# DEPRESSION IN FREDDIE MERCURY'S SONG LYRICS: "BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY", "SOMEBODY TO LOVE" AND "LOVE OF MY LIFE"

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#### Abstract

This research deals with Depression in Freddie Mercury's song lyrics. It is focused on the symptoms of depression implied in the song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Love of My Life", and "Somebody to Love". The objectives of the study are to find out the poetic devices in Freddie Mercury's song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Love of My Life", and "Somebody to Love" and to describe the depression symptoms portrayed in Freddie Mercury's song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Love of My Life", and "Somebody to Love". The theories used to analyse the data are Aaron T. Beck's depression and William Wordsworth's theory of poetry. Pragmatic approach and qualitative research design were applied in conducting the study. The techniques of data collection and analysis covered close reading and content analysis. Findings show that "Bohemian Rhapsody" makes use of hyperbole, metonymy, situational irony, antithesis, repetition, and allusion as poetic devices. The depression symptoms undergone by the speaker of the song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody" cover Low Self-Evaluation., Loss of Emotional Attachments, and Negative Feelings toward Self. The second song lyrics entitled "Someone to Love" employ repetition, hyperbole, and personification. The speaker of the song lyrics suffers from Reduction in Gratification. The song lyrics entitled "Love of My Life" make use of hyperbole, repetition, personification, and symbol as the poetic devices. The character 'I', in the song lyrics, suffer from Dejected Mood.

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

Music is part of human being's life. People love music because sometimes it represents their feeling and emotion. Moreover, by listening to or resding song lyrics, people can get both enjoyment as well as moral lesson. Song lyric can be considere as literary work because it belonges to one of the forms of poetry. One of the facts of the seriousness of perception a literary work must fulfill is that literary should be able to portray the life human beings live in as it is stated by Hudson (1960: 10) in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* that, "Literature is the expression of the life through the medium of language. It can be regarded as something essential since it contains real life".

Considering the two requirements of literary works as Hudson stated it, the thesis writer conducts a research aimed to seek out the portrayal of life in a literary work. Song lyrics as one of the poetry forms is chosen to be the source of data because Herbert

Kohl (1999: 4) stated, in The Grain of Poetry, that "Poetry speaks more intimately, wildly, and provocatively than the manners of ordinary conversation allow." Freddie Mercury's song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Love of My Life", and "Somebody to Love" are chosen because Freddie mercury is a legend having plenty of achievements. Secondly, the three song lyrics imply an interesting topic to analysie, that is depression. It is significant to discuss depression because depression is a common mental disorder. Globally, more than 300 million people of all ages suffer from depression. Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide, and is a major contributor to the overall global burden of disease. (WHO, 2018). This research aims to find out the poetic

devices and to describe depression symptoms portrayed in Freddie Mercury's "Bohemian Rhapsody", "Love of My Life", and "Somebody to Love".

The critical approaches used cover psychological approach as stated by Rohrberger and Woods (1971: 13), that "the psychological approach involves the effort to locate and demonstrate certain recurrent pattern human psychology. This approach tries to find the human psychology such as human personality as well as psychological problems faced by human beings portrayed in the literary work."

The next approach is pragmatic approach as Abrams (1971: 15) stated "There is, of course, the greatest variance in emphasis and detail, but the central tendency of the pragmatic critic is to conceive a poem as something made in order to effect requisite responses in its readers." Wordsworth's theory of poetry mostly written in the Preface of Wordsworth's poem collection book entitle *Lyrical Ballads* published in 1798 is used to analyze the topic. The theory of depression proposed by Aaron T. Beck is used to identify the depression symptoms in the song lyrics.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research approach was applied in analyzing the topic as stated by Neuman (2007:89) that "Qualitative researchers use a language of cases and contexts, examine social processes and case in their social context, and look at interpretations or the creations of meaning in specific settings. Instead of trying to convert into variables or numbers. Qualitative data are empirical. They involve documenting real events, recording what people say (with words, gestures, and tones), observing specific behavior, studying written documents, or examining visual images."

