

Typology of Personal Freedom under Totalitarian Discourse: A Comparative Reading of George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" and Nazar Eshonqul's "Go'r o'g'li yohud hayot suvi"

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Abstract: Personal freedom is one of the most productive analytical categories for comparing dystopian and post-totalitarian prose, because it allows the researcher to trace how power reshapes subjectivity through surveillance, language, memory, and juridical procedures. This article develops a comparative typology of personal freedom in George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949) and Nazar Eshonqul's "Go'r o'g'li yohud hayot suvi" (2018). Using a comparative-typological algorithm (motif → plot model → narrative mechanism → ideological discourse → character system → genre-poetics), we code the texts by two axes proposed in political theory: negative freedom (a protected sphere free from interference) and positive freedom (self-mastery and self-definition). The results show five recurrent invariants of freedom's erosion: (1) collapse of privacy through panoptic visibility; (2) reduction of language to a regulatory code (Newspeak slogans vs bureaucratic-protocol speech); (3) monopolization of truth via memory politics (history rewriting vs documentary existence); (4) conversion of the body into an object of discipline and fear; and (5) ritualization of power through institutional performances (ministries, trials, "procedures"). While Orwell constructs an explicit dystopian "state machine" that reprograms the subject through knowledge control and terror, Eshonqul models the same process as an absurd-labyrinthine "documentary regime" where existence itself must be bureaucratically proved. The proposed matrix clarifies both the universal mechanisms of totalitarian domination and their culturally specific aesthetic articulations.

Keywords: Comparative literature; typology; personal freedom; dystopia; post-totalitarian novel; Orwell; Eshonqul.

INTRODUCTION

Freedom in literary studies is not limited to the legal vocabulary of "permission/ban". It also denotes the preservation of the self as a subject capable of remembering, choosing, speaking internally, and assuming responsibility. In modern political theory Isaiah Berlin distinguishes negative liberty (a sphere protected from interference) from positive liberty (self-mastery and the possibility of being "somebody" rather than a "nobody") [Berlin, I. 2014]. This distinction provides a productive lens for dystopian narratives, where power first destroys private space (negative freedom) and then targets the very conditions of subjectivity (positive freedom).

Totalitarian domination is particularly relevant to freedom typologies because it seeks not only obedience but the production of a "new type" of person. Hannah Arendt describes totalitarianism as an institutional unity of ideology and terror, capable of undermining factual standards and transforming the boundary between truth and fabrication [Arendt, H. 1951/2004]. From a socio-psychological perspective Erich Fromm shows that freedom may generate anxiety and isolation, encouraging the "escape from freedom" into new forms of dependence [Fromm, E. 1941/1942]. At the level of micro-practices of control, Michel Foucault's concept of panopticism explains how permanent visibility induces self-censorship and

internalized discipline [Foucault, M. 1977]. Together, these theories suggest that literary representations of totalitarianism should be read as models of how freedom is dismantled through (i) epistemic control, (ii) affective regulation, and (iii) disciplinary technologies.

Within dystopia studies, scholars emphasize that "Nineteen Eighty-Four" is not merely a projection of one historical regime but a universal mechanism for manufacturing consent and erasing alternative realities [Waddell, N. (Ed.). 2020]. The Cambridge Companion to Nineteen Eighty-Four highlights how the novel's temporal uncertainty ("administrative disorientations") makes Winston unable to locate himself in time, intensifying the crisis of subjectivity [Waddell, N. (Ed.). 2020]. Research on propaganda and surveillance further demonstrates that ideological messaging and visibility function as two sides of one governing system [Yeo, M. 2010]. At the same time, the Uzbek novel "Go'r o'g'li yohud hayot suvi" has been interpreted as a post-Soviet critique of bureaucratic violence, where mythopoetic background and absurd institutional scenes expose the devaluation of human dignity [Saidmuradova, S. 2022; Artiqova, D. A. 2021]. Recent Uzbek scholarship describes the protagonist "N." as an antihero whose existence is negated by "paper" and "lists", while censorship-era poetics encourage

indirect, symbolic expression of unfreedom [Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023].

