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Investigating Gender Dynamics and Queer Identities in Queen's Lyrics: Cross-Dressing as a Means of Expression and Coming Out

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Table of Contents:

1. **Abstract**
2. **Literature Review**
3. **Introduction**
4. **Chapter 1: Freddie Mercury: *The Great Pretender***
5. **Chapter 2*: Killer Queen***
6. **Chapter3*: Liar***
7. **Chapter 4*: Bohemian Rhapsody***
8. **Chapter 5*: I want to Break Free* and the concept of "Undoing Gender"**
9. **Chapter 6: Queen and Transvestism**
10. **Chapter 7: Conclusion: *The Musical Prostitute***

Investigating Gender Dynamics and Queer Identities in Queen's Lyrics: Cross-Dressing as a Means of Expression and Coming Out

1. Abstract

LGBT (or GLBT) (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) In use since the 1990s, the term is an adaptation of the initialism LGB, which was used to replace the term gay in reference to the LGBT community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s. The LGBT issue has been one of the most controversial, spoken about, protested, supported and neglected the issue for a long time. The initialism has become adopted into the mainstream as an umbrella term for use when labeling topics pertaining to sexuality and gender identity. This issue has been widely represented through popular films, books, and music. Pop Music is one of the most important medium through which people were made aware of and open to this issue. Many bands and singers have chosen and written lyrics that echoed such issues and concerns. One of the most eminent bands is Queen, whose lead singer Freddie Mercury created a revolution through his songs.

When Freddie Mercury said in his famous song *I want to Break free* that :

"I want to break free from your lies
You're so self satisfied I don't need you
I've got to break free
God knows God knows I want to break free " , he subtly meant to break free not from the monotony of life but break free from the society, from his own body, identity and gender. Mercury explicitly talks about transvestism through this song. “All around the world people laughed and they got the joke and they sort of understood it,” May himself told NPR Radio in 2010 talking about this song where Mercury featured dressed as a barmaid in the song's video. According to *An Introduction to the Subject of Transvestism or Femmiphilia (cross-*

dressing): transvestism serves the "need for adornment and personality expression". Mercury wanted to break free from all the mockery of society. He wanted the world to take the LGBTQ community and issues more seriously and he wanted to make a change through his lyrics. Instead of having a lovely wife, he again says, "I've fallen in love for the first time... it's strange but it's true", these lines clearly suggests how he realizes his own sexual orientation and is aware of his liking towards his friend Jim Hutton. He calls it "strange, but it's true" and thus, he wants to break free from this constant dilemma, fear, and lies. In the same song, he again says "But I have to be sure when I walk out that door". He knows he has to be brave and sure before he faces the world, similarly, if we decode this song as well as most of Queen's songs there are messages and confessions of homosexuality, homoeroticism, transvestism, misogynism, gender identities, prostitution, body identity, and several other issues. Mercury himself commented "People are used to hard rock, energy music from Queen, yet with this single you almost expect Noel Coward to sing it. It's one of those bowler hats, black suspender belt numbers – not that Coward would wear that... It's about a high-class call girl. I'm trying to say that classy people can be whores as well. That's what the song is about, though I'd prefer people to put their interpretation upon it – to read into it what they like."

Since a long-time Queen's songs have become an anthem for the "doomed youth", LGBTQ+ community and also have raged controversies and arguments amongst feminists.

Queen's *Fat Bottomed Girls* is a not so famous song, but it's lyrics if studied carefully and closely seems very misogynistic and definitely, body shames girls. The title of the song itself suggests that. Again if one analyses the lyrics of *Somebody to Love* which Mercury wrote after he left his wife confessing to her about his homosexuality and his relationship with his friend Jim, It suggests how he feels lonely and needs "Somebody to Love" because homosexuality was considered illegal and something that was to be kept private. Mercury not only speaks for himself but for the entire LGBTQ+ community. However, some of his songs do contain misogynistic comments.

I will closely analyze some of Queen's songs like *I want to Break Free, Killer Queen, Somebody to Love, Fat Bottomed Girls and Bohemian Rhapsody*, keeping the LGBTQ+ issues in mind. I shall also be looking into some journals and articles based on the stated topics. Through my dissertation, I shall also try to provide brief research on the development and history of the Pride protests and marches.

Keywords**: LGBTQ+, homosexuality, homoeroticism, transvestism, misogynism, gender identities, prostitution, body identity, etc.**

LITERATURE REVIEW.

The LGBTQ protests and movements took a heavy toll during the 1980s, more because homophobic attacks became very common during this time. The efforts made by scholars, critics, and academic researchers also doubled as they started exploring topics like homosexuality and the "closet metaphor". It was Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's theories in ***Epistemology of The Closet***[1], that dealt deeper into the closet psychology, homophobia, homosexuality in great detail, widening everyone's minds and knowledge. This book had an enlightening purpose not only among the masses but previous and later LGBTQ critics. Sedgwick is known as one of the founders of Queer studies. In her ***Epistemology of The Closet***[2], she attacks and questions the basic crux of what comprises human sexuality and argues that limiting sexuality to just mere homosexuality and heterosexuality stands as a binary opposition. She begins her analysis by referring to two famous works, which were written around 1891, at a time when legal and medical notions about "homosexuality" were solidifying. She greatly refers to Herman Melville's ***Billy Bud***[3] and Oscar Wilde's ***The Picture of Dorian Gray***[4]**.** Through ***Billy Bud***, Sedgwick clarifies the polarity or disparity between the real homosexual in Melville's book, John Claggart, and the homosociality best embodied by Claggart's double, named Captain Vere. However, her reference and reading of Wilde almost overlooked by many renowned critics of male-male desire in Nietzsche which is abundant in the chapter, fascinatingly disintegrates several clichéd dichotomies. Sedgwick then also refers to Henry James' ***The Beast in the Jungle***[5]**.** The destructive effects that the closeting of homosexuality can have on women is shown through this tale. She then finally moves forward to show the importance of the "open secret" of the closet by concluding her book, inquiring into Marcel Proust's ***In Search of Lost Time***[6] (***À la recherche du temps perdu),*** which according to her has been condemned, marginalized and reduced to a medicalized space in modern society, politics, and philosophy.

