutheran program, while nevertheless breaking radically with the Roman Church, still stood in the sociological sense for the static forms of late Medieval society.

Both the Stoicism of the Renaissance and the theology of the Lutheran movement thus appear to share a common ontology which is based on a notion of the *logos* which stresses its immediate and ubiquitous nature. Such an ontology we have shown to be intimately connected to an oral understanding of the manner in which linguistic realities function. The Stoic project can be thus seen largely as an attempt to retain or to refine a basic ontology which may be linked finally to oral strategies.

In contrast to Stoicism, Bouwsma has noted a contrasting trend in
humanism which bears a marked Augustinian stance (1975: 43). This
Augustinian type of humanism we may further contrast with the formulaic
Augustinianism based on the sayings collection which we noted earlier
represented a formulaic reduction of Augustine's theology. Indeed, the
formulaic Augustine can be seen to have much in common with the Stoic
and mystical assumptions of much of Scholastic thought. The Augustinian
humanism to which Bouwsma refers is, on the other hand, more akin to the
textual Augustine than the formulaic Augustine. Here, Bouwsma notes the
economy of the will in Augustine's soteriology. It is this focus on the will
which gives the Augustinian project, according to Bouwsma, its sociological
orientation. The focus of the will we may link to the general textual thrust
of humanism with its concern for an imitatio texti. As we have seen,
Renaissance textuality had a dynamic thrust vis-à-vis change in the social
and ecclesiastical order. In contrast to Stoic humanism, Augustinian
humanism stressed the social implications of theology. The Stoic view
concentrating on the static forms of being stands in marked contrast to
Augustine's dynamic view of history. Earlier, we noted the rise of an
historical sense in conjunction with the distanciation and abstraction made
possible by the advent of textuality. In this sense, it is perhaps easier to see
Augustine's theological perspective of history as in some way shaped by
textual influences. Such a textual orientation with its possibility for
abstraction and distance created for Augustine the perspective necessary to
see history as a linear progression which is both distinct from, yet shaped
by, a transcendent divinity. For the Stoics, that divinity was seen as a
fundamental aspect of nature itself.

Oberman has shown that the humanistic schools which possessed this
kind of Augustinian orientation were associated, perhaps paradoxically, with a certain nominalistic preference (1986: 11). I say "paradoxically" because one would tend to think of nominalism in contrast to the realism of Platonic thought. However, we may now see as problematical the stereotype of Platonism in the nominalist-realist controversy. In that context, the Platonism associated with that controversy may now be seen to have been in fact a formulaic reduction of Plato much akin to the kind of formulaic reduction of Augustine in the "sayings collection" of the Decretum attributed to him. Rather, as Bouwsma has shown, the humanistic forms of Platonism were much more textually oriented and in sympathy with Aristotelean concerns (1975: 5). We argued earlier that in terms of textuality, the Platonic and Aristotelean positions, as they are revealed in their textual setting, are much more in common than the history of thought generally allows. It was this marriage of Plato and Aristotle that Bouwsma believes was behind the humanism of the Renaissance giving it both a transcendent and a this worldly orientation. Thus, in considering Oberman's observation that the Augustinianism of the Renaissance had a nominalistic orientation we may thus see humanism as continuing the textual traditions of Greek philosophy. Earlier, we argued that nominalism may in fact be seen as the precursor to the textual strategies that became widespread with the advent of printing. There, we noted that printing technology tended to reinforce this nominalistic position, a position which tended on the whole to see universals rising from a consideration of particulars. However, this kind of philosophical posture, we noted, was already part of the Greek tradition including Plato, whose textual philosophy had at least the seminal possibilities for a somatic orientation as a prerequisite for understanding
transcendent truths.

Based on the role that humanism played in the Reformation, McGrath has noted a sharp contrast between Lutheranism and the rest of the Reformed tradition (1987: 200). I believe it is now possible for us to further clarify this contrast as not simply one between Luther and humanism but rather in terms of persistent oral prejudices as over against a rising textually oriented linguistic perspective. As noted earlier, McGrath has stressed a marked difference between Lutheranism and the other strands of the Reformation which were influenced by the kind of humanism which Bouwsma has identified as Augustinian. The contrast, according to McGrath, appears to center on the controversy between a Lutheran notion of justification by faith and the Reformed notion of an *imitatio Christi*. In the Reformation outside of Luther's influence, the major theological thrust seemed to aim at a Reformation of the Church in accord with a theological paradigm based on a re-reading of Scripture which sought to implement a restructuring of the Church and society along the lines of an *imitatio Christi* in which the norms of the Gospel had a tangible impact on the ordering of human society (McGrath, 1987: 190). Furthermore, as we have seen, the humanists' notion of an *imitatio Christi* is really an *imitatio Christi textualis*. It is this ethical posture of humanism which McGrath contrasts sharply with the Lutheran program of justification by faith. The humanistic schools sought systematically to use the textual arena of the re-reading of Scripture as a kind of archetypal pattern for the ordering of society. It is thus no accident that the controversy between Luther and Erasmus should come down to a fundamental difference concerning the role of the will (Lindhardt, 1986: 130-133). Indeed, all of the great humanist
spokesmen: Bude, Lefevre, Erasmus, Zwingli, Calvin, and Melanchthon all share this common feature concerning the role of the will as a dynamic focal point for theological issues and reform. As noted earlier, the problem of Melanchthon's relation to Luther is still a tricky issue. But, as more objective scholarship comes into play, it will be clearer still that Melanchthon in the final analysis should be placed squarely in the humanistic tradition in spite of his association with Luther.

It is quite possible that Melanchthon's early relationship with Luther reflects a kind of intimidation which tended to divert Melanchthon's work toward the limitations of a strictly Lutheran program of sola fide. However, after the publication of the 1521 edition of the Loci Communes, Melanchthon's humanistic concerns begin to surface once again, so that it is possible to detect a distinctly textual orientation even in this most intimate sector of the Lutheran camp (Spitz, 1975: 418). Indeed, the close friendship of Luther and Melanchthon was such that it may have been necessary for Melanchthon to exercise great restraint in expressing views which would have been controversial in the context of a strict sola fide theology. Melanchthon's timidity in this regard can be seen in the case of his ghost writing an encomium in favor of Erasmus (Spitz, 1975: 418).

That Melanchthon is to be regarded as squarely in the humanists' camp should not surprise us in light of the fact that his grand uncle and intellectual patron, Johann Reuchlin, had an intimate connection with Italian humanism (Spitz, 1975: 408). Reuchlin knew Ficino personally. Such a direct association on the part of Melanchthon's mentor with Italian humanism is something which must not be overlooked in assessing the humanistic influences on Melanchthon's theology. If McGrath is correct in
making the contrast between Luther and the Reformed church on the basis of humanistic influences and the theological program of an *imitatio Christi*, then we are perhaps right in conjecturing that the tension between Luther and Melanchthon was real and that it centered on this very notion of the role of the will in the economy of salvation. We have already pointed out the treatise by Melanchthon, *De Anima*, which has been the major proof text in scholarship concerning Melanchthon's alleged synergism (Manschreck, 1958: 293-302). It is also noteworthy that Melanchthon revised this text several times, the last version published after Luther's death, and that in each revision there is a growing theological emphasis that is much attuned to the textual implications of the Renaissance, especially with regard to Melanchthon's understanding of the distinct faculties of the soul. These distinctions, we will argue, are very much in keeping with the textual Augustinian stance. We must, therefore, stress that Melanchthon may be included in that group of humanists who were more closely allied to the textual awakening of the Renaissance as seen in the humanistic schools and that such an awakening in almost every case involved some aspect of an *imitatio Christi textualis* as opposed to the notion of justification as seen in Luther.

We have already mentioned Melanchthon's treatise, *De Anima*, as a plausible matrix for discussing Melanchthon's humanistic background. That this background through Reuchlin is of the textual, Augustinian stamp will become evident as this digression develops. What we may note from the outset is that Reuchlin was largely responsible for the educational program of Melanchthon (Manschreck, 1958: 31-33). If we may assume that Reuchlin played an intimate role in the early training of this humanist scholar, then it
would be worthwhile to take a look at some of the influences that shaped the early views of Melanchthon. Manschreck has pointed out the distinctly humanistic and nominalistic orientation of Melanchthon’s early education (Manschreck, 36-39). The connection between humanism, nominalism, and textuality was suggested in Chapter One. Thus, in assessing Melanchthon we must consider the theological implications of a nominalistic direction in the early shaping of Melanchthon’s views. In Chapter One, we noted that one of the chief characteristics of the nominalists’ project was the notion of the decentralization of authority based on a consideration of particulars as over against universals. Universals were not denied ontological status, but access to those universals was seen to be the product of a certain kind of objective posture which textuality served to create.

