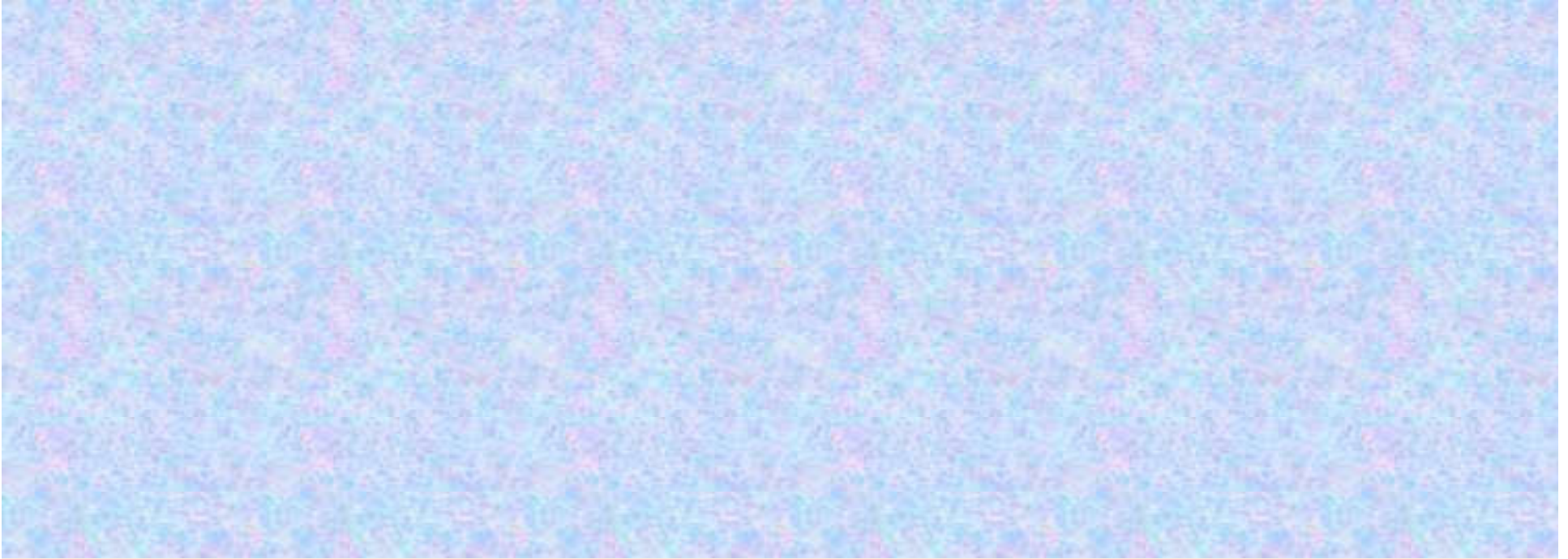




# **'TUGHLAQ'** **by Girish Karnad**

(19 May 1938 to 10 June 2019)



# Girish Karnad

- Girish Karnad is an Indian playwright, author, actor, and film director whose movies and plays, written largely in Kannada.
- He wrote his first play, the critically acclaimed *Yayati* (1961), while still at Oxford. Centred on the story of a mythological king.
- Karnad's next play, *Tughlaq* (1964), tells the story of the 14th-century Sultan Muhammad ibn Tughluq and remains among the best known of his works.
- *Samskara* (1970) marked Karnad's entry into filmmaking.
- Karnad followed with *Vamsha Vriksha* (1971), co-directed by B.V. Karanth.
- *Hayavadana* (1971) is widely recognized as among the most important plays of post-independence India.
- For his contributions to theatre, he was awarded the Padma Shri, one of India's top civilian honours, in 1974.