Intrinsic and extrinsic approaches were also

used as stated by Alex Thomson (2007) that "An intrinsic approach to literature focuses on the work of art as an autonomous artifact; an extrinsic approach seeks to explain particular works, or the development of series of works, in relation to social, political or historical events."

Close reading was used as the technique of data collecting as Klarer (2004:

110) stated, "A central term often used synonymously with new criticism is close reading. It denotes the meticulous analysis of these elementary features, which mirror larger structures of a text".

Content analysis is used as technique of data analysis as Krippendorff (2004:

18) explained, "Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use".

### 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 3.1 Poetic Devices used in the Song Lyrics

From the data shown in table 1, it can reveal that poetic devices are used in the song lyrics.

Table 1. Poetic Devices used in "Bohemian Rhapsody"

No	Lyrics	Poetic Devices	Description
1	Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?	Hyperbole	The two lines imply hyperbolic expression in which the speaker is asking himself whether his existence is real or just fantasy, The fact is that certainly the speaker is still alive since he is still able to ask the question and because he is alive then his life is real.
2	Caught in a landslide,  no escape from reality	Hyperbole	The line contains hyperbole because there is exaggeration in the meaning of the sentence 'no escape from reality. The fact is that there is no way a person cannot escape from the reality.

						Repetit	tion
3	Mama, life had just begun But now I've gone and thrown it all	Hyperbole	lyrics. Hyper gone and throthat the speak	bole own i er ha	tic devices employers used in the sentent all away' instead on surined his life, the at at the at th	ce 'I've f saying speaker	
	away	Situational Irony	Thersituation line in which the speaker he chapseaterliv him. It is iron	shows when phasi as to anthe	only is portraced in the life has just begate it. He does not the life ghan just charology and more obvious the same obvious	these to gun then theve a egun for	
4	I'm just a poor boy,  I need no sympathy	Antithesis	The first hyperbola is used in a sentence rallel structure position less that sentence contains the meaning of being poor which normally need help open lens; eager to be the opposite to the common fact that is uneagerneed to be helped.				
5	Gotta leave you all behind and face the truth	Euphemism	The verb sphi use devices phi expressions considered an suggest some refers to son unpleasant ne the spaaker of terrible conse	of maser state of the state of	Haing the of those of factors to making the order to making and esperately paties; of the canter to can be perceived to the canter to the content to the canter the content to the canter t	atics the indirect phrases which heetsuth' hide its left that	
6	Carry on, carry on as if nothing really matters	Simile	but helps accentuate an emotion. The The use of 'as if' also indicates that simile is used as poetion device. The specific devices ople to carry on their affeir opsoliky there is nothing happens.  seen in the presented table 1.		The simile is ices ople		
		Repetition	Repetition is The verb phr an idea cleare	used ase 'c usenc	as poetic device in the data dealing with carry on is repeated a limportine deviced in the limportine deviced in the song lyrics under the limportine deviced in the limportin	the	
7	I sometimes wish I'd never been born at all	Situational Irony	The situation which it seem with is just no	anves as that the factor	my is semployed in the what the speaker ha allowing the pect, it is the speaker cann	at line in s to deal It	
8	I'm just a poor boy and nobody loves me  He's just a poor boy from a poor family	Hyperbole	The speaker nobody cares though he is	exag abou poor t	ggerates the condition that the condition of the conditio	ion that nat even one who	

Rep The ide the

No	Lyrics		Poetic Device	Description
1	morning I get	little	Hyperbole	The two lines imply hyperbolic expression in which the speaker is stating that he dies a little. Moreover, he is also saying that he cannot stand on his feet. Those are exaggeration. The fact is that he is still alive and he is in healthy condition because he is still able to do his work
2	Somebody (s	som	Repetition	Repetition is used as poetic
	ebody) ooh			device in
	_	ome		those
	body			lines.
				The
				word

	(somebody)		'somebody' is
	Can anybody		repeated to to
	find me		make an idea
	somebody to		clearer and more
	love?		memorable.
3	'Til the tears	Personification	Personification
	run down		is used as poetic
	from my		device in that
	eyes		line. As a literary
	·		device,
			personification
			is the projection
			of characteristics
			that normally
			belong only to
			humans onto
			inanimate
			objects, animals,
			deities, or forces
			of nature. These
			characteristics
			can include
			verbs of actions
			that only humans
			do or adjectives
			that describe a
			human
			condition. The

		speaker personifies tears as human being who is capable of running.
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(Source: Primary Data)

The lines "Ooh, each morning I get up I die a little" and "Can barely stand on my feet First thing in the morning" show the use of hyperbole as the poetic device. The two lines imply hyperbolic expression in which the speaker is stating that he dies a little. Moreover he is also saying that he cannot stand on Those his feet. are exaggeration. The fact is that he is still alive and he is in healthy condition because he is still able to do his work.