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[1] (Sedgwick 1990)
[2] Ibid
[3] (Melville 1956)
[4] (Wilde 1954)
[5] (James 2012)
[6] Proust, Marcel .*In Search of Lost Time.*France:Grassaed and Gallimard,1913

Back in 1895, her book ***Between Men***[7] started establishing the grounds for Gay theories and studies which were further solidified by her ***Epistemology of The Closet***[8]**.** Her ***Between Men*** was successful to ally with gay men and feminists. It soon became a central document for gay studies along with feminism. Sedgwick continues her investigation further in ***Epistemology of The Closet*** and compares a "minoritizing" view of"real" homosexuals and a "universalizing" assumption of a homosocial society. She does not refer to the theories of deconstruction directly, but is very much deconstructive in nature and proves that both of these categories conflates and contains with its binaries. She not only debunks various myths related to homosexuality but also talks about how power and sex relations affect gender and some of its various loopholes. She opens the ground to a much modern gay theory and thinking and homosexual studies. she argues and makes it clear that it is through the creation and existence of the term "homosexual" that the term " heterosexual" exists. Mark Reschke reviews Sedgwick's theory and comments that: "The transformative power behind Sedgwick's theory manifests itself in four important ways: it calls attention to a crisis at the foundation of current lesbian and gay political strategies; it directs the discourse of gay studies through and beyond the essentialist-social constructionist debate which has dominated the field in recent years; it establishes that the homosexual-heterosexual definitional divide is a central controlling factor in all modem Western identities and social organizations, not merely in homosexual identities and organizations; and it opens a space for those nongays who have sufficient knowledge and awareness of their own privilege and homophobia to investigate gay and lesbian issues, or, to put it in Sedgwick's terms, to engage in "antihomophobic" projects".

She provides more ground to her theory by expanding on the topics of homosexual panic, gay-bashing, same-sex desire, homo-hetero divide, homophobia, the approach of gay-men, etc. Sedgwick provides ample examples to support her theories and assumptions. I will concentrate and draw parallels between Sedgwick's ***Epistemology of the Closet***[9] and Lesley Ann-James'

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[7] Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

[8] Ibid

[9] Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody [10]to suggest how Sedgwick's theories are rightly applicable to most homosexual men and their lives. Sedgwick mentions "Understanding the"epistemology of the closet," the homo-hetero divide, is imperative to everyone, not only to homosexuals." She writes: "So permeative has the suffusing stain of homo/heterosexual crisis been that to discuss any of these indices [knowledge/ignorance, masculine/feminine, majority/minority, public/private, et.al.] in any context, in the absence of an antihomophobic analysis, must perhaps be to perpetuate unknowingly compulsions implicit in each." Thus, we have Lesley Ann Jones, a heterosexual being analyzing the life of Freddie Mercury and his coming out of the closet and accepting his homosexuality. The examples outlined in ***The Epistemology of the Closet***[11] by Sedgwick, all seem to apply to the life of the legendary gay music icon Freddie Mercury in his biography by Jones. Sedgwick studies gay psychology and comments that most gay men seem to make advances at strangers and it ends up on a disturbing note of violence often leading to the point of homicide. Jones, similarly in chapters 236 and 252 of her Biography of Freddie Mercury states similar incidents in Freddie's life. she talks about how Freddie approached several men, mostly strangers in a pub and invited them. However, this was also the way Freddie met his boyfriend, Jim Hutton. Jones also talks about several gay-bashing and violent incidents of Freddie's life. I believe that Jones' Book is the apt theoretical real-life example of Sedgwick's theories and assumptions giving them rightful grounds.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

[10] Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

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Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

[11] Ibid

Jones talks about how Freddie discovered his sexuality and took time to come out of the closet, which he mostly did through his songs and his habit of cross-dressing. Freddie's long term girlfriend, Mary Austen whom he considered to love forever despite realizing he was gay helped Freddie in his journey a lot and supported him, though it was heartbreaking for her as they were married by then. Thus, Freddie Mercury wrote the song "*Love of my life"* where she not only confesses about his sexuality but also assures Mary how he will love her forever, but it his time for him to go and explore his newly discovered sexuality. Sedgwick suggested that homosexuality was seen as a minority gay-identity and this theory justifies why it took so much time for most gay men , including a legend like Mercury to come out of the closet and be open to the world and fight for themselves. Freddie in an interview after the release of *"Under pressure"* along with David comments that " I can't predict whether we will go on, but as long as we keep breaking new ground, the fire will remain in Queen". Yes, Queen was indeed breaking grounds with their symbolic and rebellious music videos, cross-dressing, meaningful lyrics as anyone familiar with the band will rightly agree. Jones then further comments on the above statement of Freddie in her book that this was one honest public opinion from Freddie and an indirect confirmation from him about a metamorphosis he was going through underway, it was a disguised attempt of Freddie to show to the world that he was finally comfortable in his own skin. But Jones questions in her book and asks " was he really though?". She then talks about more life events and incidents from Freddie's life and how some of them inspired him to write several lyrics of his famous songs.

As we read more and into the Biography, we realize that most of the theories and assumptions suggested by Sedgwick are applicable and true to gay men. Sedgwick concentrates largely on dualities and binaries about homosexuality, similarly, Lesley Ann Jones talks about the duality maintained by Freddie in his life, hiding in the closet, The Times comments on Jones' work " No one captured better than Lesley –Ann Jones the magical, enchanting dualism of Freddie Mercury".

INTRODUCTION.

It had taken a long time for humanity to evolve and accept gender equality and the LGBTQ community. We have had a long struggle. The struggle involved each one of us in some way or the other. It took a long time for the people in the closet to come out, and many artists including singers, actors, laureates helped in the struggle and protested in their own ways. It took people a long time to accept who they are and be themselves. LGBT (or GLBT) (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) In use since the 1990s, the term is an adaptation of the initialism LGB, which was used to replace the term gay in reference to the LGBT community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s. The LGBT issue has been one of the most controversial, spoken about, protested, supported, and neglected the issue for a long time. The initialism has become adopted into the mainstream as an umbrella term for use when labeling topics pertaining to sexuality and gender identity. We have Lesley Ann Jones, a heterosexual being analyzing the life of Freddie Mercury and his coming out of the closet and accepting his homosexuality in her Biography of Freddie Mercury titled: ***The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody***[12].

