

**EMPOWERED VOICES: A FEMINIST DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF SELF-LOVE AND CONFIDENCE IN SELENA GOMEZ'S "WHO SAYS"**

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Abstrak

Musik populer sering menjadi ruang halus tempat emosi dan ideologi saling berkelindan. Dalam lagu "Who Says" oleh Selena Gomez, kerapuhan lirikal berubah menjadi ketahanan, menciptakan suatu wacana di mana suara perempuan merebut kembali nilainya. Dalam konteks ini, lagu tersebut berfungsi sebagai medium artikulasi-diri feminis yang menegosiasikan batas antara keraguan-diri dan pemberdayaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji bagaimana lirik Gomez membangun cinta-diri dan kepercayaan-diri sebagai bentuk agensi feminis melalui strategi diskursif. Berpedoman pada Analisis Wacana Kritis Feminis (Lazar, 2020, 2023), didukung konsep cinta-diri hooks (2000) sebagai resistensi politik, serta mengacu pandangan Butler (2022) tentang subjektivitas performatif dan teori Gill (2021, 2023) mengenai budaya kepercayaan-diri dan afek pascafeminis, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan teks kualitatif. Analisis mengidentifikasi tiga pola diskursif: pengulangan sebagai resistensi, pergeseran kata ganti sebagai identitas kolektif, dan pertanyaan retorik sebagai pemberdayaan. Temuan mengungkap bahwa pengulangan mereklamasi suara harga-diri, pergeseran kata ganti mengaburkan batas antara diri individu dan kolektif, sementara pertanyaan retorik menggoyahkan otoritas patriarki. Pola-pola ini mengubah lirik pop menjadi aksi redefinisi feminis. Pada akhirnya, "Who Says" hadir sebagai manifesto lirik cinta-diri yang mengubah bahasa keraguan menjadi afirmasi, serta mendefinisikan ulang agensi sebagai hak untuk eksis secara indah dan tanpa permintaan maaf.

Kata Kunci: agency, discourse, empowerment, feminism, music, self-love

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Abstract

Popular music often serves as a subtle site where emotion and ideology intertwine. In Selena Gomez's "Who Says," lyrical vulnerability transforms into resilience, crafting a discourse where the female voice reclaims its worth. Within this context, the song operates as a medium of feminist self-articulation that negotiates the boundaries between self-doubt and empowerment. This study aims to examine how Gomez's lyrics construct self-love and confidence as feminist agency through discursive strategies. Guided by Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (Lazar, 2020, 2023), supported by hooks' (2000) notion of self-love as political resistance, and informed by Butler's (2022) view of performative subjectivity and Gill's (2021, 2023) theorization of confidence culture and postfeminist affect, the study employs a qualitative textual approach. The analysis identifies three discursive patterns: repetition as resistance, pronoun shifts as collective identity, and rhetorical questioning as empowerment. Findings reveal that repetition reclaims the voice of self-worth, pronoun shifts dissolve the line between the individual and collective self, and rhetorical questions destabilize patriarchal authority. These patterns turn pop lyricism into an act of feminist redefinition. Ultimately, "Who Says" emerges as a lyrical manifesto of self-love—transforming the language of insecurity into affirmation and redefining agency as the right to exist beautifully and unapologetically.

Keywords: agency, discourse, empowerment, feminism, music, self-love

PENDAHULUAN

In the shimmering world of popular music, the female voice has always been both an expression and a battleground, a place where selfhood is performed, negotiated, and, at times, reclaimed. Within the glittering surfaces of melody and rhythm, there pulses an urgent question of who gets to speak and how she is heard. In an era saturated with images of perfection and filtered ideals of beauty, the act of a woman declaring “Who says you’re not perfect?” becomes more than lyrical repetition; it becomes resistance. Selena Gomez’s 2011 song “Who Says” stands as a resonant articulation of self-love and confidence, a lyrical response to the culture of insecurity and scrutiny that shapes the feminine subject in contemporary media landscapes.

Popular music has long functioned as a site of cultural negotiation where gender, identity, and power are dynamically performed. As Brüstle (2023) observes, discourses surrounding gender in musical spaces often reflect systemic criticism embedded within cultural and institutional structures. Music thus becomes a field where patriarchal and neoliberal ideologies intersect with aesthetic practices, shaping how women’s voices are framed and consumed. In this context, Gomez’s song can be read as a sonic rebellion, a tender yet defiant assertion of worth that challenges the commodification of female insecurity. “Who Says” speaks not from rage but from reclamation, transforming vulnerability into a radical affirmation of self.