The relationship between particulars and universals, however, was seen not necessarily in a dichotomous role but rather in terms of a symbiotic relationship which both validated the transcendence of universals and their access through a consideration of the particulars. This union of foci is to be seen as the legacy of the nominalistic schools and as such explains why Melanchthon was so adamant in insisting on the importance of both a Platonic and an Aristotelean philosophy (CR 11: 413-425). We have already argued that in terms of textuality the two schools are much closer in sympathies than the history of Western thought generally allows and that both textual traditions ought to be distinguished from their Medieval counterparts which, on the contrary, came to represent positions consistent with an oral ontology. In the case of Platonism, the Medieval conception, largely based on a formulaic reduction of Plato, stressed the other worldly to the exclusion of the somatic realm as a valid locus for theological
considerations. In the case of Aristotle, the Medieval, scholastic use of him was limited to the methodological logic of his system which was pressed in service to an oral ontology. The nominalistic, humanistic training of Melanchthon led him rather to a purer more textual understanding of both philosophers made possible by the rise in the availability of the texts of both authors. Thus, Melanchthon’s insistence on the philosophy of both men bears the stamp of the new direction in Renaissance thinking which sought to validate both a physical and a transcendent locus as the basis for a reformation in theology.

The best place to observe the dual thrust of Melanchthon’s thought can be found in the De Anima (CR 13: 1-178). We will base our observations on the last edition of that treatise which post-dates Luther’s death in order to see the humanist Melanchthon set free form the inhibiting presence of Luther so that his true humanistic colors may shine forth more clearly.

Roughly the first third of Melanchthon’s treatise is devoted to a scientific review of the physical structure of the body based largely on Galen. This section to modern eyes appears grossly obsolete. This primitive scientific view may in part account for the lack of attention that this treatise has received in modern scholarship. However, in spite of the scientific infelicities of Melanchthon, we may nevertheless note a significant development in theology based on Melanchthon’s treatment of the soul. That such a treatise begins with a somatic orientation suggests an affirmation of our larger thesis that the somatic dimension occupied in the humanistic tradition a valid position in theological considerations. Furthermore, we noted in the first chapter the relationship according to Eisenstein between the rise in the availability of texts as a result of printing and a scientific
orientation which was raised to a new level of abstraction as a result of the objectivity created by textuality. Indeed, Melanchthon's treatise is coolly objective and detached indicating a distinctively textual orientation. Melanchthon's analysis of the body in many ways foreshadows the sort of mechanical deistic views of the enlightenment. The body is viewed as a highly organized mechanism which bears the stamp of a rational creator in terms of the precision and economy of its operation. That Melanchthon begins his consideration of the soul with a scientific review of the bodily organism further suggests his nominalistic orientation which sees the access to the transcendent as intimately associated with the locus of the body. Indeed, it will be the argument of this section to suggest that Melanchthon's primary project was to establish both the dependent and transcendent aspects of the soul in an enterprise which sought both to validate the autonomy of the soul and its transcendent orientation. In Chapter Two, we reviewed Havelock's thesis that the emergence of the Platonic notion of the immortal soul was based upon a definitive break with the oral synthesis. In that context, the textual orientation of Platonic thought led to a consideration of the soul which was both autonomous from the oral synthesis and yet had a transcendent orientation regarding the basis for categorical truth claims. The Platonic soul was seen to be both independent of the oral synthesis and dependent on the hermeneutical arena of the forms.

If we may note a parallel between the psychological and anthropological dimensions of Platonic thought resulting from the rise in textual strategies, we may note a similar development in humanism in terms of establishing the autonomy of the individual and its transcendent orientation. Melanchthon's treatise accomplishes precisely that in stressing the autonomy
of the soul and its dependence on a transcendent hermeneutical realm.

Melanchthon's treatise on the soul repeatedly stresses the autonomy of the soul in terms of its notitiae regarding the soul's ability to discern the difference between right and wrong, the one and the many, and logical progression in a syllogism (CR 13: 138). Here, he notes that the light of the soul is "sprinkled" from above giving the soul an intimation and a foretaste of divine truth (CR 13: 144). At this point, we might be inclined to equate Melanchthon's notion of the inner light with what the mystics had called the synteresis. However, in Melanchthon, this inner light is not a property of the soul proper but is imparted from another source. The term "sprinkled" suggests a source beyond the soul itself. In fact, Melanchthon's terminology in the De Anima is exactly that of Augustine's in describing the soul's relation to the divine. The verbal echoes of Melanchthon's terminology are unquestionably derived from The Confessions, a fact which indicates that Melanchthon not only held views similar to Augustine's but that the texts of Augustine had so permeated his outlook that they found their way into his own textual enterprises. In noting the textual influences of Plotinus on Ambrose and Augustine, we mentioned the frequency with which both writers echo the exact terminology of Plotinus. Since we may assume that this was not the result of some kind of oral initiation into the arcane teachings of the great master, we may conclude that such echoes suggest a thorough assimilation of a textual reading of Plotinus. Likewise, in the case of Melanchthon, such textual echoes of Augustine suggest more the textual influences of Augustine's writings than an oral orientation which would have been the norm in the Augustinian cloister.

If we take seriously the verbal echoes of Augustine in Melanchthon's
treatise on the soul, then we may conclude that the psychology and anthropology of Augustine occupied a front seat in Melanchthon's consideration of the dynamics of the soul's activities. Indeed, perhaps the most significant observation to be made with regard to Melanchthon's treatise on the soul concerns the distinct properties of the soul. In our discussion of Augustine in Chapter Two, we noted the distinct faculties of the soul as an anthropological counterpart for Augustine's consideration of the Trinitarian image of God in man. In that chapter, we argued that it was paramount for Augustine to establish the notion of distinction and separation of aspects of the deity itself as a counterpoint to the Manichaean cosmology which privileged an undifferentiated unity as the major characteristic of deity and the soul. In the Augustinian program, the sort of distinction and separation which he ascribes both to the Trinity and its image in the human personality was very much in keeping with the dynamics of textuality and its concerns for deferral and separation of sign from signified in the hermeneutical arena. That Melanchthon not only follows but textually echoes the Augustinian view indicates that his theological program had to a high degree incorporated the textual features which we have associated with Augustine's breakthrough. A detailed consideration of this aspect of Melanchthon's theology could provide the definitive evidence for the schism between Luther and Melanchthon. In our consideration of Luther's affinity with the mystical tradition of the *Theologia Germanica*, we noted an almost diametrically opposite understanding of the soul. There we noted that the goal of the mystic project was a reunion of the soul with divinity in which distinctions in the soul dissolve by becoming engulfed in the deity. Our purpose is not to write the definitive work on the distinctions between
Luther and Melanchthon. However, our consideration of the *De Anima* suggests that Melanchthon's understanding of the distinct faculties of the soul was more in keeping with the humanistic origins of his education than with Luther.

The humanistic and nominalistic background of Melanchthon's education naturally emphasized a somatic dimension in theological considerations. In this regard, we may note Melanchthon's treatment in the *De Anima* regarding the relation of the senses to the intellect (CR 13: 147-149). In our earlier discussion, we noted Melanchthon's Platonic sympathies. At this point, we must be careful to consider the textual, Platonic orientation of Melanchthon as opposed to the formulaic Platonism of the realist schools. As already noted, the Platonism of the humanists was rather the kind of textual Platonism which more easily meshed with Aristotelean considerations. In this light, we can more easily assimilate Melanchthon's assessment of the role of the senses *vis-a-vis* the intellect. While Melanchthon argues that there is in the soul a sprinkling of divine light which provides the hermeneutical key for understanding the transcendent notion of the divine, we must not overlook the somatic dimension in such a consideration. For Melanchthon the senses played a vital role in stirring the intellect toward reflection. Indeed, it is the role of the senses to arouse the soul to consider the nature of reality. This reflective activity on the part of the soul leads to a transcendent consideration of the ultimate nature of divinity but does not begin there. For Melanchthon, even though the soul has a kind of foretaste of the divine, this is only consumated when the soul is aroused to hermeneutical activity as a result of the external stimulation provided by the senses. Melanchthon states explicitly that the
role of the senses is to provide such an external orientation so that, while the senses have a certain hermeneutical autonomy, such an autonomy is only fulfilled in the arena of transcendent hermeneutical reflection.