Jones talks about how Freddie discovered his sexuality and took time to come out of the closet, which he mostly did through his songs and his habit of cross-dressing. Freddie's long term girlfriend, Mary Austen whom he considered to love forever despite realizing he was gay helped Freddie in his journey a lot and supported him, though it was heartbreaking for her as they were married by then. Thus, Freddie Mercury wrote the song "*Love of my life*[13]*"* where she not only confesses about his sexuality but also assures Mary how he will love her forever, but it is time for him to go and explore his newly discovered sexuality. Due to gay-bashing, homophobia, societal problems it took so much time for most gay men, including a legend like Mercury to come out of the closet and be open to the world and fight for themselves. Yes, Queen was indeed breaking grounds with their symbolic and rebellious music videos, cross-dressing, meaningful lyrics as anyone familiar with the band will rightly agree. She then talks about more life events and incidents from Freddie's life and how some of them inspired him to

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12

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

13 ***Love of my Life"*** , the song written and released in 1975 by Freddie Mercury.

write several lyrics of his famous songs. Lesley Ann Jones talks about the duality maintained by Freddie in his life, hiding in the closet, The Times comments on Jones' work " No one captured better than Lesley –Ann Jones the magical, enchanting dualism of Freddie Mercury"[14].

This issue has been widely represented through popular films, books, and music. Pop Music is one of the most important medium through which people were made aware of and open to this issue. Many bands and singers have chosen and written lyrics that echoed such issues and concerns. One of the most eminent bands is Queen, whose lead singer Freddie Mercury created a revolution through his songs.

1. **Freddie Mercury: *The Great Pretender.***

Freddie Mercury's real name was Farrokh Bulsara, he was born in Zanzibar to a Parsi family in 5th September 1946. He had later adopted the stage name of Freddie Mercury. In 1964 his family had moved to England. He was a songwriter, British singer and the lead vocalist of the greatest rock band Queen[15]. He is regarded as one of the greatest singers and songwriters in the history of rock music. He was also very much known for his stage persona which was very flamboyant and colourful and also for his four-octave vocal range. Mercury had spent most of his childhood in India, where he had studied in a boy's boarding school in Panchgani, Bombay. After moving to England, he had studied music for years and formed the band "Queen" in 1970 along with guitarist Brian May and drummer Roger Taylor and bassist John Deacon, who joined a year later. One cannot also overlook the peculiar name they chose for the band. The name itself reveals and hints at a lot of things. Queen as a band and especially Freddie Mercury believed in gender neutrality. Thus, four male band members went ahead with this name. The name also suggests something very grand and royal and yes the name is apt, as their songs,

14

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

15

their stage performances, and music videos were all extravagant, grand and magnificent. In simple words, even the Kings of rock music can be queens or vice versa.

Lyrics and songs have been an important part of Literature for a long time, justifying fairly enough why the Nobel prize for Literature was given to Bob Dylan in 2016. Song lyrics have been an important medium for rebelling, protesting, confessing and coding. Now you might wonder what is so special about the lyrics of Freddie Mercury? My dissertation will discuss the inner conflicts, the confessions, the wishes and desires inside Freddie which he revealed through his songs. Mercury was diagnosed with AIDS and he kept it a secret until the day before his death. He also left his long term girlfriend after years of being together, accepting and only confessing it to her about his sexuality. Mercury never revealed to the world or his fans about his battling with AIDS or about his homosexuality. Though having a larger than life stage appearance he was definitely, hiding in the closet in his real life. My dissertation will also draw parallels between Freddie Mercury's life, his confession and coming out through his lyrics to Queer theory and closet theory, along with discussions on cross-dressing. Through my dissertation, I will discuss various songs and music videos of Queen in details and argue how the lyrics and their appearances and cross-dressing on stage and music videos, if decoded symbolically and metaphorically reveal how Freddie had been living a life of dualism, a life of a pretender, yet providing the world and all his fans the best he could. He created a revolution in the history of music with his "*Bohemian Rhapsody",* a fusion of rock music and opera, never thought of before. Its lyrics have also been revolutionary and most quoted, sung, used, and considered an anthem till date. The lyrics are extremely meaningful and symbolical and also show that Mercury had enough knowledge about all fields like science, arts, history, and astronomy to create this masterpiece.

Many popular rock bands like *The Rolling Stones, Nirvana, Pink Floyd, Guns n Roses, etc,* have created a revolution in their way in not only the world of music but also through their lyrics in the world of literature. However, my dissertation will show why *Queen* is unique and how their lyrics can be read through a gendered lens. There have been several documentaries, books, short films, tribute videos and a very recent film on the life of Freddie Mercury, all mainly concentrating on how the world saw this legend. But, my dissertation will concentrate more on how Freddie saw himself and how he appeared to the world.

Exploring *Queen* songs have been very interesting. One also needs to understand the chronology of the songs to have a better understanding of Freddie's life. Songs are similar to poetry. Thus, I will also view the songs and their lyrics from a poetic point of view. Queen has produced over more than a hundred song and it is not possible to discuss all of them

theoretically and metaphorically. However, in my paper, I have chosen a few of the most important and famous songs to decode and interpret thus, further revealing the dualism, inner conflicts, and confessions associated. No matter be it the life on stage, his love life, or the life he showed to the world; he was living a dual life, more specifically the life of a pretender. Thus, I have justly titled the first chapter of my dissertation as "Freddie Mercury: The Great Pretender". Lesley Ann Jones herself quotes in her Biography on Freddie " Mary might look like a gentle soul who couldn't hurt a fly- but her fragile image concealed an inner strength and serenity that Freddie admired deeply, perhaps because he feared that the 'Great Pretender' in him did not really have those qualities himself". The interesting fact is that *"The Great Pretender*[16]*"* was originally a popular song recorded by *The Platters,* which was repopularised by Freddie Mercury in 1987. The lyrics of this song goes like,

"Oh yes, I'm the great pretender (Ooh, ooh)
Pretending I'm doing well (Ooh, ooh)
My need is such I pretend too much
I'm lonely, but no one can tell

Oh yes, I'm the great pretender (Ooh, ooh)
Adrift in a world of my own (Ooh, ooh)
I play the game, but to my real shame
You've left me to dream all alone"[17]

The reason why Freddie chose to remaster this particular song is very evident from the lyrics. He accepts that he is a great pretender and only pretending to do well in his own world. The music video of this song also shows Freddie with makeup and heels as well as Freddie wearing a suit. Transgenders and very often men cross-dressed as women appear in Queen's music video. Especially in this song. The band members of Queen also cross-dressed in various videos, the most famous of them being the legendary famous song " *I want to Break Free",* which I have discussed in depth in the following chapter of my dissertation.

Paul Matthew Gamboccini, a radio presenter commented on Freddie that, " *the self-realisation process would have been so important to him...Freddie came from a culture in which you are not supposed to love men. So you try and conform, even though you are tortured within. It's*

[16] The Platters, Tony Williams,*The Great Pretender,*Mercury,1995
[17] Freddie Mercury,Freddie Mercury. *The Great pretender.*Single record. 1987

not uncommon. Elton did it twice. On the route to self-discovery for a gay man from a repressed background, there is often an interlude of having a girlfriend. This is sometimes about need, and sometimes a case of one trying to do what is expected of one"[18].

