INTRODUCTION

Comparative studies are becoming very common now. Perhaps this is natural in a world that has grown smaller. In today's world different races, religious and political systems are brought together as in a melting pot and their harmonious blending or at least their peaceful co-existence has become necessary for the very survival of the world. Mutual understanding is necessary for peaceful co-existence. The study of the various systems of thinking and living is a part of the quest for mutual understanding and it has led to the discovery of astonishing similarities between systems considered incompatible. The way of thinking that made Rudyard Kipling write East is East and West is West and the twain shall never meet, has yielded place to an awareness of the unity underlying the diversity of all human endeavours and awareness of the essential oneness of the human race.

The present thesis "Guru Nanak and Martin Luther - A comparative study of their significance in literature with special reference to their hymns" is a result of the realisation of this oneness. In 1969 the quincentenary of Guru Nanak was celebrated and
I took part in some of the seminars conducted in connection with it. 1983 was the year of Luther's quincentenary and it produced a flood of publications. Going through some of them, it struck me that both were contemporaries, both were religious reformers and great literary figures. Starting out from these similarities I did some preliminary reading and was astonished to find more and more points of similarity and hence I thought it well worth an in-depth study. A comparative study of the Christian reformer and the 'heathen' religious leader, of two representatives of the East and West - one with the heritage of Latin and Greek and Hebrew behind him, the other with that of Sanskrit and Persian, one well versed in Hindu Philosophy and mythology and muslim religious teachings, the other a scholar and teacher of Christian and Judaic theology, the one singing his hymns in the Indian ragas, the other following the strains of Gregorian church music, German folk songs and Meistersang - seemed to be a fascinating study.

The fascination did not wear off even after the laborious search for material began. This included the study of Panjabi language in order to be able to
read Guru Nanak in the original, visiting Panjabi Universities for collecting material and discussing Guru Nanak's works with Panjabi scholars. One thing that came out in the course of this intellectual 'pilgrimage' was the fact that almost all studies on Nanak are about him as religious founder and saint and that these studies are hagiologies rather than systematic scientific research works. Macauliffe's Book 'The Sikh Religion' is an example. It gives very few dates and recounts all the miraculous things that happened in his life, even though Macauliffe blames it on the 'Janam Sakis' all of which give highly coloured accounts of Nanak's life. Gopal Singh also avoids dates, but keeps out the element of wonder by making the 'miracles' psychologically plausible. In any case it is only a handbook introducing Nanak. More cannot be said also about Khushwant Singh's brief biography with translations of extracts from Nanak's hymns. In fact


most of the material available on Guru Nanak is in the form of collections of articles or booklets. Most of the articles and even longer studies\textsuperscript{4} deal mainly with the philosophic aspects of Nanak's work. Individual studies of the 'Japji'\textsuperscript{5} also are interpretations of the philosophy contained in it. Even those who like Nirmal Singh\textsuperscript{6}, Ajit Singh Sikha\textsuperscript{7}, Harbans Singh\textsuperscript{8}, consider Nanak's significance in literature have not made an analysis or thorough study of his hymns from the literary point of view. Only the D.Litt work of Dr. Rattan Singh Jaggi\textsuperscript{9} written in Hindi has dealt satisfactorily with Nanak's work as literature. In short the available secondary literature on Nanak was not very useful for the topic of this thesis. That meant

\textsuperscript{4} e.g. Singh, Ishar; The Philosophy of Guru Nanak - A comparative Study, New Delhi, 1969.

\textsuperscript{5} Verma, Sharad Chandra; Guru Nanak and the Logos of Divine Manifestation, Delhi, 1969.

Singh, Gursaran; Guru Nanak's Japji The Morning Prayer of the Sikhs - An Interpretation in the light of Modern Thought, Delhi, 1972.

Bhave, Vinoba; Commentary on Japuji (Guru Nanak's Great Composition) English Translation with Note and Introduction by Talib, Gurbachan Singh, Patiala, 1973.


that I had to depend mainly on the original works of Guru Nanak, published by the Director of the Language Department, Government of Panjab, Patiala. They were translated into English by Manmohan Singh. (10) Since the translation and original are printed side by side, an opportunity to compare the original with the various translations including Dr. Gopal Singh's (11) was provided.