The external focus of the soul for Melanchthon culminates in the activity of the will. In the chapter on Augustine, we showed that the image of God in man was restored principally at the point of the will. The transcendent pattern of the divine had in addition to find a somatic counterpart in the soul's volitional activity. Only in terms of the volitional was the image of God in man seen to be recovered. Such a recovery, moreover, did not result in a confusion of the soul's distinct faculties but rather stressed their harmonious activity. We may conclude that such a restoration is predicated both in the case of Augustine and Melanchthon on a certain textual orientation which views such distinctions as ontologically valid. Furthermore, in this regard Melanchthon is in harmony with the humanists' notion of an *imitatio Christi* based on an *imitatio texti*.

Later, we will consider the significance of the resurrection in the theology of the Italian Platonist, Marsilio Ficino. For Ficino, the resurrection provided the textual conclusions for a Platonic psychology. That is, if the locus of the body is to be seen as an integral function of the soul's activity, then based on the perspective of eternity, it was necessary to postulate an ongoing somatic dimension of the soul's activity. If the soul is immortal, then it must retain a somatic dimension in order to function. It is not surprising, then, that Melanchthon concludes his treatise on the soul with a discussion of the resurrection in which the soul is provided in the eternal realm with the somatic basis necessary for its proper function. Melanchthon's treatise on the soul thus provides us with a psychological
schema that is very much in keeping with the sort of humanistic, Platonic dimension of Ficino, who, we have noted, was an intimate associate of Melanchthon’s great uncle, Johannes Reuchlin.

There is yet another dimension to be considered in Melanchthon’s textuality. In surveying the works of Melanchthon as they are contained in the Corpus Reformatorum, we are struck by a peculiar emphasis regarding the specific Greek texts which Melanchthon chose to submit to Latin translations. Melanchthon was, of course, the professor of Greek at the university of Wittenberg and as such would have been quite familiar with all of the Greek authors whose works were available at that time. With the advent of printing technology, these were considerable in number. Melanchthon lectured on a wide spectrum of Classical subjects, and his works contain numerous summaries and notes regarding a plethora of Greek authors. However, one author in particular was singled out by Melanchthon as the major focus of his attention in terms of translation. That Greek author was the Greek tragedian, Euripides. Why, we might ask, was Melanchthon so devoted to this one author? As far as we can tell, no scholar has as yet reflected on this singular emphasis by Melanchthon on the Greek tragedian Euripides. Of all the Greek authors, including Plato and Aristotle, Euripides was the only one to receive such attention by Melanchthon. At this point, we may offer what may be a very convincing thesis in light of the growing paradigm of orality-textuality.

To set the stage for this discussion, it will be necessary to review the significance of Euripides in the Greek setting. In the chapter on the breakdown of the oral synthesis in the Greek setting, we noted the rise in the importance of the drama as a psychological vehicle for coping with the
alienation and anxiety which resulted from the breakdown of the oral synthesis in the wake of a growing textual impact resulting from the externalization of the Greek language by the invention of the alphabet. There, we noted that the dramatic performances psychologically provided the audience with a temporary restoration of the oral synthesis and as such offered a kind of psychic relief from the loss of a culturally cohesive social identity. Those tragedians proved to be most successful in the dramatic contests whose works most effectively achieved this psychological release. By standards contemporaneous with the Greek situation, Euripides was the least successful of the Classical tragedians whose works have survived. With alarming consistency, Euripides placed last in the dramatic contests in which he competed. His unpopularity, however, seemed to be of little concern to him. The cause of his unpopularity we may now attribute to the fact that of all the Greek tragedians he was uncompromising in his treatment of the nature of psychological alienation in the wake of the breakdown of the oral synthesis. Euripides' analysis of the destructive capacities of human emotions offers no final reconciliation for the audience. The psychological tensions created by his drama find no final reconciliation as they do in the works of his older contemporaries Aeschylus and Sophocles.

The comic poet Aristophanes, for example, criticized the position of Euripides. We noted earlier Aristophanes' preference for the older oral forms of education as the proper vehicle for maintaining the aristocratic values of the status quo (Havelock, 1963: 40). In this sense, Aristophanes quite rightly saw the advent of textuality in Greek education as a significant threat to traditional authority. Oral authority figures in the work of Euripides receive bitter treatment in his exploration of their
self-aggrandizing motives. Like Plato, Euripides sought a new locus of political authority based on other factors than the traditional oral criteria. In this sense his attitude reflects a strong textual perspective which strongly and bitterly questioned the traditional assumptions of an oral mentality. In this regard, his dramatic presentations must have left his audience singularly frustrated in their expectations to receive some sort of emotional release from the stage. Thus, Euripides appears to view the phenomenon of alienation less as a temporary breakdown of the oral synthesis, as did his elders, than a permanent feature of the human condition. From the perspective of modern, post-Freudian eyes, Euripides has always been regarded as the most psychologically sophisticated of the Greek writers. He was bold and uncompromising in his analysis of the human condition. Less interested in some illusory, temporary denial of the permanence of alienation in the human scene, Euripides sought unrelentingly to explore the dynamics of alienation as the sole basis for working out a more practical psychology based on the dynamics of alienation as a given in the human arena. Furthermore, he appears to view with far less nostalgia than his peers the loss and demise of traditional notions of authority.

Based on this consideration, it is more understandable that Melanchthon should have devoted so much attention to the works of Euripides. Euripides appears to have represented for Melanchthon a figure who occupied a similar position in history to his own. In the chapter on Luther and mysticism, we noted Hoffman's observations regarding the growing sense of a loss of cultural identity in the period of the Reformation which we may now attribute both to the rise in textuality and to socio-economic factors. The breakdown of the oral synthesis of the Medieval world we may suggest
was similar in its dynamics to the same breakdown in fifth century Athens. In both cases, there was a widespread sense of alienation and anxiety. In the face of such alienation, there was a marked desire to restore the lost oral synthesis through the secondary orality of mysticism. However, there was another trend which sought to utilize the dynamics of alienation as the basis for a more profound psychology and theology. Such a trend saw the breakdown of traditional oral values and the centralized control of authority as a positive and liberating step in the rise of human consciousness. In this sense the alienation created by the sense of loss of the oral synthesis was seen as the first step in the formulation of a more dynamic analysis of the psychological makeup of the human psyche. Such programs sought to work out more valid conclusions regarding the complexities of the human personality by incorporating the dynamics of alienation into their analyses.

Using Euripides as the model for such a program in the Greek setting, we must consider one other important factor which should help us in assessing the importance of Euripides in Melanchthon's appreciation of him. Euripides' last play, written by him in exile from Athens, deals with the problem of religion in terms of the advent of the worship of Dionysus in Greek history. Euripides in his final work appears to be exploring a new dimension of the human psyche which offers his final answer to the problems of alienation in the Greek setting. In this drama, Euripides explores the rise in a new sense of religious experience which stands in opposition to the conventional wisdom of the oral world of Greek culture (Dodds, 1960: xliiv). Indeed, there is constant verbal play on his part regarding the Greek words for wisdom and their cognates. Viewed from a narrative perspective, the intertextual word plays culminate in a
deconstruction of oral wisdom in favor of an almost parabolic overthrow of such wisdom in favor of an "extra" dimension which looks outside of the oral norms for the answer to the problems created by alienation. Thus, the work of Euripides appears to culminate in an external orientation which sees alienation from the oral norms as a vital step in the transition toward a new consideration of the cosmos which looks beyond itself in a new kind of openness to the world.

Of all the translations of Euripides by Melanchthon, the Bacchae is the most dramatic and sensitive. In the history of religion some attempt has been made to see parallels between Dionysus and a Christ figure (Dodds, 1965: 119). Dionysus has a divine father and a human mother. His religious mission commences at the advent of his coming into manhood. He is seen as a disruptive figure in terms of conventional wisdom. We are thus led to ask: did Melanchthon see a particular affinity between himself and Euripides on the basis of a religion which was disruptive in terms of the conventional wisdom of Roman Catholicism? Did he not see the alienation thus created as a necessary step in the transition toward a more dynamic understanding of the external orientation of a valid religious program? Did Melanchthon in a significant way see Euripides as a spiritual contemporary who had undergone the same painful transition that was to be characteristic of the world of the Reformation?