2.*Killer Queen.*

"She keeps her Moet et Chandon
In her pretty cabinet
"Let them eat cake", she says
Just like Marie Antoinette
A built-in remedy
For Khrushchev and Kennedy
At anytime an invitation
You can't decline

Caviar and cigarettes
Well versed in etiquette
Extraordinarily nice

She's a Killer Queen
Gunpowder, gelatine
Dynamite with a laser beam
Guaranteed to blow your mind
Anytime

Recommended at the price
Insatiable an appetite
Wanna try?

[18]Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

To avoid complications
She never kept the same address
In conversation
She spoke just like a baroness
Met a man from China
Went down to Geisha Minah
Then again incidentally
If you're that way inclined

Perfume came naturally from Paris (naturally)
For cars, she couldn't care less
Fastidious and precise

She's a Killer Queen
Gunpowder, gelatine
Dynamite…"

Killer Queen was written by Mercury and was recorded and released in their third album "*Sheer Heart Attack".* This is the first song that I will analyze in my dissertation. Most of Freddie's songs had been on the top ten list in the U.K and U.S and even other countries. When you read the lyrics you notice how smooth it is with the rhythms and rhyming pattern, almost like an excellent poem. This is also one of Mercury's controversial songs like a few others. This song has several interpretations and controversies, as to who is the "Killer Queen" referred to. I have decoded and deconstructed the song in my way as well as taken popular opinions, criticisms, and various research on the song to come to a few interpretations.

The first interpretation is that the "killer queen" here, is referred to as a high-class prostitute. Brian May, lead guitarist of the band himself confirmed this. Prostitutes were considered as the "dirty strata" of the society and considered to be not deserving a better, healthy, or an open life. Here, in this song, Mercury talks about a prostitute with a standard and goals. In this song the "killer queen" does not care about what others or the society thinks. She is a high-class escort and keeps her branded costly liquor in her cabinet. Mercury describes her personality and her choices in detail. In the line; *"Let them eat cake", she says Just like Marie Antoinette..",* Mercury compares her to Queen Marie Antoinette. Marie Antoinette was the Queen of France and Navarre. She was disliked by the French due to her Austrian descent and called her "Autre-chienne" meaning 'Other bitch'. Marie Antoinette is wrongly associated with the phrase "let

them eat cake" because of her luxurious life and detachment from the common people. The phrase "let them eat cake" is a translation from the French phrase "Qu'ils mangent de la brioche." These words were believed to have been said by a prominent princess of France who lacked any touch or empathy with the common people of France. It is said and believed that the common people of France had no bread to eat and when they went to the Princess to seek help she commented, "then let them eat cake", which is not only absurd but also illogical. It makes no sense as people who didn't even have bread, will definitely lack materials to make a cake. Thus, this phrase has been often used to describe a not so down to earth person lacking practicality and empathy for common people and who is not used to a common life. Then Mercury proceeds with calling the killer queen as a "built-in remedy", even for politicians like Khrushchev and Kennedy, suggesting that there might have been tension between them due to this particular escort. Then Freddie explains this escorts behaviour, who was " well-versed in etiquette and extraordinarily nice" The song puts forward a very sophisticated image of this escort, unlike common belief. Mercury describes that she has manners and behaviour enough to be a baroness, despite being a prostitute. She had an extravagant taste of things and was as destructive as dynamite. She has also travelled parts of the world with etiquette and sophisticacy. Thus, here, through this song, Mercury breaks all the chains of the society tied to a sex-worker. He shows how even sex-workers can be sophisticated and full of manners and etiquette. This is not only a bold song but a bold step taken by Mercury too. This song also suggests that all sex-workers deserve respect and they are powerful, fastidious, and precise and "dynamite" enough to even cause tension between two nations, giving the example of Kennedy and Khrushchev in the song. What Mercury does subtly here, is contrasts and shacks the concept of the "fallen woman" through this one song. The trope of the "fallen woman" had been very predominant in all forms of art for a long time. Even the representation of these prostitutes or the women labelled as the "fallen woman" had undergone a change, progress, and protest as times changes and progressed and became more modern.

Since ancient times, women who were labelled as the "fallen woman" because they worked in a brothel or often sold their bodies to get something, were considered incapable or unworthy of having their own histories or identities. They were considered to be tempting but vicious, dirty, pitiable, and as slaves. One of the earliest of such figures was that of Mary Magdalene. She was one of the most common and loved subjects of Renaissance painters like Peter Paul Reubens, Georges de la Four, Antonio da Correggio, and several others. Though most of these paintings defended the Christian notions of chastity, they also celebrated the female beauty and body, temptation, and seductiveness. Literature had been the pioneering medium in moulding

and portraying these characters, like Isabella in Shakespeare's ***Measure for Measure***[19] to Nancy in ***Oliver Twist***[20] and many other works of literature. However, Freddie mercury chose the medium of pop music and through the bold lyrics of "*Killer Queen"* breaks all the stereotypes and previously portrayed pictures of prostitutes. He puts up an image where nothing is "fallen" in the so-called "fallen woman" imagery.

It was, however, Gabrielle Colette in the early 20th Century who broke the social and literary taboos. In ***The Rainy Moon***[21], her novella, she gives the young woman soliciting on the street a voice of her own, a history, a memory, a personality. However, simultaneously contemporary western culture also pornographied, repressed, hid facts, and showed prostitution just like any other service industry. ***The Handmaid's Tale***[22] by Margaret Atwood satirizes and criticizes these in a very spine chilling way that has a dystopic effect. Even till date, there are misogynistic and patriarchal challenges these women have to face, and they were also mostly considered devoid of love, affection, education, family, and unworthy of any liberation or enlightenment. It was Mercury's *"Killer Queen*" that talks about a liberated prostitute, who lives her own life and does not care about society. Thus, definitely through this song, Mercury not only breaks the assumptions and societal chains and misconceptions imposed on the personal lives of these women but also puts forward the image of a modern liberated woman.

In the same way, another interpretation of this song is that Freddie talks about a Queen who is modern enough to rule her kingdom as well as enjoy all those pleasures of life, including those which might question her chastity or lineage. He through this song once again smashes the patriarchal norms of Queenship. The "Killer Queen" maintains her expensive perfume and liquor as well as manages state affairs, speaks like a baroness, travels the world yet doesn't care about what the society thinks. She is free and independent and has a killer attitude, does not always need to behave, is rebellious, has fun, and seeks a male company.