To understand the significance of “Who Says,” one must locate it within the broader theoretical framework of feminist critical discourse. Cooky (2006) explains that media representations of women often oscillate between empowerment and constraint, where femininity is simultaneously celebrated and disciplined. Within such paradoxes, feminist discourse analysis offers a critical lens for examining how language constructs and resists gendered power. This study adopts that lens to trace how Gomez’s lyrical choices and discursive tone create a narrative of empowerment that refuses external validation. The song’s repeated invocation of “Who says” functions rhetorically to invert social surveillance, transforming judgment into inquiry and shame into self-possession.

Selena Gomez’s “Who Says” emerged during a transitional moment in both her career and the larger discourse on digital femininity. As Thelandersson (2022a) discusses, the figure of

the “super can-do girl” in celebrity culture embodies a blend of resilience and performative vulnerability, a paradox that both challenges and reinforces neoliberal ideals of selfhood. Gomez, often framed as the “good girl” of pop, subverts this narrative through her lyrical insistence on self-definition. Rather than chasing validation through desirability, she invites listeners, particularly young women to embrace imperfection as a site of power. The soft instrumentation and confessional tone become extensions of feminist articulation, asserting that empowerment can be gentle and still unyielding.

While previous feminist readings of pop music have explored themes of sexuality, objectification, and resistance (Greer, 2025), limited attention has been given to self-love as discourse within the framework of everyday digital femininity. Most studies focus on overtly sexual or controversial texts, such as “Blurred Lines” or “Baby It’s Cold Outside,” which foreground male desire and gender conflict. In contrast, Gomez’s “Who Says” foregrounds emotional authenticity and psychological resilience forms of empowerment often dismissed as “soft” or apolitical. This research seeks to fill that critical gap by situating self-love and confidence as active political gestures in the feminist linguistic landscape of pop.

This study employs Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) as articulated by Cooky (2006), emphasizing how linguistic and textual structures reflect and challenge power hierarchies. By analyzing the lyrics of “Who Says,” this method reveals how Gomez’s discourse redefines normative femininity through the interplay of negation (“Who says I’m not worth it?”) and affirmation (“I’m no beauty queen, I’m just beautiful me”). Each rhetorical move performs an ideological shift from externally imposed value systems to intrinsic self-recognition. FCDA allows the researcher to connect micro-level linguistic features (repetition, pronouns, rhetorical questions) with macro-level feminist concerns (representation, selfhood, and resistance).

Thelandersson (2022b) identifies a growing cultural phenomenon she terms “sad girl culture,” where women publicly express pain as a strategy of connection and survival. In this affective economy, vulnerability becomes performative yet empowering, a reclaiming of the right to feel. Gomez’s lyrical narrative aligns with this trend while subtly reconfiguring it: instead of romanticizing sadness, she redefines it

through self-love and affirmation. When read through Brüstle's (2023) view of gendered criticism and Cooky's (2006) model of discourse, Gomez's song becomes an act of cultural intervention. It dismantles the silencing mechanisms of media judgment by transforming the female voice into a site of agency. Through the affective intimacy of pop music, Gomez bridges the personal and the political, embodying what feminist scholarship identifies as the micro-resistance of everyday life.

Ultimately, this study contributes to the growing field of feminist discourse and popular culture studies by framing self-love not as an individualist slogan but as a collective form of resistance. Greer (2025) notes that songs often mirror social ideologies while simultaneously creating spaces for reinterpretation. Within that interpretive space, "Who Says" becomes a participatory act: each listener who sings along reclaims a fragment of their own voice. The song's enduring appeal among young audiences demonstrates how feminist discourse circulates affectively, not only through academic theorizing but through rhythm, tone, and repetition, the emotional architectures of song.

In centering "Who Says," this research proposes that empowerment in popular music can emerge from emotional sincerity rather than spectacle, from self-acceptance rather than rebellion. The feminist project, then, is not merely to critique but to listen, to hear how the female voice reconfigures its boundaries through melody and meaning. By reading Gomez's song through feminist critical discourse analysis, this study highlights the intricate balance between vulnerability and power, emotion and articulation. The act of saying "Who says?" is, after all, both question and challenge an invitation to rethink the conditions under which a woman's voice becomes her own.