Our consideration of Melanchthon has focused on several features which are to be seen as directly related to Melanchthon's humanistic orientation, an orientation which was based on the revival of Platonic and Aristotelian texts as well as those of Euripides. Also, we have noted a distinctly Augustinian influence. We will now turn to a consideration of John Calvin in order to see
if a common denominator can indeed be found on the basis of a shared
humanistic perspective which would include both classical and Augustinian
elements. Calvin, however, is a complex theologian. This complexity has
been analyzed by William Bouwsma in a recent book, *John Calvin: A
Sixteenth-Century Portrait* (1988). There, Bouwsma has noted two almost
schizophrenic Calvins. On the one hand Bouwsma has argued that Calvin
should be seen as part of the scholastic tradition with its ontological stance.
On the other hand, Bouwsma has argued that there was a competing
tendency in Calvin to utilize the rhetorical as the major vehicle for
theological reform. In Bouwsma's assessment, it appears that Calvin desired
to go beyond the restrictive categories of Scholasticism by an appeal to the
more intimate and persuasive arena of rhetoric. In this conception, we
might be inclined to assume that Calvin in one sense despaired of the
fossilized orality of Scholasticism in favor of the more engaging arena of oral
persuasion based on rhetorical norms. Bouwsma's view of the nature of the
scholastic concern with being over against the dynamics of rhetoric in Calvin
requires, however, severe correctives in order to see the true nature of the
relationship between the two. Bouwsma seems to imply that the scholastic
influence represented a kind of separation and limitation which Calvin
sought to bridge by an appeal to the direct emotive impact of oral rhetoric

The problem of rhetoric in the Renaissance, however, is not so easily
classified. While it would appear that the mere term "rhetorical" persuasion
represents a kind of focus which privileges the oral over the written, we
must carefully review the nature of rhetoric in Renaissance humanism
before we make such a conclusion. As Dresden points out, Renaissance
rhetoric had a distinctly textual focus (1975:143). Furthermore, Charles Partee has noted a distinction made in Calvin between rhetoric which operates solely with the view of persuasion as opposed to a kind of rhetoric which is in the service of theological truth (Partee, 1977:4-5). E. D. Willis in an article entitled, "Rhetoric and Responsibility in Calvin's Theology" has identified in Calvin a distinction between the kind of oral rhetoric which stresses the persuasiveness of the speaker as over against the kind of rhetoric which stresses the persuasiveness of the truth itself (1974: 46). It is in the camp of the latter that Willis would have us place Calvin. Here, we are reminded of Augustine's discussion of rhetoric in the De Doctrina Christiana discussed earlier in Chapter Three. Partee has compared the rhetorical problem in the Reformation to the situation in fifth century Athens regarding the sophistic schools in contrast to Plato. As noted previously, Plato had severe reservations regarding the importance of oral rhetoric as portrayed in the sophistic schools. There, the emphasis was placed entirely on the efficaciousness of the oral speaker apart from the validity of his message. The rhetorical thrust of the sophistic schools was aimed rather at the strategic program of unreflective assent to be obtained from the audience by the speaker. It is clear that Plato's interest in rhetoric was one which was, to the contrary, concerned with the persuasive exposition of truthful propositions which suggests a certain textual orientation locating truth above the arena of mere emotional consent to the speaker's manipulative tactics. Partee has thus concluded that Calvin, following Plato, had a more textual understanding of the manner in which rhetoric was to be employed than perhaps Bouwsma is willing to allow. In this sense, Calvin is thoroughly in keeping with Dresden's understanding of
Renaissance, humanistic rhetoric.

If we delve very deeply into the phenomenon of rhetoric in the Renaissance we will see that it bore a far more textual stamp than did its scholastic counterparts (Dresden, 1975: 140-144). The attempt on the part of some scholars to pit metaphysics against rhetoric we may now conclude is greatly misdirected. The notion of metaphysics which is thus caricatured is more closely aligned with the sort of oral ontology which we have already discussed. In the Renaissance tradition, rhetoric is not so neatly packaged. Indeed, most of the rhetorical schools of the Renaissance can be readily traced to the rise in textual thinking which had a strong affinity for the textual sensitivities of the Platonic-Aristotelean traditions. The kind of metaphysics which Bouwsma has outlined are rather to be associated with the kind of limited oral ontology which became solidified in scholastic methodology and mysticism. In this sense, it could be argued that the dichotomy between the philosophical Calvin and the rhetorical Calvin is a false one, and that it would be better to investigate the textual aspects of Calvin's philosophical position and the role that rhetoric plays in that specific context. In this light, we may argue that there was a more logical link between the philosophical orientation of Calvin and his rhetorical program than Bouwsma is willing to state. Again, it is the humanistic dimension of Calvin which unites the two. In other words, Calvin's philosophical premises are less related to the ontology of scholasticism than they are to his humanistic background which had a more textual understanding of Plato and Aristotle. Calvin's rhetoric should therefore be regarded not as an attempt to gain unquestioning assent on the part of his audience, but rather one which sought to make the claims of a textual theological program intelligible to the
masses. That is, we must distinguish between an oral and a written rhetoric. Such a distinction may be seen in the Rennaissance understanding of Quintillian’s textually oriented rhetoric (Dresden, 1975: 143). For Quintillian, there is a distinctly textual locus of revision which tempers the oral rhetorical stance. The orator must think textually and in reference to texts as the basis for his project. It is this textual rhetoric which gains force in the Rennaissance with the humanistic schools. To equate Rennaissance rhetoric with the kind of oral persuasion characteristic of the sophistic schools is to ignore the textual sophistication of Rennaissance humanism.

That such a textual rhetoric must stand in stark contrast to the rhetorical program of Luther is supported by the work of Lewis Spitz, who argues that Luther’s interest in rhetoric was solely concerned with the *verbum evangelici vocale*, or the oral aspects of the Gospel message (1975: 419). In other words, Spitz’ treatment of the subject suggests that Luther should be regarded less as a proponent of the sort of humanistic schools of rhetoric with their textual basis than as a strict oralist whose rhetorical thrust was aimed rather at the level of *fiducia*, which we may now argue was more a feature of the oral arena than the textual. As noted earlier, even in the case of Luther’s tracts and treatises, he appears to be more concerned with the sort of rhetorical tactics which are aimed toward the solicitation of gut responses than to a cool, rational assent to his theological project. Luther always remains a vitriolic and bombastic defender of his positions, a stance which caused considerable embarrassment on the part of those reformers who in the early stages looked to Luther as a forerunner of reform. Two cases in point are Bucer and Erasmus. Erasmus’ early support of Luther is well known. Bucer as well had thrown his support toward Luther largely
on the basis of a misunderstanding of the latter's intentions. Both Bucer and Erasmus, however, were far more in sympathy with the humanist camp than Luther ever could be, and the historical developments within Lutherancausethesetwohumanistreformerto shy away from their association with Luther (McGrath, 1987: 170).

If the humanist schools did in fact come to represent a theological program that was in opposition to that of Luther, it remains for us to explore in greater depth the nature of that humanism, its origins and influence. Partee and others have suggested that the origins of the humanism of the reformers is to be found in the humanism of northern Italy, particularly in the circle of humanists that formed around the dynamic figure of Marsilio Ficino (1977: 11). We noted earlier Reuchlin's association with Ficino as well as that of Erasmus. Calvin himself had read Plato in Ficino's translations (Partee, 1977: 111). Ficino's devotion to Plato is well known and need not be rehearsed, but the exact nature of Ficino's Platonism requires something of a digression in order to assess his influence on other branches of the Reformation, particularly Calvin. In this regard, Partee has given us a useful treatment of Ficino's Platonism. In his book, *Calvin and Classical Philosophy*, Partee has provided an in-depth analysis of the possible Platonic influences on the theology of Calvin (1977: 105-117). The greatest point of correspondence may be found in the Platonic philosophy of Ficino. Partee has noted that the chief difference between Plato and Calvin is to be found in Calvin's understanding of the resurrection (1977: 64). Since Plato had no such doctrine we might be tempted to drop the case and assume that there was in fact nothing in common between the two thinkers. However, in light of our treatment of the affinity between textuality and the somatic
dimension of the soul's activities in early Platonic philosophy, we may now regard the development of later Christian theology as more a completion than a rejection of the Platonic position. Augustine, we saw, utilized the dynamic of the Platonic schema as a vehicle for working out the textual implications of an incarnational theology. Even for Augustine, we may regard the resurrection of the body not so much as a rejection of Platonic anthropology as a final validation which, because it restores the somatic dimension of the soul's activity, is a sort of final apotheosis of the tripartite nature of the soul. This was our conclusion in the discussion concerning Melanchthon.