However, the greatest and the most accepted interpretation was that in the song the "Killer Queen" was Freddie himself. Freddie's flamboyant, charismatic and dramatic image was revealed through his *"Killer queen".* Freddie himself commented in an interview " You can be anything you want to be" when asked about who is the Killer queen. The band's bassist John

19 (Shakespeare 1970)

20 (Dickens, n.d.)

21 (Colette 1975)

22 (Atwood 1985)

Deacon himself confirmed when enquired about the song, " *Killer Queen* always felt very special. It was very sophisticated and it was very Freddie".

3. Liar

"I have sinned dear, Father
Father, I have sinned
Try and help me, Father
Won't you let me in? Liar
Oh nobody believes me, liar
Ooh, why don't you leave me alone?
Sire I have stolen, stolen many times
Raised my voice in anger
When I know I never should
Liar, oh everybody deceives me
Liar, ooh, why don't you leave me alone?
Liar, I have sailed the seas
Liar, from mars to mercury
Liar, I have drunk the wine
Liar, time after time
Liar, you're lying to me
Liar, you're lying to me
Father please forgive me
You know you'll never leave me
Please will you direct me in the right way
Liar liar liar liar
Liar that's what they keep calling me
Liar liar liar
Ooh, let me go
Listen, are you gonna listen?
Mama I'm gonna be your slave
All day long
Mama I'm gonna try behave
All day long
Mama I'm gonna be your slave
All day long

I'm gonna serve you 'til your dying day
All day long
I'm gonna keep you 'til your dying day
All day long
I'm gonna kneel down by your side and pray
All day long and pray
All day long and pray
All day long and pray
All day long, wow, all day long, wow
All day long, all day long, all day long
Yes, all day long, all day long, all day long, all day long, yeah
All day long, we have lift off, ow
All day long, all day long, all day long
Liar liar they never ever let you win
Liar liar everything you do is sin
Liar nobody believes you
Liar they bring you down before you begin
Ooh, now let me tell you this
So now you know you could be dead before they let you, uh"

It was written by Freddie Mercury in1970, but the song was released later in 1973 and again in 1974.
This is a very straightforward and simple song. Though direct in its approach it is also a veiled confession. Freddie was born to a Parsee Family, they were Zoroastrian by faith. It is one of the oldest staunch religions in history. Freddie's father, Bomi Bulsara was a strict and conservative man. He believed in the concept of redemption and sin and has raised his children believing in so.

No other song brings out the dualism and inner conflict inside Freddie Mercury, like this particular song. Every single line is very simple, direct, and an attack on the notions of homosexuality as a sin, as a disease, and how homosexual people were treated as untouchables, as minorities. He also attacks blind religious faiths and beliefs. Here, he seeks forgiveness but also at the same time accuses all religions, society, and his parents of lying. This song is a confession to not only God addressed as "Father" here but also to Freddie's

father. The time when this particular song was written, 1970, it was a very important time in Freddie's life. A lot of things have been going on in his life, and it bears a mark on the lyrics.This was the time Mary Austin, Freddie's long term partner found out that Freddie was gay. Freddie himself accepted it and confessed it to her and told her that she is free to live her life and seek a new partner. Freddie then meets Jim Hutton, who then becomes his boyfriend. But, he has always kept his private life very private and never let anyone know about his relationship with Jim, until much later. It was rather Mary who made it easier for Freddie to accept his sexuality. Lesley Ann Jones in the Biography of Freddie Mercury quotes a conversation between mary Austin and Freddie,

" No Freddie, I don't think you're bisexual, she said to him," I think you're gay".

He did accept this coming from her almost immediately. Thus, Freddie wrote this song during this time. By1970, Freddie had also started living with Mary and hardly had any contacts with his parents as they could not accept Freddie's bohemian musician life. When Mary realises Freddie was gay, they chose to be separated. However, Mary had always been the love of his life and shall be so, as he again confesses in another song called "*Love of my Life".* She was like a mother to him. It was hard for him to leave her and seek a new life out of the closet and it was harder for Mary to accept this sudden change, but she has always been supportive of him. Freddie himself comments on his and Mary's relationship after their separation, as Lesley Ann Jones quotes in her *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody:*

"*All my lovers asked me why they couldn't replace Mary, but it's simply impossible. To me, she was my common-law wife. To me, it was a marriage. We believe in each other, and that's enough for me. I couldn't fall in love with a man the same way I did with Mary".*

Thus, the song suggests that he is in a stage of dilemma and confusion and does not know what to do. It seems he does not know which path of life to choose. The thought process here is almost similar to that of Robert Frost's poem " *The Road not Taken",* where the poet came across a path that diverged into two roads and he did not know which road to take as his entire future might depend on it. one road was frequently traveled and common and the other one was the less traveled by. He chooses the second one that was less traveled and he is aware that either it will end with a sigh of relief or regret. Same way, Freddie has to choose a path, either he has to be in the closet for the rest of his life, else be bold and accept his sexuality and go out and seek adventures and be an example to the world.

Thus, I would like to argue that the lyrics of this song brings out the dualism, confusion, and inner conflict inside this man who has been living in the closet. As we further analyse the song, we see that at one point he seeks forgiveness from his father and god as he is gay and

he is made to believe that it is a sin.then again he confesses that he needs help to understand what he wants, "*try and help me".* This also brings out the hollow notion and belief of the society for many years that homosexuality was a mental illness, and people who were homosexuals needed help. He asks like a helpless man that why can't the society, his father and mother, or even God accept him the way he is and let him in, " *Won't you let me in?"* Now, based on this I would like to further argue on my dissertation how Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick addresses such issues faced by gay men in her ***"Epistemology of the Closet".***[23] She very aptly names the chapter as " The beast in the closet", and identifies the state of the male homosexual panic as a severe mental state, "socio-historical development and literary tradition, the product of the paradox created by "intense male homosocial desire as at once the most compulsory and the most prohibited of social bonds" (p.187). Sedgwick, identifies the emergence of "the beginnings of a crystallized male homosexual role and male homosexual culture" (p.184) as she begins her article begins with a brief historical background as occurring in England roughly before the end of the eighteenth century. Male homosexuality had by then become more of a cultural matter than a theological one, this lead to a male homosexual panic in return. This mainly affected the "closeted homosexual male", who must negotiate as Sedgwick quotes in her essay, "the treacherous middle stretch of the modern homosocial continuum" (p.188)[24] ever wary of the "threat" of potential homosexuality. Thus, as Chloe A hogg[25] comments in her article, "according to Sedgwick,

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23

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

24

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

25 Chloe Hogg on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's "The Beast in the Closet"

the development of male homosexual panic and persecution in Euro-American culture colors the entire range of male homosocial bonds that subtend the patriarchal political, social, and economic power structures."[26]

Sedgwick through the new "character taxonomy" of the bachelor further deconstructs and explains the concept of male homosexual panic, referring to several literary works mainly Thakeray and James. Sedgwick related this panic as something that affects both its male as well as female subjects. The very apt example is Mary Austin, the female subject who suffered due to Freddie's homosexual panic as a result of the cultural society. Sedgwick also argues that this panic might lead to a demoralized misogynistic conception of the mother and father figures. As I have mentioned this is what Mercury does, he accuses his parents of lying and not accepting him in the above-mentioned song.

