Selena Schema: Sharing Space through Stories about Selena Quintanilla Pérez

Amanda L. Matousek
Wofford College

AMANDA L. MATOUSEK (PhD) is Associate Professor of Spanish at Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. She has published articles on real and fictional female icons, divas, and rebels in *Label me Latina/o, Hispanic Studies Review, Hispanic Journal, Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies,* and *Letras Hispanas*. A graduate of The Ohio State University, Dr. Matousek's research focuses on Mexican Literatures and Cultures, Latinx and Chicanx Studies, Popular Music and Popular Culture Studies, Mexico-US Border Studies, Women and Violence in Latin American and Iberian Literatures and Cultures, and Women's and Gender Studies.
ORCID: 0000-0003-1727-9354

Matousek, Amanda L. "Selena Schema: Sharing Space through Stories about Selena Quintanilla Pérez". *Camino Real*, vol. 14, no. 17, 2022, pp. 87-116.

Recibido: 03 de enero de 2022

Abstract

27 years after her murder, Selena Quintanilla Pérez, "The Queen of Tejano Music," remains a prominent icon among Latinx communities in the U.S. and beyond. Deborah Paredez coined the term *Selenidad* to represent the continual acts of remembering Selena that open spaces for Latinxs to process, reimagine, and revolutionize *Latinidad*. Drawing from this vast corpus of memories, my article analyzes recent narratives about Selena. These artifacts of *Selenidad* include *Selena: The Series* (*Netflix*, 2020-2021), the podcast *Anything for Selena* (2021) hosted by María García, and Melissa Lozada-Oliva's "novel in verse," *Dreaming of You* (2021). Applying Paredez's seminal theories and expanding my previous research on consuming Selena through makeup, I closely examine the narrative components of these newest stories that continue creating a shared cultural schema among her fans.
KEYWORDS: Cognitive narrative analysis, *Latinidad,* pop culture, reader response, Selena cultural schema, *Selenidad*.

* * *

I soaked in Selena Quintanilla Pérez's "Dreaming of You" at a seventh-grade dance. Gap chinos, chunky-heeled penny loafers, CK One fragrance, and Wrigley's Winterfresh gum mingled in a sweaty junior high gymnasium.[1] Across from the Great Lakes Mall and a handful of miles from Lake Erie, Selena's captivating vocals and craving lyrics—felt strongest in the Spanish *cómo te necesito* and *cómo te extraño*—expressed a similar yearning in my thirteen year-old heart. According to Nate Sloan and Charlie Harding, "[r]esearch into music cognition shows that we form the strongest attachment to music we listen to as teenagers" (99). A cognitively appropriate teenage obsession rooted in love, longing, and loss, led to my profession and to this cognitive narrative analysis of Selena schema.

Deborah Paredez coined the term *Selenidad* to represent the continual acts of remembering Selena that open up spaces for Latinxs to process, reimagine, and revolutionize *Latinidad*. Each new generation inherits Selena, reinforcing the fact that "[o]ral tradition has historically been the most important means of the preservation of Mexican American culture" (Martín Rodríguez 46). First conceptualized by sociologist Felix M. Padilla, *Latinidad* is a complex concept rooted in both colonialism and pan-Latinx solidarity in the United States. It represents being, becoming, and appearing Latinx.[2] 27 years after her death, the heartbeat of Selena worship is

an ever stronger *bidi bidi bom bom*. Drawing from this vast corpus of memories, my article analyzes recent narratives about Selena.[3] These artifacts of *Selenidad* include *Selena: The Series* (*Netflix*, 2020-2021), the podcast *Anything for Selena* (2021) hosted by María García, and Melissa Lozada-Oliva's "novel in verse," *Dreaming of You* (2021). Applying Paredez's seminal theories and expanding my previous research on consuming Selena through makeup, I closely examine the narrative components of these newest stories that continue creating a shared cultural schema among her fans.[4,5]

In his book, *Capturing Mariposas: Reading Cultural Schema in Gay Chicano Literature* (2019), Doug P. Bush demonstrates how coming out, discovering queer literature, feeling shame, hiding homosexuality, employing or undermining elements of magical realism and more are examples of a shared cultural schema of gay Chicano literature. Bush argues that gay Chicano authors are ".actively creating community both for and with their readers, providing an identificatory space that may not have otherwise existed" (2). In dialogue with *jotería* studies and the scholarship of Patrick Colm Hogan, Paula Moya, and James Phelan, among other cognitive scientists of literature, Bush examines the equal significance of the gay Chicano narrative and the reader's response. He explains that "[r]ather than the author distancing themselves from the subject as is typical in academic writing, *jotería* studies exalts the personal experience, making it a base for theory" (5). Bush's notion of cultural schema deepens Phelan's work on "cultural narrative" and coincides with Paula Moya's assertion that schema is formed by life experiences and informs individual worldviews (8-9). Bush logically extends this to cultural groups who often share some similar schema (9). Comparable to gay Chicano literature, Selena narratives create community among her fans through shared cultural schema.[6] While *Selenidad* and Selena cultural schema intersect and overlap, my study is unique with its grounding in narrative and reader response theories and its focus on recent texts.