In considering the Platonic dimension of Ficino's philosophical project, Partee has noted the growing emphasis on the resurrection of the body in Ficino's thought (1977: 61). In other words, Ficino's Platonism is much like that of Augustine's in which the soul was viewed less as a divine being itself than a mediary between the somatic and the spiritual world. Ficino's emphasis on the resurrection thus validates the somatic as a genuine locus for the perceptions of spiritual realities. The body thus played such a significant role in the access to divine realities that it was finally vindicated as a legitimate locus in the notion of the resurrection. Earlier, we remarked on the growing understanding of the distinct functions of the soul in Platonic thought. The appetitive element which was directly concerned with the soul's relation to the body was there seen as a valid locus for psychic activity and health. Concentrating on the intermediary position of the soul, Ficino's philosophy likewise vindicates the body as a genuine agent in the soul's relationship to a transcendent deity. The soul is thus seen as a vehicle which must span the gap between the somatic realm and the transcendent realm
while never privileging the one over the other. Ficino's understanding of the resurrection thus fully Christianizes the Platonic position by further validating the role of the body through the notion of the resurrection.

We must, therefore, stress the humanistic dimension in the Reformation represented by the influence of Italian humanism. In the preceding discussion, we saw much in common between Melanchthon's psychology and that of Ficino's. We must now turn to a consideration of such influences on the theology of John Calvin and the Swiss theologians. We have noted the connection between the Mieux group of humanists surrounding Jacque Lefevre and Northern Italian humanism including Ficino and Pico. Pico in particular was intent upon the humanistic program of uniting the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle (Spitz, 1975: 408). Partee has noted the continuation of this project in the work of Melanchthon (1977: 110). Calvin as well had a significant connection with Lefevre and his humanistic enterprise. The influence of such an association can be unquestionably found in Calvin's relationship to Platonism as it came to him through such humanistic influences. We mentioned earlier that Calvin had read Ficino's translations of Plato. We may further note that Calvin stated expressly his approval of Plato as the most outstanding of pagan thinkers (Partee, 1977: 111). However, when we begin to survey the scholarship regarding Calvin's relationship to such influences, we find the sort of ambiguity which characterized the history of scholarship in connection with Luther's relationship to mysticism with each school arguing for or against in terms of its own theological prejudices. Roy Battenhouse, for example, has argued for a significant degree of Platonic influence in the theology of Calvin (1948: 470). Heinrich Quistorp agrees but uses such conclusions as a basis
for arguing for the non-biblical aspects of Calvin's theology (1955: 73,101). In the opinion of Quistorp, Calvin is too greatly influenced by Platonism to appreciate the more Biblical view of the soul as found in Luther. Partee himself, while noting Calvin's appreciation of Plato, has argued that in the final tally Calvin is a Biblicist and that his Christian philosophy significantly separates him radically from Platonic influences (1977: 64). Ironically, it is the theological locus of Calvin's understanding of the resurrection which for Partee provides the basis for this radical disjunction. In light of our earlier discussion regarding Augustine's, Ficino's, and Melanchthon's incorporation of the Platonic model in terms of the incarnation as the basis for understanding the necessity for the resurrection, it would appear that Partee has missed a promising opportunity to discuss the relationship of Calvin's own appreciation of Plato in the formation of his views of the faculties of the soul and the place of the resurrection in Christian theology.

Regarding the humanistic influences of Platonic thought and Augustinian anthropology, Calvin may be seen to have a great deal in common with Melanchthon. Partee has shown that there is a tension in the theology of Calvin between the notions of unity and distinction much of it centering on Calvin's attitude toward natural theology and revelation (1977: 42-45). In this connection, Partee has noted the controversy between Barth and Brunner regarding the role of natural theology. Brunner gives a yes to such a theology in general and to Calvin in particular. Barth, of course, stresses the "no." In Brunner's assessment of the problem, he sees a sort of unifying link between the notion of a natural revelation and a corresponding anthropology as the basis for such a union. To discern a natural revelation at all requires some sort of pre-grasping of the problem as the basis for a full
appreciation for the workings of divinity within the realm of the cosmos which must be intelligible to the natural faculties of man. Partee notes that Barth, on the other hand, stresses the ultimate transcendence of the divine and the human hybris in aspiring to a grasping of God's nature which is somehow a function of the human faculties. For Barth, Christian theology must always retain this "extra" dimension in order to be valid. To support this "extra" dimension, we may note that Calvin indeed asserts that natural revelation can only be discerned through the lenses of faith (CR 29: 28-29). Partee has suggested that the proper answer is both a yes and a no in regard to natural revelation for Calvin. Indeed, according to Partee, Calvin's major theological triumph was the balance he created between unity and distinction (1977: 45). It is this sort of balance that chiefly characterizes his Trinitarian theology. E. David Willis has noted the Trinitarian emphasis in Calvin's theology which we may now suggest was based largely on his humanistic and linguistic training (1966: 104, 121). We have consistently noted the connection between textuality and a theology of transcendence and distinction. At the same time, we have noted the Platonic notion of the soul which locates within the soul's autonomy certain hermeneutical powers which elevate textual discussion beyond the level of mere sense data.

The key to an understanding of Calvin's Platonic tendencies are inextricably tied to his humanistic background. Calvin's humanism is well documented by Quirinus Breen's *John Calvin: A Study in French Humanism* (1968). Nevertheless, we may stress a few highlights. Calvin received a thorough education in the classical languages. Furthermore, his humanistic interests of his early period may be seen in his commentary on Seneca which demonstrates a high degree of textual erudition. In addition, we cannot
ignore his association with the notable humanists of the day, particularly
Frasinus but including such figures as Lefevre, Bucer, and Melanchthon.
Finally, we may note that Calvin himself proclaimed that his works were
merely a paraphrase of Augustine (McGrath, 1987: 188). We have already
discussed the connection between Augustine and a textually oriented
humanism. On this basis we may conclude that Calvin's theology was
influenced not only by humanistic interests per se but also by that sort of
textual Augustinianism which we have outlined above. That there is a great
deal in common between the humanistic understanding of the soul and an
Augustinian one has been already demonstrated. It remains then for us to
document these influences in Calvin's theology.

One of the greatest influences on the shaping of Calvin's theology was
perhaps that of the Strasbourg theologian, Martin Bucer. McNeil in his book
on Calvin suggests that the years which Calvin spent in Strasbourg were
overwhelmingly influenced by the sort of humanistic theology formulated by
Martin Bucer (1954: 145-158). Bucer had a direct impact on the shaping of
Miriam Chrisman (1982) has shown that Strasbourg was of all the
Reformation centers perhaps the most greatly influenced by the impact of
textuality in theological considerations. Thus, Calvin's exile in Strasbourg
may be seen as a sort of incubation period in which his humanistic training
underwent the transition to theological humanism. That is, it was only in
Strasbourg under the influence of Bucer, Sturm and others that Calvin's
humanism (imitatio texti) received the baptism of the imitatio Christi
textualis. We have already argued for the moralistic dimension of those
elements of the Reformation which in contrast to Lutheranism stressed the
*imitatio Christi* and the *lex Christi* as the authentic domain for theological concerns. Thus it was that in Strasbourg Calvin adapted the theological paradigm which was to incorporate the dynamics of textuality into his basic theological outlook.

We have mentioned the significance of such influences in the area of Calvin's theology of the Eucharist. In Strasbourg under Bucer, Calvin came to an appreciation of the role of the Spirit in the manner in which the presence of Christ was rendered effectual to the believer (McNeill, 1954: 145). Here we may note that the theology of the Eucharist in the Reformation in Switzerland, Strasbourg, and outside of the Lutheran domain was shaped largely by textual considerations.