Thus, I feel that Sedgwick's identification of male homosexual panic is an important tool in the analysis of texts, relevant not only to the nineteenth-century but also today. I believe that she argues of an interesting possibility of a connection between the male homosexual panic experienced by dominant heterosexual structures and individuals and the expression of this panic through the discourse and thematics of misogyny. I will further elaborate and argue on this point through my deconstruction and interpretation of Freddie Mercury's next song "***Bohemian Rhapsody."***

4. <u>Bohemian Rhapsody.</u>

Is this the real life, is this just fantasy?
Caught in a landslide no escape from reality
Open your eyes look up to the skies and see
I'm just a poor boy, I need no sympathy
Because I'm easy come, easy go
A little high, little low

[26] Ibid

Anyway the wind blows
Doesn't really matter to me, to me
Mama, just killed a man
Put a gun against his head
Pulled my trigger, now he's dead
Mama, life had just begun
But now I've gone and thrown it all away
Mama, ooh, ooh
Didn't mean to make you cry
If I'm not back again this time tomorrow
Carry on, carry on as if nothing really matters
Too late, my time has come
Sends shivers down my spine
Body's aching all the time
Goodbye everybody, I've got to go
Gotta leave you all behind and face the truth
Mama, ooh (anyway the wind blows) I don't want to die
I sometimes wish I'd never been born at all
I see a little silhouette of a man
Scaramouch, scaramouch will you do the fandango
Thunderbolt and lightning, very, very frightening me
Gallileo, Gallileo, Gallileo, Gallileo,
Gallileo Figaro magnifico
But I'm just a poor boy and nobody loves me
He's just a poor boy from a poor family
Spare him his life from this monstrosity
Easy come easy go will you let me go
Bismillah, no we will not let you go, let him go
Bismillah, we will not let you go, let him go
Bismillah, we will not let you go, let me go
Will not let you go, let me go (never)
Never let you go, let me go
Never let me go, ooh
No, no, no, no, no, no, no

Oh mama mia, mama mia, mama mia let me go
Beelzebub has a devil put aside for me
For me, for me
So you think you can stone me and spit in my eye
So you think you can love me and leave me to die
Oh baby, can't do this to me baby
Just gotta get out, just gotta get right outta here
Ooh yeah, ooh yeah nothing really matters
Anyone can see nothing really matters
Nothing really matters to me
Anyway the wind blows

" 'Bohemian Rhapsody' was something that I'd wanted to do for a long while. It wasn't something I'd given much thought to on previous albums, but I just felt that when it came to the fourth album I was going to do it", says Freddie Mercury in an interview. [27] Queen never revealed the meaning of this song, but Freddie Mercury's biographer, Lesley-Ann Jones, believes these lines represent Freddie killing his old self and revealing his new out of the closet self. A 2015 article by the *New Zealand Herald* quotes lyricist, Sir Tim Rice, who says:" *It's fairly obvious to me this was Freddie's coming-out song. […] I've spoken to* Roger Taylor, *the band's drummer about it. There is a very clear message in it. This is Freddie admitting that he is gay."*

The genre of this song is said to be that of rock Opera, and the only and first ever song made in this genre. It has a six-part structure, starting from an Intro, then followed by a ballad, a guitar solo, then it is followed by the most famous and extraordinary Opera part followed by the Hard rock and finally the outro.

Lesley Ann Jones mentions in her book that no one really knew what had ignited Freddie's imagination, which inspired him to create this song. She calls the song soaring and decadent,

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27

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

brimming with thinly-disguised personal agony and ecstasy, it was an impossible blend of baroque and ballad, of Music Hall and monster rock.

The song's second line says that, "*Caught in a landslide, no escape from reality*", this suggests again the inner conflict which he was going through, and how he was struggling in the closet. He is sorry to disappoint his family, and he says he didn't mean to make her cry. Mercury did put a lot of research into this song. He talks about a huge number of things, but with the right amount of information and goal. He talks about A "Scaramouche" is a deceitful clown character from the Italian commedia dell'arte.[28] The character usually wears an all-black outfit and can be portrayed as either clever or a buffoon. Scaramouche is also portrayed as a coward, thus he is frightened of thunderbolts and lighting. He then mentions the "fandango", which is a couple's dance that starts slowly and increases tempo. It originated in Spain, probably in the 18th century. Mercury is likely referring to "hemp fandango": a delightfully ghastly English slang term for being hung that derives from the thrashing of a hanged man's legs. His extensive research to create this masterpiece in the history of music is evident through the mention of Galilio and Figaro in the song. The most striking feature of this song is that it is full of parallels and contrasts. He mentions "Bismillah" and "Beelzebub" together, almost giving away the dichotomy between the two.

He then says to his old self that he can't leave him like this and he will get out and live his life. This song also carries a strong message of moving on, accepting life, and not giving up. This song has not only been an anthem for the LGBTQ community but also for soldiers worldwide. Oscar-winning lyricist Sir Tim Rice tells Lesley Ann Jones that, 'It's fairly obvious to me that this was Freddie's "*coming-out song*",' [29] .

Lesley Ann Jones very rightly and justifiably mentions in her Biography of Freddie Mercury that,

[28] It was an early form of Italian theatre.