Turning to Luther, there was no dearth of material either of original works or secondary literature, the Quincentenary celebration having led to a veritable flood of books on Luther (12) in both Germanies. Most of these, however, deal with Luther's life and times, his

12. Brecht, Martin; Martin Luther, Sein Weg zur Reformation, Stuttgart, 1983.
   Landgraf, Wolfgang; Martin Luther, Reformator und Rebell, Berlin, 1981.
   Ulrich, Herold (Editor); Was haben wir von Martin Luther? Gespräche zu Person und Werk, Halle - Leipzig, 1984.
   Creutziger, Werner; Kollege Luther oder Worin stecken die Messer des Geistes?, in: Sinn und Form, Berlin, 1983.
   Ebeling, Gehard; Martin Luther, Weg und Wort, Frankfurt am Main, 1983.
   Strelher, Siegfried; Luther the Poet, in: Neue Deutsche Literatur Monatschrift für Literatur und Kritik, 31, Jahrgang, 11/Heft/Nov. 1983.
   Lenk, Werner; Martin Luther und die deutsche Literatur, in: Weimarer Beiträge, 29/1983.
personality or the Reformation as for example Barbara Beuys, "Und wenn die Welt soll Teufel war". (13)

Heinrich Bornkamm’s (14) very interesting study of Luther’s world of thought also is not concerned with the literary aspects of Luther’s works, although it was extremely useful because of the very good translation of quotations from Luther’s original works. On the Hymns themselves, however except for one or two articles in journals and Gerhard Hahn’s ‘Evangelium als literarische Anweisung’ not much could be found. The last mentioned actually considered the Hymns more as church music than as literature. (15)

We have attempted in this comparative study, first of all, to build up a comprehensive picture of the background which led to the emergence of the two reformers. This we have done in the first chapter by depicting the historical, social and religious background of each reformer separately. In the last part


14. Bornkamm, Heinrich; Luthers geistige Welt. Translated by Martin H. Bertram under the title 'Luther’s World of Thought', Saint Louis, Missouri, 1957.

15. Hahn, Gerhard; Evangelium als literarische Anweisung; Zu Luthers Stellung in der Geschichte des deutschen kirchlichen Liedes, München, 1981.
of the chapter factors common to both are pointed out.

In the second chapter the focus is turned on the life and personality of the two, since in any creative work these are of supreme importance. The lack of material on Guru Nanak or rather the peculiar nature of materials available on him was a handicap. Some of the miraculous occurrences have been incorporated into our account since they could have been actual events in the Guru's life transformed into wonders in something like a deification process and also because these happenings have psychological value. The last part of the chapter is again a comparison between the two.

In the third chapter the significance of Guru Nanak in Panjabi Language and literature and of Luther in German language and literature is assessed and the key role each played in his language and literature is stressed. Their contributions to language also are included, since creating a living literary medium is a vital part of their services to literature.

The fourth chapter is the most important part of this thesis. Since Guru Nanak left only hymns behind, any comparison of their original works has to limit itself to the Hymns. Nanak's Hymns are far greater.
in volume and scope than Luther's and hence a comparison between specific hymns of the two reformers is not possible. We have therefore, as in the preceding chapters, made a separate study of the two, selecting some of their compositions as models and then worked out the points of similarity in the last part of the chapter. Since Luther's hymns spring from certain central ideas which however are not directly expressed in them, quotations from his prose writings have also been used to illustrate the sameness of their concept of God as well as other vital points of similarity.

Since comparisons between the two reformers have been made in every chapter, the conclusion only brings together these findings.

Each chapter thus consists of three parts i.e. (a) a short introduction on the theme of the chapter (b) study of the two reformers with regard to the theme of the chapter (c) and comparison of the two. Since we start with the history of the age, pass on to the biography of the reformers and end with 'werk-immanente' study of their hymns, one can only say that a pluralism of methods was found necessary.