Repetition is also used as the poetic device for the two last lines of the first stanza. Repetition is used as poetic device in those lines. The word 'somebody' is repeated to to make an idea clearer and more memorable. The repetition that the shows speaker desperately needs a person to love. Based on the speaker's feeling portrayed by the song lyrics, it is apparent that that the speaker is lonely and desperate.

Personification is used when the speaker says, "'Til the tears run down from my eyes". The speaker personifies tears as human being who is capable of running.

The following table 3 shows poetic devices used in the third song lyrics entitled

"Love of My Life"

The line "Bring it back, bring it back, don't take it away from me" employs two poetic devices at once. The speaker uses personification to express his meaning. He personifies the feeling of love as a person who can be brought back. Repetition is also used as poetic device. The verb phrases 'bring it back'

1	Bring it back, bring it back, don't take it away from me Because you don't know what it means to me	Personification	The speaker tises personification to express his meanicanile, nersonifies the feeling of love as a person who can be followed by that the speaker intends to show to the readers or listeners. Moreover, the speaker
		Repetition	needs a help very much to bring Repetition is also used as poetic his love of his life back 'bring it back' is repeated to emphasize the meaning
		Carrella al	3.1 Depression Syndromes Implied in the
		Symbol	symbol, yrigs poetic device, is employed also in that line. The pronoun 'it' that refers to the word
			'love' symbolizes 'someone I Is this Increased A person's precious.  Dependenc desire to have
2	Hurry back, hurry back, please bring it back home to me	Repetition	Repetition is used.  Phrasia? Iverb 'hurry baim of her, to receive instruction and
			It is facture create rhythm affer bringinge, is attention to an idea stronger
: Primary Data)			Indecisiven Difficulty in
1	Dagad on what the smaller		ess making decisions.

(Source:

Based on what the speaker says through the song lyrics, the thesis writer concludes that the character 'I' in the song lyrics feel lonely and desperate from the very beginning. He is longing for his "Love of My Life". He desperately needs the love of his lifetime. The dominant poetic device used in the song lyrics entitled "Love of My Life" is repetition.

an idea	Subliger
Indecisiven	Difficulty in
ess	making
	decisions,
	vacillating
	between
	alternatives, and
	changing
	decisions are
	depressive
	characteristics
	that are usually
	quite vexing to
	the
	patient's family
	and friends as
	well as to the
	patient
Negative	Viewing the
Expectatio	future as black
ns.	and hopeless
	ess  Negative Expectatio

П			
e, es fro re 3 M lift ju be Bu I'v go an the	gun ut now we one	Negative Feelings toward Self	Patients state that they feel disappointed in themselves
av 4 I'n ju po bo ne no	vay n st a por by, I sed mpat	Low Self-Evaluation	Self-devaluation is apparently part of     depressed     patients' pattern of viewing themselves as deficient in those attributes that are specifically important to them: ability, performance, intelligence,     health,     strength, personal     attractive ness, popularity,  or
4 G	otta	Loss of E motional Attachme nts	financial resources.  The loss of interest or of positive feeling may progress to indifference.  Viewing the
lea yo be	ave ou all shind d face e truth	Expectatio ns	future as black and hopeless

A	Carry	Negative	Patients state that
	•	reguire	they feel
	<i>'</i>	Feelings	disappointed in
	•		themselves
			themserves
	_	Self	
	-		
7		Withdrawa	The wish to
1	-		avoid or escape
		1 ** 1511C5	is
	11100		manifested i
			n
			marked
			seclusiveness).
	0 0 0 0 11		sectusiveness).
	0 0 1 1 1		
8		Low Self-	Self-devaluation
Ì	-		is apparently
	_		part of
			depressed
	-		patients'
	10 / 02		pattern of
			viewing
			themselves as
	boy		deficient in
	-		those attributes
			that
	8	a poor boy and nobody loves me He's just a poor	on, carry on as if nothing really matters  I Withdrawa l Wishes mes wish I'd never been born at all  I'm just a poor boy and nobody loves me He's just a poor

from a	are specifically
poor	important to
family	them: ability,
	performance,
	intelligence, health,
	strengt
	h, personal
	attracti
	veness,
	popularity, or
	finan
	cial resources.