[29]

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

'Yes, he was admitting his homosexuality to himself initially....but then, by default, to the rest of the world, because it was such a huge hit everywhere. " Mama, I just killed a man..." He's killed the old Freddie he was trying to be: the former image. " Put a gun against his head, pulled my trigger, now he's dead"- He's dead, the "straight" person he was originally." Mama, life had just begun, but now I've gone and thrown it all away..."I mean this is just my theory, but it does fit. He's shot and destroyed the man he was trying to be, and now this is him, trying to live with the new Freddie.it's very obscure, of course. But think about that middle bit: "I see a little silhouette of a man..." that's him, still being haunted by what he's done and what he is.". [30]

She suggests that this song was all about the two sides of Freddie accepting one another. One of my main arguments in this paper was that Freddie was living a dual life and it was hard for him to come out of the closet and accept himself. Well, this song justifies it all.
The song also talks about homosexual panic and trauma that Kosofsky had mentioned in her *Epistemology of the Closet* [31]which I have already mentioned in the previous chapter.

5. I want to Break Free.

"I want to break free
I want to break free
I want to break free from your lies
You're so self satisfied I don't need you
I've got to break free
God knows, God knows I want to break free

[30] Ibid
[31]

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

Jones, Lesley Ann. *The Definitive Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody.* Great Britain: Hodder, 2012.

Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

I've fallen in love
I've fallen in love for the first time
And this time I know it's for real
I've fallen in love, yeah
God knows, God knows I've fallen in love

It's strange but it's true, yeah
I can't get over the way you love me like you do
But I have to be sure
When I walk out that door
Oh, how I want to be free, baby
Oh, how I want to be free
Oh, how I want to break free

But life still goes on
I can't get used to living without, living without
Living without you by my side
I don't want to live alone, hey
God knows, got to make it on my own

So baby can't you see
I've got to break free
I've got to break free
I want to break free, yeah
I want, I want, I want, I want to break free"

This song was written by guitarist John Deacon around 1984. The most important feature of the song is not only the lyrics but also its music video. In this video, we find all the band members cross-dressed as a modern American household where Freddie is dressed as the domestic help of the house and is seen cleaning and dusting the room, and the others as the house-wife, grandmother, and a schoolgirl. The video can be interpreted and dissected in many ways and each one of them is equally important and justified. This concept was however proposed by Roger Taylor but was taken to a new extravagant from by definitely Freddie Mercury. The main idea of the song lies in its title. The first part and a few minutes of the video where all of them are dressed as a housewife , maid, and schoolgirl suggest that the daily household duty is not only the duties of a woman. The song and the video attack the patriarchy

from the roots and suggest that the common belief that it is only the duty of the woman of the house to clean the house and make sure they cook a meal for everybody is wrong. They attack, challenge and also satirize the common gender believes and notions through this song and suggests that even men can do it and it does not make them womanly or suggests that it is not only the duty of the woman to do so. Here, the women are tired of being treated as domestic help and want to break free and seek adventures outside the household.

The second part of the music video and the song lyrics is the romantic or the love theme part. The song says,

"*I've fallen in love*
I've fallen in love for the first time
And this time I know it's for real"

This suggests that Freddie admits that he is in love with a man, Jim Hutton and yes he is ready to and wants to break free from the closet and the society. The song, its lyrics and definitely the music video send a message for all the LGBT community, that is to break free from the societal norms, believes and suppression and accept themselves. He asks them to rebel and protest until they are free. He says that I have to be strong when I walk out the door and this is a message to the world and to himself that before you walk out of the closet be sure of yourself and be strong and do not give up. The music video the lyrics also suggest to break free from all religious superstitions and believes and blind faith

However, most importantly through the concept of crossdressing in the music video, he suggests that men can wear whatever they want and so can women . There is nothing called "men clothes" or "women clothes". He addresses the gender biases in this music video too.

6. ***Queen and Transvestism.***

"*Although the logic of anatomy might suggest otherwise, skirts are the traditional garb of women and pants the traditional garb of men---harem bloomers and kilts, the exceptions that*

prove the rule." –(Boston Globe Magazine, 1988) quotes Margorie Garber in her introduction to ***Vested Interests- Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety***[32]**.**

Garber also subtitles the introduction of her book as "Clothes make the Man". She begins the introduction to her essay about cross-dressing by bringing to the readers view how renowned newspapers for a long time have had several assumptions about clothing based on gender and without ground. Certain published articles in *Times* divided baby clothes according to gender and assigned colours. It is a predominant assumption as well as belief all across the world that the colour pink is associated with girls and blue with boys. This is an assumption without grounds and thus, also interferes with the way a person should dress from infancy itself. Garber boldly points out these beliefs and how gender is associated with not only color but also clothes. She concentrates her book ***Vested Interests- Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety***[33] on Cross-dressing and the cultural anxiety associated with it, as the title itself rightfully suggests. Garber in her book attempts to not only explore the nature but also the significance of the art of cross-dressing and the historical recurrent fascination towards it. Through the chapters of her book, she explores the relationship between cross-dressing and theatricality. She deconstructs the myth of how clothing constructs gender and gender differences. She talks about and explores deeply how transvestism affects career paths, hierarchical relations and calls for various misconceptions and perceptions. She also explores the role of cross-dressing in fashion, popular culture and in arts itself. She talks about various famous personalities who have practiced transvestism like David Bowie, Boy George, and Laury Anderson and several other prominent people in her book to explain the wide umbrella of transvestism.

Similarly, in my thesis, I shall explore the depths of transvestism and it's relation to the LGBTQ community widely revolving my dissertation around the legendary Freddie Mercury and his band Queen arguing how most of his songs had a "coming out of the closet" message. My research shall refer to not only Garber's book but also Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet*, Judith Butler's *Undoing Gender*[34] as well as Butler's *Bodies that Matter* all in relation and reference to Lesley Ann Jone's biography on Freddie Mercury, *Bohemian Rhapsody*.

32

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

33 ibid

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Lesley Ann Jones in her ***The Definite Biography of Freddie Mercury Bohemian Rhapsody*** gives us a detailed insight into this artist's life before and after he discovers he is homosexual and comes out of the closet. She shares very detailed information about Freddie's relationships and also delves deeper into the journey of his life through his songs. Lesley Ann Jones reveals how Freddie Mercury, the Lead singer of the American Rock Band Queen who was larger than life on stage was initially a "shy person in the closet". She dissects various shows, songs and interviews of Queen and reveals how Freddie spoke about himself and his sexuality and his relationship with other people in his songs. Jones very subtly also does away with several gender norms about Mercury and his life. Through this biography, we get to know not only how the world saw Freddie but also how Freddie saw himself. Mercury was known for his extravagant performances and how he dressed boldly often as barmaids and housewives in his music videos. Through the songs of Queen and their crossdressed music videos, they became a worldwide symbol for the LGBTQ protests. Songs like " I want to break free" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" became anthems for the transvestite community. Along with David Bowie, it was Freddie Mercury who took a stand for transvestite and homosexual artists in popular culture. However, the concept of cross-dressing is not something new. Cross-dressing has been practiced in many societies for several reasons since ancient times. With the evolution of time and knowledge, the Anglo-Saxon term "cross-dresser" was replaced by the modern term "transvestite". The term "Transvestism" however was not coined until the late 1990s. It was in 1910 that Magnus Hirschfeld had coined the term "transvestite" initially to refer and associate with the sexual interest and orientations in cross-dressing.

