

THE TELUGU COMPOSITION CONTROVERSY

MINUTE OF DISSENT



By

G.V. APPAROW

1914



SRI VEDAGIRI COMMUNICATIONS

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G.V. APPAROW B.A., F.M.U.

TO THE REPORT OF THE
TELUGU COMPOSITION SUB-COMMITTEE,
APPOINTED BY THE MADRAS UNIVERSITY, 1914

SRI VEDAGIRI COMMUNICATIONS
HYDERABAD

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Gurajada Venkata Apparow
to the Report of the Telugu Composition Sub-Committee
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*Photo taken on the occasion of birthday of G.V. Apparow
on the 21st September, 2010 at Hyderabad.*

*Dr. (Smt.) Vasa Prabhavati, Smt. Potturi Vijayalakshmi, Sri Vihari,
Dr. Vedagiri Rambabu, Dr. Poranki Dakshinamurty, Sri Sudhama
and Sri Sivaprasad*

DEDICATED

To

M.R. Ry. Gokul Dossjee Gowardhan Dossjee

*as a token of respect and gratitude
for the patriotic enterprise which he has helped to build up in
the publication of Sanskrit and Telugu Classics
and of popular Literature*

BY THE AUTHOR

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THE TELUGU COMPOSITION
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Part I

THE MINUTE OF DISSENT TO THE REPORT OF
THE TELUGU COMPOSITION SUB-COMMITTEE

By

G.V. APPAROW

B.A., F.M.U.

V. Ramaswamy Sastrulu and Sons
192, Esplanade
MADRAS

1914

Just a Minute...

More than seven decades ago, Gurajada was recognised by the nation as a pioneer in different branches of modern Telugu literature like social drama, poetry, lyric and short story. Interestingly he was also a forerunner in the Modern standard Spoken Telugu Movement.

Classical Telugu poetic style had deviated considerably from the standard spoken Telugu, not less than a thousand years ago. It looked like another language for the students and young writers of Telugu. Teachers at all educational levels never allowed the students to write in the contemporary standard spoken Telugu. The condition was most discouraging for the students to develop their mental faculties to write in their mother tongue. So, the Madras University, having realised the seriousness of the problem, wanted to solve it and appointed a composition committee to study the situation in depth and offer their recommendations. The majority of the committee members had unfortunately opted for classical poetic style which was against the wishes of the votaries of modern standard spoken Telugu. As a member of the said committee, G.V. Apparow did not agree with the recommendations of the majority and had to submit a Minute of Dissent to the Report.

The Minute of G.V. Apparow was first published by Vavilla Ramaswami Sastrulu and Sons, Madras, in 1914. Till now, it was never reprinted. But nearly fifty years ago, it was translated into Telugu by Dr. Poranki Dakshinamurty and serialized for four months in the leading Telugu daily Andhra Prabha in 1964. It appeared in a book form in 1968 and was not reprinted.

As an ardent admirer of the great Gurazada, I am happy to have got the opportunity to reprint his English original text, on behalf of Sri Vedagiri Communications.

Telugu writers of all the 23 districts of Andhra Pradesh, have celebrated the Centenary Year (1910-2010) of Modern Telugu short story (kathanika) with great enthusiasm. Several valuable publications are brought out by Sri Vedagiri Communications. It is re-

ally heartening to note that the movement of Modern Standard Spoken Telugu was at its height in the year 1910 and ended in an eventual success after a few decades. Thus the year 2010 happens to be the Centenary Year of the Modern Language Movement. In memory of the great movement and in honour of the late Sri G.V. Apparow, it is considered appropriate for Sri Vedagiri Communications to bring out this volume.

I am thankful to Dr. Poranki Dakshinamurty for providing me a copy of the English text and for contributing his Foreword to the present publication.

My sincere thanks are due to my mentor Sri Vihari garu and also Sri M. Ramarao garu of 'Kathakeli' fame of Vijayawada who had kindly undertaken the arduous task of bringing out the book neatly and efficiently.

