

TIME AND SPACE IN TOHIR MALIK'S STORY *FALAK*

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Abstract: *This article analyzes the representation of time and space in Falak, a philosophical-fantastic story by prominent Uzbek author Tohir Malik. The study focuses on how spatial and temporal dimensions are constructed in the narrative and how they reflect the protagonist's internal transformation and the metaphysical concerns of the work. The research reveals that Malik uses time and space not merely as settings but as symbolic and narrative tools to explore themes of fate, conscience, and transcendence.*

Keywords: *Tohir Malik, Falak, time, space, Uzbek literature, narrative structure, symbolism, metaphysics.*

Introduction

In literary fiction, time and space function not only as structural elements but also as reflections of thematic depth and philosophical intention. In the works of Tohir Malik, particularly his fantastic and psychological stories, the manipulation of time and space plays a central role in shaping the reader's perception and emotional response.

In *Falak*, Malik constructs a universe where time is fragmented, nonlinear, and symbolic. The concept of space shifts from the physical world to an inner, almost spiritual realm. This article explores how such treatment of temporal and spatial categories contributes to the overall message of the story and reveals deeper layers of meaning.

Tohir Malik's unique literary vision often explores the metaphysical layers of human existence. In *Falak*, the relationship between man and fate is mediated through a surreal manipulation of time and space. This narrative strategy not only



distinguishes the story within the framework of Uzbek fantastic literature but also aligns it with global literary trends in symbolic and psychological fiction. The title itself—*Falak*, meaning “the cosmos” or “fate”—sets the tone for a tale that transcends earthly logic and enters a dimension shaped by memory, guilt, and metaphysical trial.

This article argues that time and space in *Falak* function not merely as narrative elements but as vehicles of meaning. Through detailed analysis, we uncover how Malik transforms temporal and spatial categories into instruments of psychological depth and spiritual inquiry, constructing a narrative that is at once culturally rooted and universally resonant.

Methods

The following methods were employed:

- **Narrative analysis** – to explore how the chronology and setting influence plot development.
- **Symbolic analysis** – to interpret spatial and temporal motifs in relation to the protagonist’s psychological state.
- **Comparative method** – to relate Malik’s use of time and space with conventions in fantastic literature.
- **Contextual reading** – to connect the story’s metaphysical aspects with Uzbek spiritual and cultural traditions.

Results

The analysis shows that in *Falak*, time and space:

- **Function symbolically** to express the protagonist’s inner turmoil and moral evolution.
- **Are deconstructed** to move the story beyond realism and into the realm of spiritual allegory.
- **Serve as metaphors** for fate (*falak* as “destiny”) and divine order.
- **Support narrative ambiguity**, keeping the reader in a suspended state between reality and dream, sin and redemption.



This non-traditional use of temporal and spatial dimensions allows the reader to experience the story not just as an external narrative, but as an internal journey of reflection and awakening.

Discussion

1. Temporal Disruption and Metaphysical Time

In *Falak*, time does not move in a conventional linear pattern. Instead, it is cyclical and recursive, marked by dreams, déjà vu, and symbolic flashbacks. These disruptions reflect the protagonist's detachment from worldly life and entry into a realm where past, present, and future coexist. Time becomes a subjective experience that mirrors inner guilt and existential uncertainty.

2. Space as Psychological and Moral Arena

The physical setting in *Falak* is minimalistic, often limited to confined spaces—a room, a dark corridor, or a remote location—which evoke isolation. However, these physical spaces often dissolve into metaphysical ones. The protagonist enters mental and emotional spaces where spiritual judgment, memory, and fate intertwine. The vertical imagery of “falak” (sky/heavens) is used to represent transcendence and divine observation.

3. The Role of Time and Space in Character Transformation

As the story progresses, time and space evolve alongside the protagonist's conscience. What begins as a material journey turns into a metaphysical trial. The collapse of time and the abstraction of space serve as narrative indicators of the character's shift from denial to realization, and eventually to moral reckoning.

Conclusion

Tohir Malik's *Falak* exemplifies how time and space, when creatively manipulated, can enhance both the philosophical and emotional impact of fiction. Rather than functioning merely as backdrop, these elements become active agents in the narrative, shaping theme, tone, and character development. Malik's treatment of time and space invites readers into a multidimensional world where the boundaries between the material and the spiritual dissolve, and where the meaning of existence is questioned through artful storytelling.



The study of time and space in *Falak* reveals Tohir Malik's mastery in crafting fiction that operates on multiple levels—psychological, symbolic, and philosophical. His deliberate distortion of chronological time and realistic space invites the reader to explore the deeper dimensions of the protagonist's journey: from denial to awareness, from guilt to a search for redemption.

Moreover, the narrative's abstraction of time and space reflects broader cultural and spiritual ideas embedded in Uzbek consciousness—particularly the concepts of *taqdir* (destiny), *qismat* (fate), and divine justice. Malik's manipulation of narrative mechanics enhances the story's impact, encouraging readers to reflect on their own moral and existential place in the universe.

In conclusion, *Falak* serves as a powerful example of how Uzbek fantastic literature can merge traditional themes with innovative literary techniques. Time and space in the story are not fixed backdrops but dynamic forces that shape meaning, emotion, and transformation—testifying to the lasting significance of Tohir Malik's literary legacy.

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