METODE

This research employs a descriptive qualitative design because it seeks to interpret meanings, not to quantify them. Meaning, as Fairclough (2021) reminds, is not a static entity but a process of negotiation embedded within power, emotion, and culture. The purpose of this study is to explore how Selena Gomez's "Who Says" articulates self-love and confidence as forms of female agency through discourse. The study rests on the premise that language especially in the lyrical form becomes a space where women reclaim their voice and challenge

social norms. As Braun and Clarke (2021) suggest, qualitative inquiry allows researchers to read beneath the textual surface, uncovering the emotional, ideological, and relational layers that construct subjectivity. Thus, the song is treated as both a cultural and affective text, where the discourse of empowerment is linguistically and symbolically woven.

The framework guiding this analysis is Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), a method that integrates linguistic scrutiny with feminist theory to reveal how gendered power operates within texts (Lazar, 2020). FCDA does not merely analyze "what is said" but also questions "how it is said," and more importantly, "why it is said that way." It recognizes discourse as a social practice where meaning is shaped by the intersections of ideology, identity, and power. Within this framework, "Who Says" is read as an empowering dialogue between self and society, where the lyrical persona resists imposed ideals of beauty and perfection. The song becomes a microcosm of the broader feminist struggle transforming vulnerability into strength, and self-doubt into affirmation.

The unit of analysis in this study is the entire set of lyrical lines from "Who Says." Each lyric is examined as a discrete expression of voice, resistance, or affirmation. The lyrics were obtained from verified sources such as Genius and Spotify to ensure textual accuracy. Beyond textual data, the study also references credible secondary materials including interviews, commentaries, and academic discussions surrounding Gomez's artistry and feminist representations in popular music. These sources provide socio-cultural context that situates the song within broader discourses of body politics, self-worth, and digital feminism.

The analytical process follows the principles of feminist discourse analysis as outlined by Lazar (2020) and Sunderland (2023), involving three interpretive stages. First, textual analysis identifies keywords, metaphors, and linguistic patterns that signify power, negation, or affirmation. For example, expressions like "Who says you're not beautiful?" which destabilize hegemonic standards. Second, interdiscursive mapping traces how these linguistic features interact with broader cultural narratives of female self-image and autonomy, drawing connections to digital self-expression and celebrity culture (Gill, 2021). Third, interpretive synthesis integrates these findings to articulate how the song's discourse functions as feminist resistance,

transforming mainstream pop into a platform of self-affirmation.

The analysis is conducted through document analysis, following Bowen's (2020) systematic method of coding and categorizing textual meanings. Each lyrical segment is coded according to thematic clusters such as self-doubt, affirmation, validation, and agency. Through iterative reading, these codes are refined into two overarching discursive domains: the internal voice of insecurity and the external voice of empowerment. The interpretive process involves tracing the shift between these domains how the song moves from questioning to self-assurance, mirroring a feminist journey from silence to articulation.

To maintain analytical rigor, this study adopts triangulation through theoretical and reflexive strategies. The theoretical triangulation integrates FCDA with perspectives from media feminism (Ringrose & Coleman, 2022) and psychology of self-compassion (Neff & Germer, 2020), enabling a multi-layered interpretation of agency. Reflexive triangulation, following Tracy's (2020) model, involves the researcher's continuous self-awareness to minimize interpretive bias and remain grounded in textual evidence. This reflexivity is particularly vital in feminist research, where the analyst's own position shapes the reading of gendered discourse.

Finally, this study acknowledges that songs like "Who Says" are not mere artistic artifacts but discursive events that circulate within the affective economies of modern media. They shape and are shaped by audiences who engage emotionally and ideologically with the message of empowerment. Through FCDA, the study reveals how Gomez's lyrical discourse dismantles patriarchal constructions of worth and reclaims the right to self-definition. The act of saying "Who says you're not perfect?" becomes both a question and an assertion a reclaiming of language as agency, echoing Butler's (2022) idea that speech itself is a form of embodied power.

In essence, this methodological framework enables the study to interpret "Who Says" as a text where discourse and empowerment converge. The interpretive journey moves from textual surface to ideological depth, uncovering how the song reframes self-love not as narcissism but as ethical resistance. Through systematic analysis, feminist reflexivity, and critical awareness, this research reaffirms that language in its poetic and affective power remains a

profound site for reimagining what it means to be a woman who speaks, sings, and believes in her worth.

HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

The lyrical terrain of "Who Says" unfolds as a gentle rebellion as a dialogue between insecurity and affirmation. Through repetition, pronoun shifts, and rhetorical questioning, Selena Gomez constructs a discourse that transforms self-doubt into self-recognition. The analysis reveals that empowerment in this song does not roar; it resonates softly through language, allowing confidence and self-love to emerge as feminist acts of voice, resistance, and redefinition.

Discursive Pattern 1: Repetition as Resistance **Data 1: "I wouldn't wanna be anybody else"** *(repeated opening and theme)*

The line "I wouldn't wanna be anybody else" emerges as both declaration and defiance. Its repetition across the song solidifies a linguistic stance against conformity and external judgment. In feminist discourse, reiteration operates not merely as emphasis but as reclamation a deliberate act of voicing the self within a culture that constantly instructs women to become someone else. Gomez's repetition performs a subtle resistance to internalized insecurity; by restating her refusal to change, she transforms a fragile affirmation into a resilient truth. The phrase evolves from a personal whisper to a communal anthem, echoing through each recurrence with greater certainty. Linguistically, this repetition dismantles the notion of lack and replaces it with sufficiency. Poetic in its simplicity, the line becomes a mantra of self-acceptance where repetition is not redundancy, but revolution, affirming that identity, once owned, needs no external validation to exist.

Data 2: "Who says, who says you're not perfect? / Who says you're not worth it? / Who says you're the only one that's hurting?" *(chorus repetition)*

In the chorus, the iterative questioning "Who says" reverberates as both resistance and reclamation. The repetition of this phrase dismantles authoritative voices that define beauty, value, and perfection through external gaze. By refusing to name the oppressor, Gomez universalizes the act of defiance, that is transforming critique into collective empowerment. Each repetition functions as a lyrical shield, pushing back against a discourse of

inadequacy imposed upon women by patriarchal norms. The rhetorical cadence of “Who says” becomes a feminist refrain that destabilizes power by interrogating its source. It invites listeners, particularly women, to question the unseen systems that dictate their self-worth. Through rhythmic insistence, the repetition transfigures self-doubt into solidarity, turning pain into performance, and performance into protest. Thus, the chorus becomes not only a melody of resistance but an anthem of radical self-love.

These recurring phrases act as rhythmic assertions of defiance and affirmation. Within their repetition unfolds a deliberate discursive strategy—one that reclaims voice through echo and insistence. Gomez employs reiteration not merely as a musical device but as a performative act of resistance, transforming vulnerability into agency. Each “who says” destabilizes normative authority and affirms the right to self-definition. Thus, repetition becomes a feminist rhythm: cyclical, enduring, and quietly revolutionary.

Discursive Pattern 2: Pronouns and Collective Identity

Data 3: “You made me insecure / Told me I wasn’t good enough”

In these lines, Gomez employs personal pronouns to dramatize the intimate tension between you and me as a linguistic choreography of power and vulnerability. The pronoun you signifies the external voice of societal judgment, the faceless chorus of critics who dictate feminine worth. In contrast, me becomes the locus of resistance, the self reclaiming its emotional territory. Through this pronoun opposition, Gomez transforms a private confession into a universal experience, inviting listeners, especially women to locate themselves within her narrative. The discourse thus transcends individuality: me becomes we, and personal insecurity transforms into collective awakening. By confronting the oppressive you with the resilient me, Gomez reframes linguistic hierarchy into solidarity, revealing how identity can be both personal and shared, fragile yet unbreakable.

Data 4: “You’ve got every right / To a beautiful life”

In this line, Gomez shifts the pronoun focus from the wounded me to an affirming you, marking a discursive transformation from introspection to empowerment. The phrase you’ve got every right operates as a performative utterance an act of giving permission, restoring autonomy that patriarchal discourse often

withholds. Here, you is no longer the oppressor but the empowered listener, the woman reclaiming her rightful space in the narrative of beauty and worth. The repetition of you universalizes self-love, turning it outward as an inclusive invitation rather than an isolated declaration. Through this linguistic gesture, Gomez crafts a collective identity where every listener is addressed, validated, and seen. A beautiful life thus becomes not merely a dream but a feminist manifesto an assurance that beauty is not a standard to reach, but a right to inhabit.