(Source: Primary Data)

When the speaker says 'Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?, he just cannot think whether the life he is living in is real or just fantasy. He is asking that question, and by asking, it means that he needs someone to help him answering his doubt. In this case, the speaker is undergoing one of the depression symptoms that is Increased Dependency. The term dependency is used here to

designate the desire to receive help, guidance, or direction.

Another symptom undergone by the speaker is Indecisiveness. Difficulty in making decisions, vacillating between alternatives, and changing decisions are depressive characteristics that are usually quite vexing to the patient's family and friends as well as to the patient. The speaker of the song lyrics finds difficulty to decide whether his life is the reality or fantasy.

The lines "Caught in a landslide, no escape from reality" indicate a depression symptom called Negative Expectations. A gloomy outlook and pessimism are closely related to the feelings of hopelessness. The speaker states he will never get over his troubles and that things cannot get better. He believes none of his problems can be solved. The character 'I' undergoes a symptom of Low Self-Evaluation. The line 'I'm just a poor boy (poor boy)' implies it. Low self-esteem is a characteristic feature of depression. Self-devaluation is apparently part of depressed person's pattern of viewing himself as deficient in those attributes that are specifically important to them: ability, performance, intelligence, health, strength, personal attractiveness, popularity, or financial resourcesIt is just like the character 'I' who states, "I'm just a poor boy (poor boy). The use of repetition as poetic device indicates that the speaker want to emphasize the meaning as a worthless person.

The line "I need no sympathy" indicates that the speaker of the song lyrics undergoes the symptom called Loss of Emotional Attachments. Loss of emotional involvement in other people or activities usually accompanies loss of satisfaction. This is manifested by a decline in interest in particular activities or in affection or concern for other persons. It is just like what the speaker of the song lyrics feels. He does not need anyone's sympathy.

The lines "Mama, life had just begun, But now I've gone and thrown it all away" indicate that the speaker is suffering from depression symptom named Negative Feelings toward Self. Depressed person often expresses negative feelings about himself. The depressed person appears to distinguish feelings of dislike for himself such as "I am worthless.". By stating that line, the speaker considers himself a looser. He expresses his self-dislike feeling by saying that line.

The line 'Gotta leave you all behind and face the truth' indicates that the speaker undergoes negative expectation negative expectation. A depressed person tends to expect a negative outcome in ambiguous or equivocal situations. They regard the future as unpromising and state they have nothing to which to look forward.

The line "Sometimes wish I'd never been born at all' indicates that the speaker also undergoes Beck's depression symptom named withdrawal wishes. A depressed person feels a strong desire to end their life as a way of escaping from a situation they regard as intolerable. It is true that the speaker in the song lyrics does not want to end his life, but by saying that he had never been born implies that he regrets for being alive and he wishes he had never been alive. It is a withdrawal wish.

The character 'I' also undergoes a symptom of Low Self-Evaluation. The line 'I'm just a poor boy (poor boy) implies it. Low self-esteem is a characteristic feature of depression. Self-devaluation is apparently part of depressed person's pattern of viewing himself as deficient in those attributes that are specifically important to them:, personal attractiveness, popularity, or financial resources.