Mercury strongly deconstructed the association of clothing and gender through his songs. He completely shattered several patriarchal and misogynistic gender norms, especially with the help of his very famous song "I want to break free", where he was dressed as an American housewife. Mercury took transvestism and music as his ways of coming out of the closet and revealing his sexuality and taking a stand for all similar men. Critics and scholars have argued since time immemorial about gender and the various norms, prejudices and societal assumptions associated with it. Gender biases and cross-dressing are very closely related. Garber again in her book very closely studies the relationship between transvestism and gay identity and how it has evolved and developed through time. Garber mentions "The appeal of cross-dressing is clearly related to its status as a sign of the constructedness of gender categories. But the tendency on the part of many critics has been to look *through* rather than *at* the cross-dresser, to turn away from a closer encounter with the transvestite, and to want instead to subsume that figure within one of the two traditional genders. To elide and erase – or to *appropriate* the transvestite for particular political and critical aims." (Garber 1992) However,

Lesley Ann Jones in the Biography of Freddie Mercury does not do the mistake that critics like Gilbert and Gubar had done putting forward the idea of the third gender and this has been criticized by Margorie Garber in the above-mentioned lines. However, Jones not only looks at the cross-dresser Freddie but also at the human Freddie ? and his life. She nevertheless does not treat Freddie or see him through a "third gender lens", she extensively talks about Freddie realizing he is gay and having difficulty in accepting it and disclosing it to his girlfriend whom he loved more than anyone. Jones talks about the details of Freddie and Jim Hutton's relationship and how Freddie took time to accept his sexuality and face society, his fans, his family, his band members, and Mary. Garber had studied cross-dressing and its relation to queer theory, and Jones in her Biography of Freddie reflected it and proved it.

"His lyrics reflected his life", says Frank Allen of The Searchers. " Naturally a songwriter expresses his ethos and personality in his lyrics, and as Freddie became more comfortable with his sexuality, it gave him the freedom to open up to the world."[35] (Jones 2012)

7. Conclusion.

Freddie Mercury:The Musical Prostitute.

"*I'm just a musical prostitute my dear"*

- Freddie Mercury.

The most famous interview of Freddie Mercury was the one taken by Rudy Dolezal in Munich in 1984. The interview reveals a lot about Mercury and his songs. I shall talk about and elaborate further on some of the snippets of the interview.

" Rudi: *What's the fresh element that's now in the new tour?*

Freddie : *It's me, My costume*.

Rudi:*How would you describe yourself as an artist?*

35

Garber, Margorie. *Vested Inrterests - Cross-Dressing and cultural anxiety.* New York and London: Routledge, 1992.

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Sedgwick, and Eve Sedgwick Kosofsky. *Epistemology of the Closet.* University of California, 1990.

Freddie : *No my type is not an artist, I'm just a musical prostitute my dear."*

LGBT (or GLBT) (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) In use since the 1990s, the term is an adaptation of the initialism LGB, which was used to replace the term gay in reference to the LGBT community beginning in the mid-to-late 1980s. The LGBT issue has been one of the most controversial, spoken about, protested, supported and neglected the issue for a long time. The initialism has become adopted into the mainstream as an umbrella term for use when labeling topics pertaining to sexuality and gender identity. This issue has been widely represented through popular films, books, and music. Pop Music is one of the most important medium through which people were made aware of and open to this issue. Many bands and singers have chosen and written lyrics that echoed such issues and concerns.Thus, through my dissertation I tried to establish the point that, one of the most eminent bands is Queen, whose lead singer Freddie Mercury created a revolution through his songs.
When Freddie Mercury said in his famous song *I want to Break free* that :

"I want to break free from your lies
You're so self satisfied I don't need you
I've got to break free
God knows God knows I want to break free " ,

he subtly meant to break free not from the monotony of life but break free from the society, from his own body, identity and gender. Mercury explicitly talks about transvestism through this song. "All around the world people laughed and they got the joke and they sort of understood it," May himself told NPR Radio in 2010 talking about this song where Mercury featured dressed as a barmaid in the song's video. According to *An Introduction to the Subject of Transvestism or Femmiphilia (cross-dressing)*: transvestism serves the "need for adornment and personality expression". Mercury wanted to break free from all the mockery of society. He wanted the world to take the LGBTQ community and issues more seriously and he wanted to make a change through his lyrics. Instead of having a lovely wife, he again says, "I've fallen in love for the first time... it's strange but it's true", these lines clearly suggests how he realizes his own sexual orientation and is aware of his liking towards his friend Jim Hutton. He calls it "strange, but it's true" and thus, he wants to break free from this constant dilemma, fear, and lies. In the same song, he again says "But I have to be sure when I walk out that door". He knows he has to be brave and sure before he faces the world, Similarly, if we decode this song as well as most of Queen's songs there are messages and confessions of homosexuality,

homoeroticism, transvestism, misogynism, gender identities, prostitution, body identity, and several other issues. Mercury himself commented "People are used to hard rock, energy music from Queen, yet with this single you almost expect Noel Coward to sing it. It's one of those bowler hats, black suspender belt numbers – not that Coward would wear that... It's about a high-class call girl. I'm trying to say that classy people can be whores as well. That's what the song is about, though I'd prefer people to put their interpretation upon it – to read into it what they like."

Since a long-time Queen's songs have become an anthem for the "doomed youth", LGBTQ+ community and also have raged controversies and arguments amongst feminists.

Queen's *Fat Bottomed Girls* is a not so famous song, but it's lyrics if studied carefully and closely seems very misogynistic and definitely, body shames girls. The title of the song itself suggests that. Again if one analyses the lyrics of *Somebody to Love* which Mercury wrote after he left his wife confessing to her about his homosexuality and his relationship with his friend Jim, It suggests how he feels lonely and needs "Somebody to Love" because homosexuality was considered illegal and something that was to be kept private. Mercury not only speaks for himself but for the entire LGBTQ+ community. However, some of his songs do contain misogynistic comments.

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