Vedagiri Rambabu

For Sri Vedagiri Communications
Hyderabad

MINUTE OF DISSENT BY G.V. APPAROW

[N.B.: *The resolutions passed by the committee at its sittings of the 2nd of August and the 6th of September were numbered separately. The report of the majority of the sub-committee quotes numbers without specifying dates; but it is evident that the numbers refer only to the resolutions passed on 6th September*].

1. dissent from the views of the majority of the sub-committee consisting of Messrs. Venkataraya Sastriar and K.V. Lakshmana Row. They stuck to the position which they had all along occupied and showed no disposition to come to any common understanding with the Modern School.

2. An examination of the lists which they prepared and the covering report clearly show that far from entering into the spirit of the second resolution, they tried to get behind it. The report reopens discussion on the principle of the resolution, lays down conclusions at variance with it, and winds up with an appeal in favour of a school of prose with which Mr. Lakshmana Row may be particularly identified as the editor of the *Vijnanachandrika* series.

3. The lists were drawn up not in accordance with the amendment proposed by Prof. Rangachariar, accepted by me as proposer of the resolution, and passed by a majority of the committee, but in accordance practically with an amendment proposed by Mr. J. Ramayya Pantulu and seconded by Mr. K.V. Lakshmanarow which was lost. The latter amendment was "that the words 'in standard literary Telugu' be inserted between the words 'from' and 'be classified.'" The same amendment was proposed by Mr. G. Venkataranga Row and seconded by Mr. Venkataraya Sastriar at the meeting of the 2nd of August, fortified by the additional clause "it being understood that no form not sanctioned by literary usage be permitted." In fact, the second resolution as modified by Mr. Ramayya Pantulu's amendment was one of the draft resolu-

tions which Mr. Venkataranga Row placed before the reconstituted committee on the first day of its meeting.

4. The language of Prof. Ranga Chariar's amendment was clear, and the speech with which he introduced it, left no room for doubt. He mentioned 'పస్తాడు' (*vastadu*) as an instance of 'polite speech prevailing among the educated Telugu people.' The very fact that Mr. Ramayya Pantulu's amendment was lost showed that the sense of the committee was against the exclusion of all polite forms which did not conform to the grammar of the literary dialect or the usage of the poets.

5. As Prof. Ranga Chariar explained to the committee, the syndicate felt that the literary dialect in each of the principal Dravidian Languages had diverged too far from polite speech and thought it desirable to bring them closer together by "fixing if possible a standard of colloquiality, in vernacular composition. Committees were constituted to carry out this object. As defined by the syndicate, "to seek to establish a standard of colloquiality in composition for each language" was the primary function of the committees. Mr. Lakshmana Row evidently picked up the term colloquiality from the syndicate's reference in this connection and utilised it to coin a nickname for the modern school. His memorandum on modern standard Telugu prose which was circulated to the members of the Telugu committee, is a violent attack on what he calls the colloquiality school and contains a warning to the University not to lend its support to this 'New School.' The views of the memorandum are the views of the sub-committee's report and its classification of forms is practically the classification adopted by the sub-committee.

6. When he moved resolution 6 of the 2nd of August, Mr. Lakshmana Row expressed solicitude to adhere to the letter of the Syndicate's reference. But in framing these lists he disregarded the spirit of the Syndicate's reference and the instructions conveyed in resolutions 2 and 3 of the committee. The majority report clearly states that "the sub-committee have classified the grammatical forms into archaic and current." By *grammatical* Mr. Lakshmana Row means conforming to the grammar of the old literary dialect. Here his memorandum comes to our help. There he says "when I say grammar and grammatical forms I mean the traditional grammar of the Telugu Language and the forms sanctioned by it and employed by modern popular prose writers like Viresalingam and Lakshminarasimham."

7. So the majority of the Sub-committee have dealt only with forms which have been employed by a certain school of contemporary prose writers to which they belong, and forms which have the sanction of

'traditional grammar.' They ignored the second part of Prof. Ranga Chariar's amendment which extended the classification to the polite speech prevailing among the educated Telugu people ; and they gave a restricted meaning to the word literature in the first part.