- **Karnad is internationally known as a playwright, but is also a highly talented film-maker, a versatile actor, an able cultural administrator, a noted communicator and a person of wide accomplishments and interests.**
- **Based on his serious explorations of folklore, mythology and history, the subject of his plays reflect the problems and challenges of contemporary life, and endeavour to forge a link between the past and the present.**
- **Karnad has left an indelible impact on the history of contemporary Indian dramaturgy.**
- **He was rooted in the cultural tradition of his soil with a deep understanding of Western dramatic aesthetics and craft.**
- **His two plays – “Tughlaq” and “Hayavadana”– have helped redefine the form and structure of drama.**

# WORKS

- 1. Hayavadana
  2. Yayati
  3. Tughalak
  4. Anjumallige
  5. Hittina Hunja Taledanda
  6. Agni mathu Male
  7. Tippuvina Kannasugalu
  8. Translated his plays from Kannada into English
  9. Translated his play Tughalak into German and Hungarian.
  10. He is an Director, actor and screenplay writer for many Kannada movies such as Samskara, Vamsha Vriksha, Kadu, Kanooru Heggadithi.

# HONOURS AND AWARDS

1. Central Sangeeth Natak Akademi award for his play Hayavadana
2. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya award in 1978.
3. His play "Nagamandala" was premiered in Minneapolis in the USA.
4. Staged all over the world
5. Samskara won the best film award
6. Vamsha Vriksha got national and state awards
7. Visiting professor at the University of Chicago in 1987-88
8. Director of the Film and Television Institute of India
9. Chairman of the Central Sangeeth Natak Akademi
10. Jnanpith award

# Characters in 'Tughlaq'

- **Mohammad Bin Tughlaq** - The Emperor
- **His Stepmother**
- **Aziz** - A shrewd man who deceives Tughlaq with his disguise
- **Najib** - An advisor and confidante of Tughlaq
- **Sheikh-Imam-Uddin** - A critic of Tughlaq's foolish acts
- **Sihabuddin** -
- **Ain-ul-Mulk** - An old friend of Tughlaq who, later, turned into an enemy

# TUGHLAQ THE PLAY

- Tughlaq' is Karnad's second play written in 1964; the play was originally written in Kannada and then translated in English by Karnad himself.
- It is all about the life of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughlaq who has ruled in India in 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- There is a lot of controversy among the historians about the character of Tughlaq but Karnad has presented this man as a man of opposites.
- The central theme of the play is the complexity in the character of Sultan Tughlaq, who has both the elements good as well as evil.
- He is a visionary man as well as man of action. Other characters also present Tughlaq's dual personality; his close associates Barani and the scholarly historian Najib are practical politician like him.

- *From the very first scene we come to know about the complex personality of Tughlaq.*
- **He is one of the most fascinating kings to occupy the throne in Delhi. He ruled for 26 years, a period of unparalleled cruelty and agonising existence for his subjects.**
- *He can be considered as a learnt and an intelligent man. He has abilities to learn with curiosity to know and he is a master in playing chess.*
- *He has the knowledge of ‘Quran’ more than any sheikh, and also a good reader who has read Greek, farcical and Arabic literature.*
- *Tughlaq wanted his life as a garden of roses, where even thrones also give delight; his imagination expresses his sense about literature.*



- He understood the value of money as not deriving from its intrinsic worth but from the promise behind it: and introduced copper coins.
- Yet in 20 years his reign had degenerated into an anarchy and his kingdom had become a "kitchen of death".
- He wanted to make a new India, and for him it was very difficult but he is ready to explain what people don't understand.
- Tughlaq changed the capital from Delhi to Daultabad, and from there again to Delhi.



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# TUGHLAQ

Girish Karnad was born in Matheran, near Bombay, in 1938. A Rhodes Scholar at Oxford (1960-63) and a Bhabha Fellow (1970-72), he is one of the foremost playwrights in contemporary India. He writes in Kannada. His first play, *Yayati* (1961), a retelling of the Hindu myth on the theme of responsibility, was a major success. Later, *Hayavadana* (1970) won the Natya Sangh award for Best Play of 1971.

*Tughlaq* (1964), Karnad's second play, has also won popular acclaim, exploring the paradox of the idealistic Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq, whose reign is considered one of the more spectacular failures in India's history. This edition of the play is introduced by U.R. Anantha Murthy.