The conflict between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg may thus serve to set the stage for this very significant development concerning the role of the Spirit in Reformed theology. The early section of McNeil's book, *The History and Character of Calvinism*, deals with the influence on Calvin of the radical shift in theology ushered in by Zwingli (1954: 3-93). Based on our orality-textuality paradigm, we can best understand Zwingli's position as one of extreme referentiality in which there was a strong distrust for the oral word. Zwingli, as we recall, stressed unrelentingly the risen Christ as the chief locus of consideration in Eucharistic matters. Luther, on the other hand, stressed the ubiquity of Christ's presence. In linguistic terms, we may suggest that the view of Zwingli was highly referential stressing the separation of the signifier from the signified, an attitude which is unquestionably based on a textually oriented understanding of the way in which language was understood to function. Zwingli's distrust for the oral word is nowhere more evident than in his consideration of music. A trained
musician, Zwingli nevertheless objected to the captivating appeal of music. Charles Garside has devoted an entire book to the subject, *Zwingli and the Arts* (1981), in which he outlines Zwingli's stringent approach to linguistic realities. For Zwingli the word is foremost conceived in terms of its referential potentiality. In this regard, music is seen as a deterrent to meaning insofar as it seeks to gain an emotive response which stresses the signifier over the signified (Garside, 1981: 51). Language for Zwingli is only authentic which functions in the referential capacity which we have earlier termed the opacity of the sign. The sign for Zwingli is never an end in itself but is only a linguistic pointer which directs the individual beyond the identity of signified and signifier into the hermeneutical arena of textuality. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Augustine, like Zwingli, had strong reservations about the use of music in the liturgical setting. "He is insistent that music can have no legitimate function in true Christian worship" (Garside, 1981: 54). Likewise, in the view of Augustine it was far too easy for the worshiper to fall into the trap of worshipping the medium of the message rather than the message itself. The beauty of the music tends to distract the audience away from the message of the worship in favor of the kind of non-reflective assimilation characteristic of the oral arena. This view of language on the part of Zwingli, Garside suggests, grew out of his humanistic studies (1981: 52).

If we may regard this sterile approach to language as indicative of a textual orientation, then we may place Luther in sharp contrast to this approach. For Luther, music was vital to the reception of the message. Music provided the key for the dissemination of Lutheran ideas (Garside, 1981:67). Musical rhythms and cadences we have noted are characteristic of
the oral milieu. Thus, in stressing the non-musical nature of referential linguistic signifiers, Zwingli is emphasizing the textual manner in which the Word is to be understood.

Zwingli’s view of language, therefore, emphasizes the transcendent reference above the medium of referral. Thus, it is very interesting that in the debate at Marburg Zwingli constantly emphasizes linguistic aporias in terms of the tropological nature of the Greek text, while Luther pounds his fists and scratches on the table hoc est corpus. That Luther quotes the Latin vulgate, which he had assimilated in the monastic setting primarily through oral means, indicates his oral attitude toward Scripture in contrast to the exceedingly textual orientation of Zwingli. Zwingli’s theology thus demonstrates a sterile and referential view of language which stresses the utter transcendence and separation of the signifier from the signified in the manner of Augustine’s signum-res dichotomy. In Zwingli, there is an extreme emphasis on absence as opposed to the notion of presence contained in Luther’s understanding of ubiquity. We have already suggested that the notion of ubiquity is very much in keeping with an oral ontology. We have likewise stressed that extreme forms of textuality such as that of Zwingli’s have an alienating and deconstructive effect in terms of oral presence.

If Zwingli represents the kind of alienation characteristic of the first step in the transition from orality to textuality, then we must look beyond him for the theological locus in which the tension between signifier and signified is reconciled in the hermeneutical arena. This, we would now argue, is to be found in other elements of the Reformed tradition. We may rather look to such a reconciliation in the theology of Martin Bucer and John Calvin.
One of the chief theological insights which Calvin gained from his association with Bucer is clearly to be found in the notion of the Spirit as hermeneutical mediator between signifier and signified. In this regard, Bucer's influence can be most clearly detected in Calvin's theology of the Eucharist. Calvin, like Zwingli, stressed the transcendent locus of the risen body of Christ as the first premise in any eucharistic theology (CR 29: 1009-1011). That Christ's body is indeed absent meshes well with the sort of textual orientation which we have outlined above. The word, especially the textual word, suggests rather a separation of the signified from the signifier than the immediacy of presence characteristic of oral speech. In this sense, Calvin clearly aligns himself with a textual view of the words of institution. However, Calvin goes beyond Zwingli in suggesting the reconciliation of signifier and signified through the hermeneutical role of the Holy Spirit. For Calvin, it is the Spirit which bridges the gap between signifier and signified (CR 29: 1012). For Calvin, the hermeneutical activity of the Spirit provides the means by which access is gained to the divine presence, but not the sort of presence characteristic of orality, but rather a sort of linguistically deferred presence in which the Spirit is seen as the hermeneutical bridge between signifier and signified.

In Calvin's theology, the sharply divided spheres of sign and signified are maintained but a union occurs at the point of the Spirit. In such a theological schema, unity is based entirely on the priority of distinction. The Spirit unites signifier and signified only on the hermeneutical plane in which direct correspondence characteristic of orality is finally denied. But there is never an exaltation of the Spirit which overrules the external demands of the *logos*. The Spirit always acts in accordance with the locus of the external
*logos* and in so doing renders its reality to the volitional plane of existence. Calvin thus supplies a model for the Trinitarian nature of the image of God in man. As in Augustine, the image finds restoration in its volitional activity. If Luther's sociological program, based on an oral ontology, stressed the maintenance of the *status quo*, then the textualists' project maintained to an equal extent the priority of change in the volitional plane which sought to render in tangible ethical activity the reality of the *logos*. Thus, McGrath, as previously noted, has accurately shown that there is a distinct difference between the Lutheran Reformation and the that of Calvinism. What McGrath has not shown is the significance of linguistic controversies concerning the nature of the tension between orality and textuality in the two movements. Based on a consideration of the respective theologies in terms of textuality, we would have to say that in general the oralist ontology stands for the *status quo* in ethical terms and that a textual view of reality sees time abstractly as the field of volitional activity which thereby becomes the locus of theological reality.

With regard to the problem of the sacraments, we may note that it is the nature of a textual orientation to see a distinction between the *signum* and the *res*, whereas orality sees a confusion of substances in which the *signum* and the *res* are inextricably bound together in the field of oral discourse. Here, we must be careful to make a distinction regarding the precise manner in which we are using the terms *signum* and *res*. If we pay attention to Derrida, and even to Handelman, the distinction of *signum* and *res* does not necessarily suggest a neat packaging of oral vs. textual strategies. As noted previously, both Derrida and Handelman have shown that a sharp distinction between *signum* and *res* can be maintained even
while privileging oral speech above textuality. In such a dichotomy, the *signum* represents merely the external written sign, the *res* of which is found in oral speech.

If this were the only division to be made, we would be correct in asserting that even Luther maintains such a distinction. For Luther, the written word always remains a mere *signum* which must be authenticated by the *res* of oral speech. However, if we return to Augustine, who first made the distinction between the *signum* and the *res*, we will find an entirely different view of the relationship between the two. For Augustine, the term *signum* applies to all of linguistic reality, even the realm of the oral. In fact, for Augustine, as we saw in connection with his view of the recitation of the Psalms set to musical cadences, the danger is clearly that the *res* of the *signum* can become confused in the oral arena. Augustine here is clearly not stating that the *res* is more accessible in the form of oral speech, rather that the oral audience may be tricked into thinking so. For Augustine, then, it is necessary always to maintain the sharp distinction between *signum* and *res* even in orality. This would suggest that Augustine is already well on the way to a textual mode of linguistic interpretation. Therefore, when we see theologians in the Reformation attempting to authenticate their views on the basis of Augustine, we must ask ourselves whether or not they have fully assimilated this textual *modus operandi*. In the case of Luther, we would have to conclude that, while a distinction between the *signum* and the *res* is maintained, the *signum* refers only to the written word while the *res* is rendered authentic in oral speech. R. W. Quere in the published form of his dissertation, *Melanchthon's Christum Cognoscere*, has shown that this textual Augustinian
dichotomy is the impetus behind Melanchthon's understanding of the Eucharist (1977: 59-79). For both Melanchthon and Augustine, the words of institution emphasize the memorial nature of the sacrament. In such a view the sign provokes a hermeneutical crisis which is resolved at the level of the spirit, but above all, the *signum* is never conceived in terms of the direct correspondence between *signum* and *res*.

We noted earlier that, even in Augustine's treatment of memory in Book X of *The Confessions*, there is no notion of direct correspondence between the human apparatus and the divine transcendence. In Book X, while Augustine suggests that the divine is indelibly stamped on the memory, still, that notion is complicated by the experiential dimension of an examination of conscience such as outlined in Book X. A careful reading of Book X shows that memory itself is a referential phenomenon always pointing to an absence rather than a presence. In Derridean fashion, the memory of man never reveals more than a trace of the divine. For Augustine, plenary presence is an illusory concept which must give way to a theology of absence, referentiality and deferral. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sacraments. For Augustine, the sacraments remain a sign analogous to his comprehensive understanding of the nature of language itself.