8. The Sub-committee was required to classify forms into *current* and *archaic*. The currency or archaic character of any form is a question of fact, and facts are not altered by individual prejudices or predilections. In the majority report there is no discussion of facts. Both Mr. Venkataraya Sastriar and Mr. Lakshmana Row had, no doubt, opposed the second resolution; but I presume, Prof. Ranga Chariar hoped that the members of the Sub-committee would loyally attempt to give effect to the 2nd resolution laying aside, for a moment, their allegiance to opinions to which they were committed in the past, or to their literary work which was moulded on those opinions. But it was only natural and right that the majority of the Sub-committee gave expression and effect to their own convictions.

9. It was equally natural that they should cast about to find some justification for their procedure. They resorted to the expedient of reading the 4th resolution into the 3rd resolution, and so reading, they hoped to be absolved from all obligation to admit into their classification polite spoken forms which do not conform to 'accepted grammar.'

10. The third resolution clearly defined the scope of the Sub-committee's work which was to "prepare a list of archaic and current forms" in accordance with the second resolution and there is no mention in it of the 4th resolution. The 4th resolution was brought up after the 3rd resolution had passed, and if the former were meant to regulate the classification set forth in the 2nd resolution, Prof. Rangachariar who moved the 4th resolution, would have introduced into it a clause to that effect. As I can understand it, the 4th resolution has application only to slang and other *similar* forms ; that is, to non-polite forms which may be described by the Sanskrit word असभ्य. If, on the other hand, it was meant to exclude all forms except Mr. Lakshmana Rao's 'grammatical forms,' then the 2nd clause of Prof. Rangachariar's amendment to the 2nd resolution would be purposeless.

But as I have shown above, the meaning of the 2nd resolution is abundantly clear, and any attempt to get round it must fail. The form వస్త్రాడు which Prof. Rangachariar instanced as an admissible polite form stares the majority of the Sub-committee in the face and there is no escaping it.

11. The report of the majority of the Sub-committee is vague. It does not formulate or discuss a body of principles to govern the classification of forms. I asked them to define the terms *current* and *archaic*. Mr. Lakshmana Rao showed a disinclination to commit himself to definitions. I then handed in a slip of paper with the following question engrossed upon it :

“What is the meaning of the words current and archaic when applied to the literary dialect?”

Mr. Lakshmana Rao told me that his report answered my question.

12. In the report there is no attempt at definition; nor can we gather from it in what sense the writers used the terms *current* and *archaic*. They have, however, defined *spoken language*. “By the spoken language the Sub-committee understand the deliberate speech of the educated classes of the higher order of society, in the Telugu Country as a whole, and not the speech either confined to any particular area or to particular clan or tribe.”

13. ‘Telugu Country as a whole’ is another instance of the majority bringing up a lost point. When Prof. Rangachariar proposed his amendment to the 2nd resolution, Mr. Ramayya Pantulu suggested the addition of the words “in the whole of the telugu country” or words of similar import. Prof. Rangachariar declined to accept the suggestion. But that lost suggestion was to govern the classification of forms in these lists.

14. The majority claim to have striven to “establish harmony between the spoken and written languages.” *To establish harmony* is a convenient metaphor but it is not very informing. Whatever it may mean, this harmony has been attained here by strongly circumvallating the literary dialect.

15. In the past, non-literary forms used to attain affiliation from time to time though very sparingly. The process was due in some cases, to the inadvertent blunders of old poets ; but more often, it was due to the conscious sanction of writers whom metrical exigencies drove to violation of precedent. Later grammarians and rhetoricians accepted those blunders and violations as authoritative precedents. But this process is now to cease at the bidding of the majority. Their report says “any further attempt to introduce spoken forms into the literary dialect will certainly hinder the growth of a dignified healthy prose literature.” The word *further* may seem to imply that the Sub-committee propose to give the literary dialect a fresh accession of non-literary spoken forms to any appreciable extent. But an examination of the lists shows that only one

End of Preview.

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