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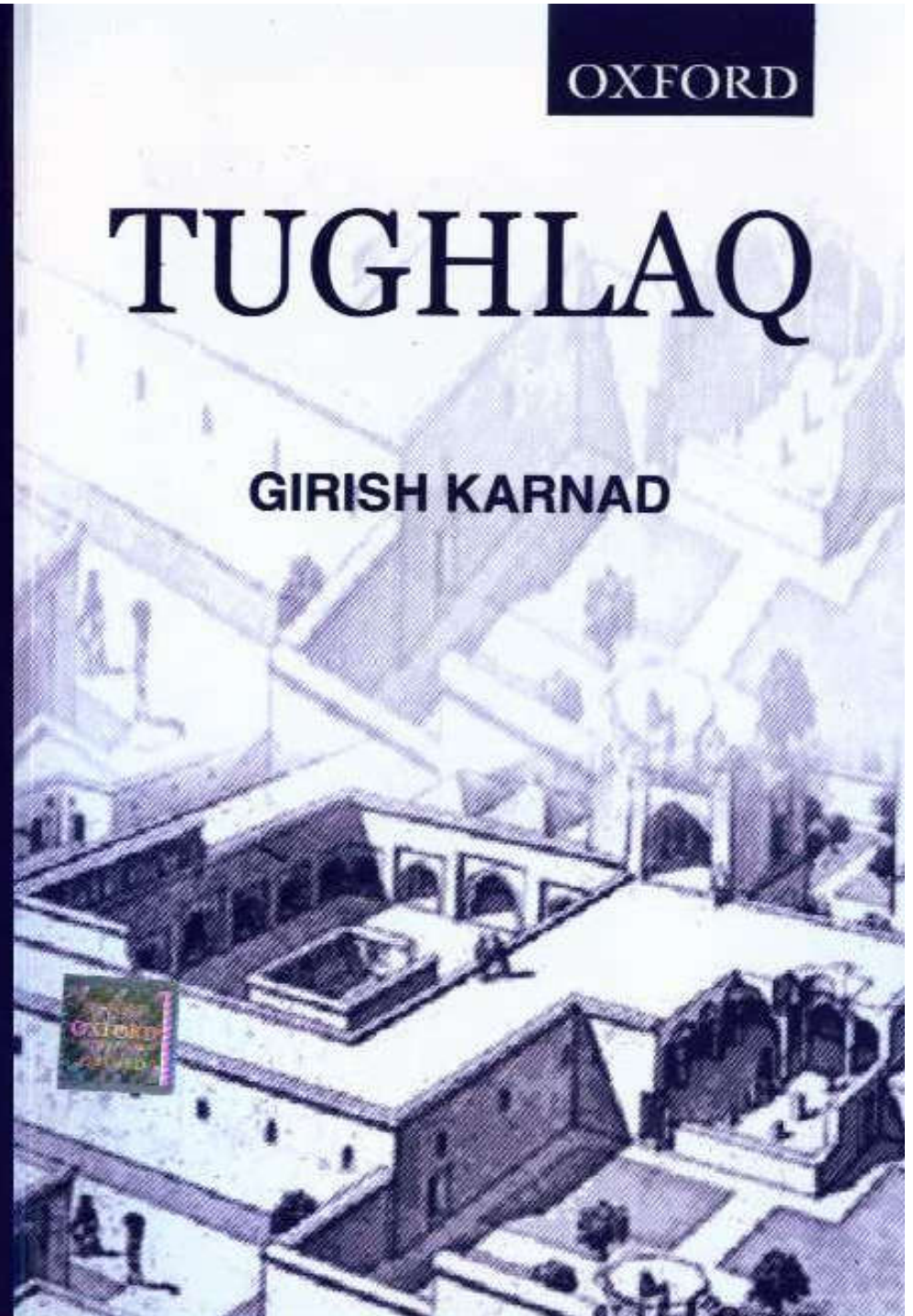


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# TUGHLAQ

GIRISH KARNAD



## SCENE ONE

A. D. 1327

*The yard in front of the Chief Court of Justice in Delhi. A crowd of citizens—mostly Muslims, with a few Hindus here and there.*

OLD MAN: God, what's this country coming to!

YOUNG MAN: What are you worried about, grandfather?  
The country's in perfectly safe hands—safer than any you've seen before.

OLD MAN: I don't know. I've been alive a long time, seen many Sultans, but I never thought I would live to see a thing like this.