The following table shows the depression syndromes implied in the song lyrics entitled "Somebody to Love"

Table 5. Depression Symptoms in "Somebody to Love"

N	Lyrics	Depression	Description
o		Symptons	
1	Ooh,	Dejected Mood	Persons who
			are in
	each		depressed may
	morning I		use this
	get up I die		adjective
	a		to designate
	little		feelings of
	Can barely		loneliness,
	stand on my		boredom, or
	feet		discourageme
			nt
2	Somebody	Increased	A person's
	(somebody)	Dependenc	desire to have
		у	things done
	ooh		for him or her,
	somebody		to receive
	(somebody)		instruction
	Can anybody		and
	find me		reassurance,
	somebody to		is stronger

"Ooh, each morning I get up I die a little, can barely stand on my feet", he is undergoing of what Beck said as Dejected Mood. The feeling of boredom or discouragement indicates it. The speaker feels that he dies a little whenever he gets up in the morning.

The repeated calling for help made by the speaker when he says "Someone" indicates that the character "I" is undergoing depression symptom named Increased Dependency. This symptom is indicated by a person's desire to have things done for him or her, to receive instruction and reassurance, is stronger. Here, the speaker of the lyrics keeps on calling help from someone.

Depression symptom undergone by the speaker of the song lyric is called Crying Spells. There is an increased tendency to weep or cry. The lines indicating that symptom are '(Take a look at yourself) Take a look in the mirror and cry (and cry)' and ''Til the tears run down from my eyes'. There is an increase tendency of crying undergoing by the speaker. By only looking his face on the mirror is enough to make him cry.

Referring to Beck's depression symptom, the speaker of the song lyrics undergoes a depression symptom named Dejected Mood. Among the adjectives used by depressed person in answer to the question

	love?		"How do you feel?" are miserable,
3	'Til the tears run down from my eyes	Crying Spells	The hope less increased tendency to weaph appy, or cry. Stimuli or situations that would ordinarily not affect the patient may now replicit dealers by the speaker of the song
	(Source: Primary Da	ta)	1

lyrics. He feels sad and downhearted because of longing for his love of his life.

Another depression symptom undergone by the character 'I' is Increased Dependency. The term dependency is used here to designate the desire to receive help or guidance. The dependent desire does not seem to be simply a by-product of the feelings of helplessness and inadequacy. The depressed person feels a craving for help. The repeated phrasal verb 'hurry back' indicates that the speaker needs help very much. In the song lyrics, the speaker needs help to bring his lover back to him.

#### 3. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After conducting data analysis, the thesis writer draws his conclusion based on the research findings. Referring to the first research question, the poetic devices used to convey the meaning of the song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody" hyperbole, metonymy, situational irony antithesis, repetition, and allusion. The second song lyrics entitled 'Someone to Love' employs repetition, hyperbole, and personification. The third song lyrics entitled "Love of My Life" makes use of hyperbole, repetition, personification, and symbol as the poetic devices. The dominant poetic devices used by the three song lyrics are hyperbole and repetition. By finding out the poetic devices used in the song lyrics, it is easier for the thesis writer to grasp the meaning of the song lyrics so that the second statement od the problem can be answered.

Based on the meanings of the song lyrics that are strengthened by the use of poetic devices, the thesis writer finds out that the depression symptoms are portrayed by the use of poetic devices in the song lyrics. There are several depression symptoms undergone by the speaker of the song lyrics. Those symptoms are based on the depression symptoms proposed by Aaron T Beck. The depression symptom undergone by the speaker of the song lyrics entitled "Bohemian Rhapsody" cover Low Self-Evaluation., Loss of Emotional Attachments, and Negative Feelings toward Self.

The speaker of the song lyrics entitled "Someone to Love" suffers from Dejected Mood, Increased Dependency, and Crying Spells.

In the last song lyrics entitled "Love of My Life". The character 'I' suffers from Increased Dependency and Dejected Mood

After conducting analysis and finding out the results of the research, the thesis writer would like to present some suggestions to the readers of this thesis. For the students of Faculty of Letters both English and Japanese departments, the thesis writer suggests that after reading this thesis, the fellow students will be eager to conduct further research on song lyrics to better the findings of this research and to enrich the research on song lyrics.

For the common readers, the thesis writer suggests this thesis as a guidance of how to enjoy songs by following the steps of analysis, the thesis writer suggests the readers to do the same whenever they listen to songs of any genre. After reading this thesis, at least the readers can think of the way of not only enjoying the rhythm of the music but also getting moral lesson from the song lyrics.

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