Thus, the shifting pronouns you, me, we, who trace a delicate choreography of identity, where the self and the collective continuously mirror and affirm one another. This fluidity of address transforms the song into a dialogic space, dissolving the boundaries between speaker and listener. What begins as a personal confession unfolds into a shared affirmation, suggesting that empowerment is not a solitary victory but a communal act of recognition. In Gomez’s discourse, pronouns become instruments of solidarity, weaving an inclusive grammar of belonging.

Discursive Pattern 3: Rhetorical Questioning as Empowerment

Data 5: “Who says you’re not perfect?”

In the line “Who says you’re not perfect?”, Gomez wields the rhetorical question as a subversive act of empowerment. Rather than seeking an answer, the question destabilizes the authority of societal judgment itself. Its repetition dismantles the internalized voices of criticism that often haunt female identity, transforming uncertainty into affirmation. The tone oscillates between confrontation and care, inviting the listener to question the legitimacy of external validation. Through this interrogative rhythm, Gomez reclaims language from its oppressive roots turning what was once accusation into affirmation. The question becomes both mirror and mantra, a soft rebellion that insists on the listener’s inherent worth. In its cadence lies the radical act of self-love: to resist not by denial, but by asking who grants the power to define beauty at all.

Data 6: “Who says you’re not worth it?”

The line “Who says you’re not worth it?” extends Gomez’s use of rhetorical questioning into a deeper emotional and ideological terrain. Here, the question functions as both confrontation and consolation a challenge to the invisible arbiters of worth who dictate standards of femininity, and a gentle reminder to those who

have internalized their judgment. The repetition of “Who says” transforms doubt into defiance, reclaiming power from the anonymous collective that seeks to measure value. Linguistically, the interrogative form unsettles certainty; poetically, it becomes an act of care, urging self-recognition amid cultural noise. Gomez’s voice here is not accusatory but redemptive, reframing worth as self-defined rather than socially bestowed. In doing so, the lyric embodies the essence of feminist empowerment: to question the systems that name us unworthy and, through that questioning, to rediscover the quiet conviction that we always were.

Data 7: “Who says you can’t be in movies?”

In this line, “Who says you can’t be in movies?”, Gomez expands the sphere of empowerment beyond physical beauty toward ambition, creativity, and public presence. The question resists the cultural scripts that confine women to the margins of visibility. By invoking the cinematic metaphor, she challenges the patriarchal gaze that determines who deserves to be seen, heard, and celebrated. The lyric thus becomes both an invitation and a provocation inviting women to imagine themselves as protagonists of their own stories while provoking the structures that seek to render them secondary characters. In this moment, rhetorical questioning transforms from critique to creation, from doubt to declaration. It is not merely about refuting a statement but about reclaiming authorship over one’s destiny, allowing the listener to step into the spotlight of self-belief and artistic agency.

Data 8: “Who says you don’t pass the test?”

The lyric “Who says you don’t pass the test?” extends Gomez’s discourse of empowerment into the realm of validation and achievement. The “test” here symbolizes societal measurements of worth beauty, intelligence, success, and morality all shaped by patriarchal and capitalist ideologies. By questioning this unseen examiner, Gomez dismantles the legitimacy of those external standards. The rhetorical force of her question refuses failure as a given and reclaims the right to self-definition. Her tone is not defensive but awakening, urging listeners to reconsider who has the power to assess, approve, or deny their value. Within this line, self-love emerges as a radical act of refusal refusal to be graded, categorized, or diminished. The lyric thus becomes an anthem for those who have been told they fall short, transforming doubt into defiance and transforming failure itself into freedom.

Ultimately, these rhetorical questions serve as lyrical mirrors in which listeners confront the constructed nature of inadequacy. Each “Who says?” reverberates beyond the personal sphere, transforming into a collective act of resistance against the silent, omnipresent gaze of social judgment. In questioning the authority of those who define perfection, Gomez dismantles the hierarchies that equate beauty with worth. The repetition of inquiry becomes liberation itself an insistence that the power to define oneself lies not in external validation but in inner affirmation. Through this subtle yet forceful dialogue, the song transcends mere melody, evolving into a feminist manifesto that celebrates imperfection as authenticity and doubt as the beginning of empowerment.

