

# rami malek on playing freddie mercury

NPR did a [nice interview](#) with Rami Malek about his work on the role of Freddie Mercury in Bohemian Rhapsody. I particularly like this bit:

*Malek speculates that the singer's showmanship sprung from a desire to find his place in the world. Born in Zanzibar as Farrokh Bulsara, Mercury had buck teeth and was called "Bucky" by most of the kids at the boarding school he attended in India. When Mercury returned to Zanzibar after boarding school, the country was in the midst of a revolution and his family had to immigrate to London. "At that point, trying to identify himself, [he] feels like a fish out of water," Malek says.*

*But in front of a crowd, it was a different story: "When [Mercury] gets out on the stage, he holds everyone's attention and says, 'Hey, I may have been an outcast and a misfit, and I may feel like I don't belong, but here on this stage, we belong together,'" Malek says. "It is the most beautiful thing to see realized."*

You see what he did there? He identified a couple of gaping wounds from Mercury's past (having buck teeth and being teased for it, having to immigrate to London as a young adult and feeling like a fish out of water) that produces a need (for belonging) that he as the actor can pursue throughout the film. This is exactly how we break things down in class: we look at the character's past to identify moments or periods of profound loss (which we call **gashes** or **tumors**, respectively), and also moments of triumph or completeness (which we call **trophy moments**), and then try to articulate what the **need** is that arises from those past events. In this way, we find a

need that can be pursued under all circumstances, which we call the **underlying objective**. Then the question arises, with regard to a particular scene: how can this underlying objective be productively **pursued** in the situation of the scene?

No wonder Malek was so good!

□