Despite the extensive commentary on Orwell's dystopia and the growing critical literature on Eshonqul's modernist-absurd prose, there remains a methodological gap: the two texts are rarely compared through a single typological matrix of personal freedom that integrates motif, plot, narrative strategy, discourse, and character system. This article addresses that gap by proposing a typology of freedom's erosion and by mapping key textual indicators to comparable episodes in both novels.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Corpus. The primary corpus includes George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" (1949) and Nazar Eshonqul's "Go'r o'g'li yohud hayot suvi" (2018, Akademnashr edition) [Orwell, G. 1949; Eshonqul, N. 2018]. For page-referenced textual indicators in Orwell, we additionally use the widely circulated Planet eBook PDF edition (2009), because it provides stable page markers for key institutional loci (e.g., Ministry of Truth, Room 101, Newspeak Appendix) [Orwell, G. 2009]. Secondary sources include political-philosophical accounts of freedom and totalitarianism [Lebdeh, L. T. A., & Al Masri, A. 2014] and literary scholarship on Orwell and Eshonqul [Waddell, N. (Ed.). 2020; Yeo, M. 2010; Saidmuradova, S. 2022; Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023].

Research design. The study employs comparative-typological close reading. Following Berlin's model, we operationalize two axes: negative freedom (privacy, non-interference, freedom from coercion) and positive freedom (self-definition, memory continuity, inner speech, and moral agency) [Berlin, I. 2014]. Textual units of analysis include: (a) emblematic scenes (diary writing, interrogation, trial rituals), (b) institutional spaces (ministries, court/office labyrinth), and (c) recurrent discursive formulas (slogans, protocols, documentary labels). Each unit is coded for its dominant freedom indicator and for the mechanism of erosion (surveillance, discourse restriction, memory manipulation, bodily discipline). To improve interpretive transparency, the coding scheme was revised iteratively after a second reading of the corpus; contested units were re-contextualized at the level of plot and discourse before final classification.

Analytical procedure. We apply a six-step "practical typological algorithm": motif → plot model → narrative mechanism → ideological discourse → character system → genre-poetics. In step (1), we identify freedom-related motifs (privacy, naming, truth, love, fear). In step (2), we map plot dynamics as sequences of resistance and counter-control. In steps (3–4), we examine focalization and institutional language as tools of subject formation. In steps (5–6), we interpret character typology and genre strategies (explicit dystopia vs absurd-labyrinth) as culturally specific articulations of a shared totalitarian code.

RESULTS

Negative freedom: privacy collapse and spatial regimes of control. In Orwell's Oceania, the destruction of privacy is constructed through permanent surveillance (telescreens, Thought Police) and through the symbolic geography of ministries. The Party's slogans function as the first layer of externalized coercion, normalizing paradox as a civic "truth" [Orwell, G. 2009]. At the plot level, Winston's attempt to create a private sphere begins with diary writing—an act explicitly coded as disloyalty ("Down with Big Brother") [Lebdeh, L. T. A., & Al Masri, A. 2014]. The Ministry of Truth (page-referenced locus in the PDF edition) materializes the state's control over information and thus over the boundaries of permissible thought [Orwell, G. 2009]. Scholarly readings of Orwell emphasize that propaganda and surveillance operate as a single coin: visibility disciplines behavior while discourse disciplines interpretation [Yeo, M. 2010]. In Eshonqul's novel, negative freedom is not primarily destroyed by technological visibility but by the bureaucratic labyrinth: offices, protocols, and court procedures. The subject is trapped not because he is constantly watched, but because every movement requires documentary permission, producing a condition of procedural captivity [Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023].