When Melanchthon published the *variata* to the Augsburg Confession, no doubt he was theologically thinking in terms similar to Augustine. And yet the *variata* left him open to the charge of crypto-Calvinism. That this should have been the case confirms Gibbon's statement that the difference between Calvin and Augustine is indeed microscopic and that Melanchthon in the *variata* is espousing a view of the sacraments which is not only in harmony with Augustine but more significantly is in harmony with Calvin.
We noted earlier that the advent of textuality often creates an atmosphere of alienation insofar as the *signum* and the *res* were understood in orality as a unity. When their separation occurs, as it did in the philosophy of Plato according to Havelock and in the neo-Platonic tradition according to Freeman, the phenomenon of alienation must be substituted either by a return to orality as seen in the mystic communities or by an incorporation of the dynamics of alienation as the new arena in which an understanding of unity must take place. It is in this sense that we see Zwingli as a forerunner in the paradigmatic shift from orality to textuality. Zwingli's stringent separation of the oral and the written suggests the alienating dimension in the first stages of transition, with Calvin offering a pneumatology which attempts to bridge the gulf between the *signum* and the *res*. A modern example can be seen in the theology of Karl Barth. Barth saw himself as a theologically historical corrective to the errors of the nineteenth century. Focusing on the notion of presence, Barth's analysis of the nineteenth century (*Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century. Its Background and History*, 1972) reveals the extent to which philosophical and theological issues in the post-Kantian era had turned to the subjective sphere as the final criteria for deciding theological *aporias*.

The notion of presence returns to the arena of metaphysics and theology in the nineteenth century. Hegel's notion of the Spirit in this context suggests a kind of immediacy which is uncharacteristic of textuality either as understood by Augustine or Derrida (Barth, 1972: 391). The same is true of the movement of piety. The notion of presence as indistinct from the subjective realm of perception is, according to Barth, the characteristic feature of nineteenth century pietism and philosophy (1972:114). In this
sense, we would have to agree that much of what is understood by Derrida in Western philosophy as a metaphysics of presence is unquestionably to be found in nineteenth century thought. But in this sense, we would also have to assert that the nineteenth century is more a child of Luther than of Calvin. Such a notion of presence is far more akin to the oral theology of Luther than to the textual complexity of Calvin's thought.

If Barth saw himself as a corrective to the ontological and theological assumptions of the nineteenth century, then we may look for the notion of absence as the dominating feature of his theology. For Barth, the sum of human experience reveals far more the notion of a lack or an absence than does the optimism of the nineteenth century. In this sense, we may see something distinctly parallel to Zwingli's deconstruction of the Medieval synthesis. However, such a deconstruction only sets the stage for theology. Now theology must render coherent the theological implications of such a deconstructive tactic. Barth himself stated that his own theology was a propaideutic for a pneumatology (Busch, 1976: 494). Thus, the role of the Spirit as hermeneutical mediator between signum and res, but res understood not as an oral phenomenon, seeks to reconcile the two on a basis that does not abolish their distinction. Such a maneuver may be seen to be analogous to the ancient dicta of Chalcedon and in this sense to suggest that the Christological ramifications behind such an assumption reveal an understanding of Christ's relation to humanity which preserves the distinctiveness of his divinity. Thus, the incarnation, so understood, itself is a pattern of referentiality. The body as signum may point to the reality of the res, soul, while not confusing the substance of the two. Calvin's view is thus in keeping with the dicta of Chalcedon. In Calvin, language itself
functions in a manner analogous to the two natures in Chalcedonian terms. The *signum* and the *res* are never confused. Rather, the Spirit unites the two in a manner that does not threaten their respective autonomy.

Zwingli's deconstruction thus provides for the Reformation what Barth did for the nineteenth century. Calvin, at least for the Reformation, thus appears to provide the pneumatological answer for the questions posed by the deconstruction of Zwingli. Calvin's theology reconciles *signum* and *res* through the hermeneutical role of the Spirit, a role that does not seek to abolish the distinction of the two but rather to harmonize them in a unity which preserves their respective identities and thus provides the ontological basis for the Trinity.
CONCLUSION

The original purpose of this dissertation was to consider the roles of orality and textuality in the Reformation. However, as the project unfolded it became increasingly clear that a full understanding of the problem could only be obtained by going back to the origins of textuality in Western thought. We have seen that the revival of textuality in the Renaissance and Reformation was in many ways a continuation of a philosophical posture that can be traced to the origins of textuality in ancient Greece. In light of this, we have qualified the thesis of Eisenstein that the printing revolution in early modern Europe was largely responsible for the shift towards objectivity in Renaissance thought. This kind of textual perspective we have shown to have been a major factor in Western thought from Plato on. To support this we have examined the origins of textuality in the Platonic-Aristotelian heritage, the effects of textuality on the theological development of Augustine, the continuation of a textual perspective in nominalism, and finally the widespread application of textuality in humanism. What the invention of the press did accomplish was the dissemination of textuality in ways that were not previously possible. In this sense printing did serve to revolutionize early modern Europe but only insofar as it made available on a much larger scale access to texts. Textual thinking had always to some degree played a role in the history of Western thought since the invention of writing.

Printing made available on a larger scale the reproduction of texts. But the texts which the presses most often printed in the early stages of
Renaissance humanism were Classical texts. The restoration of purer texts of Plato and Aristotle had a dramatic influence in establishing the perspective of Renaissance humanism. To understand this perspective, it was necessary to examine the birth of textuality in the Greek setting. In Chapter Two, we examined the effects of writing on the oral synthesis of early Greek society. In that setting, it was also necessary to outline the major features of oral thinking. One characteristic which we noted was the communal nature of oral societies. In that context, we saw a distinct lack of the notion of an individual who can function on the basis of hermeneutical autonomy. Furthermore, we observed that oral thinking operates almost exclusively on a concrete level. The ability to think either abstractly or objectively is severely limited. The invention of writing served to create a new epistemological focus which elevated truth to the level of abstract, categorical thinking. Furthermore, the invention of writing served to establish a new hermeneutical focus, that of the individual as distinct from his community. The concept of an individual operating in the realm of abstract categorical forms was seen as the major contribution of Platonic thought. According to Havelock, this gave rise to the Platonic understanding of an immortal soul. Because the Platonic understanding of the soul is often seen as a sort of precursor to gnosticism which shuns the body, we proceeded to examine the nature of the Platonic soul. There we saw that the soul was characterized by distinct functions in its tripartite structure. Furthermore, we discovered a distinctly ethical focus which viewed positively the relationship of the soul to the body as the arena in which the soul was to be actualized. It is this ethical focus of Platonic thought with its project of restructuring the somatic realm on the basis of a transcendent
pattern of justice accessible to the intellect by way of the Platonic notion of
the forms which was seen as an extension of and major characteristic of a
textual focus. In contrast to orality, which stressed the maintenance of the
status quo, the ethical dimension of Platonic thought sought to incorporate
the transcendent pattern of justice into the world. It is this ethical
dimension of textuality which continued to surface in our consideration of
textuality up to the Reformation. This ethical concern of textual thinking
was seen as a major characteristic of Augustine's mature theology and in
the textual, humanistic movements of the Renaissance and Reformation.

However, we also noted that the breakdown of the oral synthesis did
not always culminate in the kind of textual perspective which we have
identified with the Platonic heritage. We also observed that the breakdown
of the oral synthesis often led to a profound sense of alienation. The oral
synthesis, as long as it survives, provides a coherent view of the world and
serves to establish social and cultural identity. Thus, in the wake of its
demise, we may note a project of recovery, of a return to origins. In such
settings we may see an attempt nostalgically to restore the psychological
dynamics of unity in the oral synthesis. Insofar as orality serves to create a
unity in which the individual is seen to merge, the secondary project of
mysticism seeks to re-establish the psychological dimension of that unity
through a kind of mystical union with the divine in which the distinction
between self and other is overcome. In such settings we noted the origin of
a conception of soul which views the soul as an undifferentiated unity,
which must transcend alienation in order to return to its original
undifferentiated state. In concluding the chapter, we thus identified a
bifurcation which occurs in the breakdown of the oral synthesis: either to
incorporate the dynamics of alienation into a textual perspective, or to seek a return to the oral synthesis by way of the secondary orality of mysticism.