Interpretive Discussion: Self-Love as Feminist Agency

Data 9: “You’ve got every right to a beautiful life”

The line “You’ve got every right to a beautiful life” stands as the song’s emotional and ideological nucleus. It encapsulates the transformation of self-love from a private sentiment into a public declaration of feminist agency. In these words, Gomez constructs beauty not as an aesthetic possession but as an existential right an entitlement to joy, self-worth, and emotional freedom. The lyric functions as a counter-discourse to patriarchal narratives that equate a woman’s value with her appearance or compliance. By asserting the right to beauty, Gomez reframes beauty as an ethical and spiritual condition rather than a physical one.

Here, self-love becomes political; it challenges systemic insecurities that have long disciplined women’s bodies and voices. The inclusive pronoun “you” universalizes the message, transforming an individual affirmation into collective empowerment. In the cadence of this lyric, the listener hears both tenderness and resistance a quiet revolution articulated through melody.

Data 10: “I’m no beauty queen / I’m just beautiful me”

The lyric “I’m no beauty queen / I’m just beautiful me”

This lyric dismantles the myth of the “beauty queen” as a cultural emblem of perfection, competition, and patriarchal validation and replaces it with an affirmation grounded in authenticity. Gomez’s lyrical voice rejects the external gaze that dictates worth, choosing instead to locate beauty within the self, unfiltered

and unperformed. The contrast between “beauty queen” and “beautiful me” exposes the ideological tension between socially constructed femininity and embodied individuality.

In this declaration, self-love emerges not as vanity but as reclamation. To be “just beautiful me” is to resist commodified ideals and to inhabit one’s imperfection as truth. The repetition of the pronoun “me” is both self-assertive and liberating a linguistic gesture that transforms self-acceptance into feminist agency. Through this modest confession, Gomez redefines empowerment as the courage to exist sincerely, without apology.

Ultimately, these lines crystallize the lyrical journey from internalized insecurity to radiant self-recognition. The transformation from self-doubt to self-affirmation reflects not merely a personal awakening but a feminist reclamation of voice and worth. Within this emotional arc, self-love becomes a political act, a refusal to be diminished by external judgment and a celebration of the self as inherently valuable. In affirming beauty beyond societal standards, the song reimagines empowerment as tenderness toward oneself, a quiet revolution sung through sincerity.

KESIMPULAN

The lyrical analysis of Selena Gomez’s “Who Says” reveals four interconnected discursive patterns that articulate feminist self-agency through language. First, repetition functions as resistance, serving as a lyrical strategy of self-assertion that transforms vulnerability into empowerment, as seen in Data 1–2. Through recurring phrases of affirmation, the song reinforces emotional resilience and challenges internalized insecurity. Second, pronoun shifts construct a sense of collective identity, illustrated in Data 3–4, where the alternation between I and you blurs the boundaries between self and community, redefining what it means to belong. Third, rhetorical questioning emerges as a tool of empowerment, evident in Data 5–8, where the repeated inquiries dismantle social hierarchies and beauty myths, reclaiming the right to self-definition. Finally, self-love operates as feminist agency, as shown in Data 9–10, where affirmations of worth and autonomy position empowerment as an act of self-recognition and self-possession. Together, these patterns demonstrate how Gomez’s lyrics transform

personal reflection into a performative act of feminist affirmation.

This study demonstrates how Who Says operates as a feminist discourse that reclaims self-esteem through linguistic empowerment. Through repetition, the song resists the internalized echo of social judgment; through shifting pronouns, it unites the individual “I” with the collective “we.” Each rhetorical question becomes an act of defiance, a melodic protest against the invisible authorities that dictate beauty and worth. In this discursive landscape, Gomez transforms insecurity into solidarity and affirmation into revolution.

The interpretive discussion reveals that self-love in Who Says is not a sentimental refrain but a political stance. The declaration “I’m just beautiful me” encapsulates a movement from self-doubt to agency, framing authenticity as empowerment. Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) illuminates how language here is both personal and ideological a site where resistance is sung rather than shouted.

Ultimately, Who Says positions pop music as a terrain of feminist awakening. Within its rhythmic optimism lies a radical claim: that beauty, voice, and worth are self-authored. Gomez’s lyrical persona stands as both individual and symbol, teaching that to love oneself is to resist erasure, and that in affirming the self, women collectively redefine what it means to be beautiful, powerful, and free.

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