Positive freedom: identity, naming, and the right to be a subject. Orwell dramatizes the collapse of positive freedom through a gradual reprogramming of Winston's selfhood: memories become unstable, inner speech becomes "thoughtcrime", and the subject is reduced to what one critic calls a "fragment of the abolished past" [Waddell, N. (Ed.). 2020]. The final stage of subject destruction is not only physical torture but epistemic domination—forcing the individual to abandon the capacity to verify reality. In Eshonqul, the crisis

begins with naming. The protagonist’s identity is abbreviated as “N.”, and the narrative repeatedly stresses that a name is the ontological core of the self (“My name is my self”, Eshonqul 2018, p. 20) [Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Eshonqul, N. 2018]. Here positive freedom is attacked at its root: the right to define oneself is replaced by the right of documents to define existence. Consequently, a living person may be unable to “prove” that he is alive, because institutional writing overrides embodied reality (Eshonqul 2018, p. 57) [Artiqova, D. A. 2021].

Language as a technology of freedom restriction. Both novels depict how language becomes a regulatory code that criminalizes alternative meaning. In “Nineteen Eighty-Four”, Newspeak is presented as a metatextual appendix (p. 376 in the PDF edition), making explicit the project of shrinking vocabulary so that dissent becomes literally unthinkable [Orwell, G. 2009]. Psycholinguistic analyses of the novel argue that language is not a neutral medium but a device of psychological manipulation that restructures cognition [Hossain, M. 2017]. In “Go‘r o‘g‘li”, the controlling idiom is not a constructed lexicon but the cold bureaucratic register of protocols, lists, and verdicts. Modern Uzbek literary criticism defines this as an “imaginary-paradoxical” and metaphorical form of expression, where the violence of power is encoded in administrative speech [Yakubov, I. 2023]. Thus, Orwell models linguistic control as a total ideological engineering project, whereas Eshonqul models it as the everyday tyranny of officialese that converts a person into a file.

Memory politics and epistemic freedom. Freedom in both novels is inseparable from the ability to hold a stable relation to the past. Orwell’s plot explicitly links power to history control: the

Ministry of Truth continuously rewrites records, producing a “post-historical” condition in which the past becomes a palimpsest [Bowen, J. (Ed.). 2021; Orwell, G. 2009]. Such manipulation corresponds to Arendt’s thesis that totalitarianism targets factuality itself and erodes the distinction between truth and fabrication [Arendt, H. 1951/2004]. Eshonqul’s novel translates the same logic into a documentary regime: if institutional memory (records) denies your status, your lived memory becomes legally irrelevant. The protagonist’s energy “fades” within the office system (Eshonqul 2018, p. 57), suggesting that epistemic unfreedom is experienced as existential depletion [Artiqova, D. A. 2021]. Therefore, in both texts, memory politics functions as the core mechanism converting the self from a historical agent into an administratively managed object.

The body, fear, and the limit of individuality. Orwell’s dystopia makes bodily discipline a direct instrument of political pedagogy: the state seeks not merely confession but love for Big Brother. The final “re-education” is staged through Room 101 (p. 293 in the PDF edition), where fear is individualized and used to break remaining resistance [Orwell, G. 2009]. Critical studies underline that the Party’s ultimate aim is to colonize desire and abolish autonomous pleasure [Orwell, G. 1949]. In Eshonqul, bodily control is less explicit but no less destructive: the hero’s exhaustion, anxiety, and progressive loss of vitality indicate how institutional violence can operate without visible torture-through endless waiting, humiliation, and procedural absurdity [Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023]. In both cases, individuality is framed as a fragile achievement that collapses when the body becomes the target of governance.

Table 1: Typological matrix of personal freedom indicators in the two novels.

Freedom indicator (axis)	Mechanism of erosion	“Nineteen Eighty-Four” (episode / locus)	“Go‘r o‘g‘li” (episode / locus)
Negative freedom (privacy)	Surveillance / procedural captivity	Slogans normalize coercion (p. 6); diary as private speech becomes crime (Orwell 2007, p. 20); Ministry of Truth (p. 48).[Orwell, G. 2009; Lebdeh, L. T. A., & Al Masri, A. 2014]	Office–court labyrinth; existence regulated by protocols and lists; indirect control through paperwork.[Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023]
Positive freedom (self-definition)	Identity reprogramming / naming denial	Winston becomes “fragment of the abolished past” (NEF, p. 82).[Waddell, N. (Ed.). 2020]	“My name is my self” (Eshonqul 2018, p. 20); inability to prove being