Because Augustine played such a major role in the Reformation, we sought in Chapter Three to outline the major features of Augustine's theology on the basis of the orality-textuality paradigm. In that context we observed that Augustine began his life in a social milieu which was to a large extent governed by the dynamics of orality. Augustine's early education stressed oral-rhetorical skills as the basis of its project. Furthermore, Augustine lived in a society which continued to utilize the oral word in the form of dramatic presentations as a major form of entertainment. However, the world of Augustine was also beset with major threats to its stability. Such threats culminated in a growing sense of anxiety and alienation. In Chapter Two, we observed that alienation often led to the project of mysticism which sought to overcome alienation by a return to an undifferentiated unity with the divine. In the the case of Augustine, we observed the same dynamics in Augustine's association with the Manichaeans. The Manichaean community was seen to parallel the mystery religions of ancient Greece.

It was not until Augustine came into contact with the neo-Platonic texts available through the friends of Ambrose that Augustine began to undergo major changes in his theological perspective. We observed how Augustine's association with the texts of Plotinus led to a deconstruction of Manichaean assumptions of divinity, psychology, and linguistics. In that context, Augustine was seen to have divorced himself from the oral-rhetorical arena in a new quest for theological truth. In linguistic terms, the effects of neo-Platonism were observed in Augustine's treatment
of language in the *De Magistro*, a treatise written in the Platonic genre of the dialogue. In the *De Magistro*, we saw the formation of Augustine’s signs theory of language, a theory clearly based on a textual perspective which sees language in an entirely different context than that of orality.

We argued that it was the influence of neo-Platonism with its emphasis on distinction and divisions not only between the *signum* and the *res* but also in terms of the distinct faculties of the soul which paved the way for Augustine’s formulation of a Trinitarian theology and anthropology. Finally, the distinctions in the soul, as we saw in the case of Plato himself, led Augustine to emphasize the role of the will as the authentic locus for the restoration of the damaged image of the Trinity in man. Again, we found that a textual perspective had serious ethical implications. In contrast to the oral metaphysics of the Manichaeans which had very little concern for ethical questions, the Trinitarian theology and psychology of Augustine resulted in a profound concern for ethical activity. The will of man was seen to mirror the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, and the proper function of the will in accord with the Holy Spirit was seen as the basis for union with the divine, but not a union which abolished distinction, but rather a unity predicated on distinction, separation, and division. Unity in this context was seen to be one of relation, of conformity without confusion.

One of the recurring themes in Chapter Two and Three was that the breakdown of the oral synthesis often leads to a sense of alienation; and furthermore, alienation often leads to the advent of mysticism as a means of psychologically restoring the lost sense of unity characteristic of oral societies. To set the stage for the final consideration of the role of textuality
in the Reformation, we looked first at the breakdown of the oral synthesis in the late Medieval world. In that context, we noted a widespread sense of alienation as the cultural cohesion of late Medieval Catholicism suffered stern challenges. In part, this was seen to have been the result of socio-economic factors and the decline of Papal prestige during the Babylonian Captivity. However, we noted that nominalism with its textual perspective represented a severe threat to ecclesiastical authority. In the wake of this breakdown we saw the rise of mysticism as a means for psychologically restoring the lost sense of unity of the oral synthesis. In our analysis of late Medieval mysticism, we observed its oral orientation both in its promulgation and utilization of oral patterns of communication as well as its ontology which emphasized an indistinct union with divinity. We also saw that the ethical posture of mysticism was ambiguous. In many ways consistent with orality's concern for the maintenance of the status quo, mysticism showed less concern with changing the world than in freeing the soul. Furthermore, the soul's salvation was predicated on passivity. This tendency was noted in the systems of Eckhart, the Free Spirit movement, Tauler, and the Theologia Germanica. The latter two were of particular concern to us because of their direct influence on the thought of Martin Luther. We turned then to a consideration of Luther's relation to late Medieval mysticism. Using the rhetorical model of Jan Lindhardt, we explored in further detail the oral aspects of Luther's thought. Lindhardt noted the common features between Luther's orality and that of mysticism. The notions of passivity, ubiquity of the divine, and the efficaciousness of oral speech indicated a common link between Luther and the movements of Mysticism. However, based on the work of Peter Meinhold and others we
showed that, while there were indeed common features between Luther and mysticism based on Luther's preference for the oral word, nevertheless, Luther remains a paradoxical figure. The *Theology of the Cross* suggests a linguistic perspective which has much in common with textuality. We concluded the chapter by suggesting that Luther is a transitional figure. Brought up in an oral milieu and yet seeing the possibilities of the printed word, Luther was never able fully to abandon the one or thoroughly to embrace the other.

In the final chapter we examined the resurgence of textuality in humanism. The impact of textual humanism was seen to have had a dramatic effect on the Reformation. The humanists' project based on the perspective of the written word had implications that were consistent with what we had discovered earlier in Platonic thought and in Augustine. The emphasis on the textual word had ethical implications for the humanistic reformers. This was a concept that McGrath had identified as the *imitatio Christi*. But, as our analysis progressed, it became clear that the Christ to be imitated was the Christ of the text. In this sense, we saw that the textual perspective of Reformation humanism saw the textual word as the vehicle for a new understanding of reality. For the humanists, theology was seen to be a matter of the text. Furthermore, as noted in the case of Plato and Augustine, the textual perspective always entails a significant ethical orientation. Furthermore, that ethical orientation is based on a complex understanding of the soul. The textual soul is not understood as an undifferentiated unity but rather is viewed in Augustinian terms as a reflection of the Trinity itself. Thus, the locus of the body is validated as the true arena in which the will must imitate the movement of the Holy
Spirit itself, a movement that culminates in the attempt to incorporate a reflection of divinity in the temporal order. The notion of the soul was examined in detail in the case of Philip Melanchthon, whose humanistic background was emphasized. While not solving the problem of the relationship between Luther and Melanchthon, we nevertheless did not compromise the humanistic dimension of Melanchthon's thought, but rather suggested that his humanistic orientation united him much more closely to Erasmus and Calvin than to Luther. In Melanchthon's treatise *De Anima*, we saw the application of Augustinian themes regarding the soul, themes which were first elaborated in the Platonic-Aristotelean tradition and which Melanchthon was able to use in his theological dissection of the soul's parts and their relation to divinity. The insights of Melanchthon were based in part on his reading of Augustine, but we also noted the influence of northern Italian humanism in his background. In this connection, we noted similarities with Calvin. Calvin's view of the soul and his relationship to the Platonism of Marsilio Ficino also were seen to bear a distinctively textual stamp. In the thought of Melanchthon, Ficino, and Calvin the resurrection, we noted, was in many ways the fulfillment of the textual trajectory which began with Plato.

We began this study by citing the controversy between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg regarding the Eucharist. In that context, we observed that Luther appeared to operate from a perspective which privileged the oral word for its efficaciousness in rendering the divine presence. In the case of Zwingli, we noted an extreme referentiality which emphasized the utter transcendence of the *res* above the *signum*. We returned to that theme in the closing sections of the last chapter to suggest that the
deconstruction of oral assumptions on the part of Zwingli prepared the stage for the re-affirmation of a Trinitarian theology which was thoroughly in keeping with the textually oriented Trinitarian theology of Augustine. This reaffirmation we suggested was to be found in the role of the Spirit in Calvin’s theology. For Calvin the Spirit unites the reader, the signum, and the res in a hermeneutical arena which does not abolish distinctions, but unites them in a manner that preserves the integrity of each.

In concluding this dissertation, we wish to underscore the significance of a textual perspective in theological issues. We have seen that textuality emphasizes the hermeneutical autonomy of the individual, alienation as a necessary precursor to a theology of otherness and transcendence, and finally, the ethical response of the individual based on the pattern of transcendent reference found in the concept of deity. Furthermore, just as orality continued to play a dominant role in the Reformation, in spite of printing, orality can be seen also to play a dominant role in modern attitudes. In other words, the importance of the paradigm of orality-textuality is not simply its historical application, but, as Derrida has shown, even the most sophisticated thinkers operate from a premise which unconsciously privileges the notion of presence. In considering any theological program in the post-modern era, we may legitimately ask where it falls on the orality-textuality spectrum. Our investigation into the origins and application of this paradigm in the Reformation will perhaps better equip us to do so.
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