YOUNG MAN: Your days are over, old man. What's the use of Sultans who didn't allow a subject within a mile's distance? This King now, he isn't afraid to be human—

THIRD MAN: But does he have to make such a fuss about being human? Announce his mistakes to the whole world—invite the entire capital?

OLD MAN: And get kicked by an infidel too. It's an insult to Islam.

YOUNG MAN: That's good that! Insult to Islam! So you want to teach him Islam, do you? Tell me, how often did you pray before he came to the throne?

THIRD MAN: That isn't the point.

YOUNG MAN: That's precisely the point. Not even once a week, I bet. Now you pray five times a day because that's the law and if you break it, you'll have the officers on your neck. Can you mention one earlier Sultan in whose time people read the Koran in the streets like now? Just one?

OLD MAN: What's the use? One must act according to it . . .

THIRD MAN: All this about the Hindus not paying the

jiziya tax. That's against the Koran, you know.  
A Mowlvi told me that—

HINDU: Now, now, don't look at *me* when you say that.  
We didn't want an exemption! Look, when a Sultan  
kicks me in the teeth and says, 'Pay up, you Hindu  
dog', I'm happy. I know I'm safe. But the moment  
a man comes along and says, 'I know you are a Hindu,  
but you are also a human being'—well, that makes  
me nervous.

YOUNG MAN: Ungrateful wretch!

OLD MAN: But this wretch is our best friend, Jamal.  
Beware of the Hindu who embraces you. Before you  
know what, he'll turn Islam into another caste and call  
the Prophet an incarnation of his god . . .

*The PUBLIC ANNOUNCER comes out and beats his drum.  
Silence.*

ANNOUNCER: Attention! Attention! In the name of  
Allah it is hereby announced that Vishnu Prasad, a  
Brahmin of Shiknar, had filed a suit against His  
Merciful Majesty, that his land had been seized illegally  
by the officers of the State and that he should be given  
just compensation for the loss of the land and the  
privation resulting therefrom. The Kazi-i-Mumalik  
having considered this matter carefully and in full  
detail has declared . . .

*He pauses for effect. The audience is tense and the  
ANNOUNCER looks pleased.*

. . . has declared that the Brahmin's claim is just. . .

*Commotion in the crowd. The ANNOUNCER silences them  
with a couple of drum beats and continues.*

. . . that the Brahmin's claim is just and that His  
Merciful Majesty is guilty of illegal appropriation of  
land. The Kazi-i-Mumalik has further declared that  
in return for the land and in compensation of the  
privation resulting from its loss the said Vishnu Prasad  
should receive a grant of five hundred silver dinars  
from the State Treasury.

*Renewed commotion. But the ANNOUNCER isn't finished yet.*  
His Merciful Majesty has accepted the decision of the Kazi-i-Mumalik as just and in addition to the grant of five hundred silver dinars has offered the said Vishnu Prasad a post in the Civil Service to ensure him a regular and adequate income.

*Beats the drums again and retires.*

OLD MAN: What folly is this! May Heaven guide our Sultan.

HINDU: I don't believe a word of it. There's something more to this, that much is obvious—

*The ANNOUNCER comes out followed by MUHAMMAD, the KAZI and the retinue.*

ANNOUNCER: Attention! Attention! The Warrior in the Path of God, the Defender of the Word of the Prophet, the Friend of the Khalif, the Just, His Merciful Majesty, Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq.

CROWD: Victory—to the King.

MUHAMMAD: My beloved people, you have heard the judgement of the Kazi and seen for yourselves how justice works in my kingdom—without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or creed. May this moment burn bright and light up our path towards greater justice, equality, progress and peace—not just peace but a more purposeful life. And to achieve this end I am taking a new step in which I hope I shall have your support and cooperation. Later this year the capital of my empire will be moved from Delhi to Daulatabad.

*The crowd reacts in bewilderment. MUHAMMAD smiles.*  
Your surprise is natural, but I beg you to realize that this is no mad whim of a tyrant. My ministers and I took this decision after careful thought and discussion. My empire is large now and embraces the South and I need a capital which is at its heart. Delhi is too near the border and as you well know its peace is never free from the fear of invaders. But for me the most