			alive (p. 57).[Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Eshonqul, N. 2018]
Linguistic freedom	Newspeak / officialese	Newspeak Appendix as metatext (p. 376); language as psychomanipulation.[Orwell, G. 2009; Hossain, M. 2017]	Protocol language replaces moral meaning; person reduced to document.[Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023]
Epistemic freedom (truth/memory)	History rewriting / documentary truth	Continuous rewriting by Ministry of Truth; post-historical palimpsest.[16; Orwell, G. 2009]	Institutional record overrides lived reality; existential depletion in office system (p. 57). [Artiqova, D. A. 2021]
Bodily autonomy & affect	Fear discipline / exhaustion	Room 101 individualized terror (p. 293); colonization of desire.[Orwell, G. 2009; Orwell, G. 1949]	Vitality “fades”; humiliation and endless procedure replace direct torture. [Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023]

DISCUSSION

The typology confirms that both novels stage freedom as a multi-layered phenomenon: a private sphere, a linguistic-cognitive capacity, a memory continuity, and a bodily-emotional autonomy. Through Berlin’s lens, Orwell dramatizes a sequential collapse: negative freedom is destroyed first by surveillance, then positive freedom is eliminated through epistemic violence and internalized discipline [Lebdeh, L. T. A., & Al Masri, A. 2014]. Eshonqul’s narrative compresses both collapses into one bureaucratic logic: negative freedom is restricted by procedures while positive freedom is attacked through naming and documentary negation [Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023; Shukurova, S. O. 2023].

At the genre-poetic level, the difference between the texts is not merely thematic but structural. Orwell constructs an explicit dystopian “state machine”, offering a relatively transparent model of institutions (ministries) and ideological technology (Newspeak) that engineers the subject [Orwell, G. 2009; Waddell, N. (Ed.). 2020]. Eshonqul, in contrast, chooses a modernist-absurd strategy: mythopoetic background functions as a semantic horizon, while power appears as a labyrinthine bureaucracy that drains meaning and agency [Saidmuradova, S. 2022; Artiqova, D. A. 2021; Yakubov, I. 2023]. This supports the idea that typological similarity does not require direct influence; rather, comparable socio-historical pressures can generate convergent aesthetic solutions in different literary systems.

The model also clarifies how “freedom” in totalitarian settings is a problem of epistemology. Both novels suggest that once the distinction between truth and fabrication collapses, the individual loses the capacity to judge, and thus loses the core of positive freedom. In Orwell, the state achieves this by monopolizing archives; in Eshonqul, by making the document the ultimate ontology. Consequently, the most radical violence is not physical but semiotic: the conversion of human existence into a controllable text (slogan, record, verdict) [Arendt, H. 1951/2004; Orwell, G. 2009].

Limitations. Page references to the primary texts depend on editions; in this article, Orwell citations [Toma, S. 2019; Claey's, G. 2016; Moylan, T. 2018; Berggren, A. 2016] follow the page markers used in the Planet eBook PDF edition and in the OUP 2021 edition where specified, while Eshonqul citations follow the Akademnashr 2018 edition [Orwell, G. 1949; Orwell, G. 1949; Eshonqul, N. 2018; Orwell, G. 2009]. Future studies may strengthen the typology by integrating quantitative corpus-based discourse measures (e.g., frequency of bureaucratic formulae) and by expanding the corpus to include other post-totalitarian Uzbek novels and canonical dystopias.

CONCLUSION

This IMRAD-form comparative study proposes a typology of personal freedom in “Nineteen Eighty-Four” and “Go’r o’g’li yohud hayot suvi”. The analysis identifies five invariants of freedom’s erosion-privacy collapse, linguistic restriction,

memory politics, bodily discipline, and ritualized institutional power-while also distinguishing two aesthetic models of domination: Orwell's surveillance-driven dystopian state and Eshonqul's document-driven absurd labyrinth. The typological matrix can serve as a transferable analytical tool for further comparative work on freedom, subjectivity, and totalitarian discourse across literary traditions.

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