Additionally, Moya considers close reading both "…an encounter with the self…" and "…an encounter with an other—even a radical other" (Moya 9).[7] Thus, "[k]ey to the impact a text will have on a reader is the manner and extent to which that text activates for that reader a set of cognitive-affective structures social psychologists refer to as schemas" (15).[8] The schema a Selena text activated for me at

thirteen and activate for me now come from my experiences as a white female American and Spanish as a second language speaker and professor specializing in Mexican and Latinx literatures and cultures. Consequently, my response to the song "Dreaming of You" was both an encounter with myself and with an other that opened my mind to studying world languages and cultures. It is distinct from the experiences of Latinxs and others. Thus, I first identify the story components that form Selena cultural schema within a wider social group of fandom.

Moya also explains that personal experiences, individual schema, and shared demographic schema, like race, gender, religion, and class, combine to unite shared cultural schema (19). On her Selena podcast "about belonging," María García highlights the push and pull of being too American in Mexico and too Mexican in the United States. Selena, played by Christian Serratos on *Selena: The Series*, expresses a similar sentiment when EMI Latin separates albums by Mexicanness and Americanness even though the band exists as both ("Gold Rush"). For García, Selena is an unapologetic Mexican *and* American role model.

While I belong to the social culture of fandom united by Selena schema, I am not negotiating meaning within *Selenidad* and *Latinidad* like Latinxs. Selena and I share working class roots in industrial regions (Corpus Christi and Cleveland), ambitions beyond these borders (breakout mainstream diva and first-generation college student), family dreams of making it in music, polka and country music (Tejano and my Czech and Appalachian roots), early musical influences including: Madonna, Paula Abdul, and Michael and Janet Jackson, a penchant for not taking ourselves too seriously, and a love of fast food and pizza, to name a few points of contact.[9] However, I do not relate to this as a minority in the US. Thus, I approach Selena cultural schema broadly, while keeping *Latinidad* at the forefront.

I begin by summarizing classic Selena cultural schema and relating them to the television series and the podcast. The former is a superficial family drama and the latter an in-depth year-long case study of *Selenidad*. While the podcast is similarly profound, Melissa Lozada-Oliva's *Dreaming of You* is the only text that challenges traditional Selena schema. Following Bush's and other cognitive

approaches to literature, I consider personal reactions alongside the critical analysis. Here, I explore the book's "gappiness"—a crucial component for creating meaning in narrative:

> [t]he dynamics and interpretation of narratives depend on the absence of information and on discrepancies between the reader's knowledge and the knowledge possessed by narrators and characters. As narrative theory teaches us, narratives come into being through the interaction between minds and narrative gaps. (Bernaerts et al. 1-3)[10]

Even if audiences crave more nuanced representations of Selena, they are still critical of transgressing the standard Selena schema inaugurated by Gregory Nava's movie, *Selena* (1997). Consequently, Lozada-Oliva's *Dreaming of You* tends to the discordant reader response. Here, I will underscore the benefit of innovative Selena fiction for "shift[ing] reader expectations," *Latinidad,* and more (Bush 162).

Lozada-Oliva encourages us to fill in the gaps or exist within them. She exemplifies the Houston Astrodome 1995 live concert recording's iconic pause in the song "*Como la flor.*" After Selena sings "*Yo sé perder*," she pauses for about 15 seconds and waves before a softer "*pero*" leads into a powerful "*ay, ay, ay, como me duele.*" We read:

> […] Selena cried for us, but first she waited.
> There was that pause.
> And that space between her and us.
> That all-knowing delay?
> That space between the stage and the floor?
> The buzzing in the air?
> The desire, the beckoning?
> That is where we want to live. (152)

Selena, the skilled storyteller, provides a moment to reflect on the weight of her words and to consider the cultural schema that "*Como la flor*"[11] activates in all of us.

1. SELENA SCHEMA: CLASSIC COMPONENTS

Between and beyond Gregory Nava's *Selena* biopic (1997) and Abraham Quintanilla Jr's memoir *A Father's Dream: My Family's Journey in Music* (2021), we observe common Selena schema.

Although decades of Selena texts are distinct in genre, form, and content, the following schema unite many of them. In the infographic below, I use Bush's study as a comparative springboard to locate commonly shared cultural schema in Selena narratives.

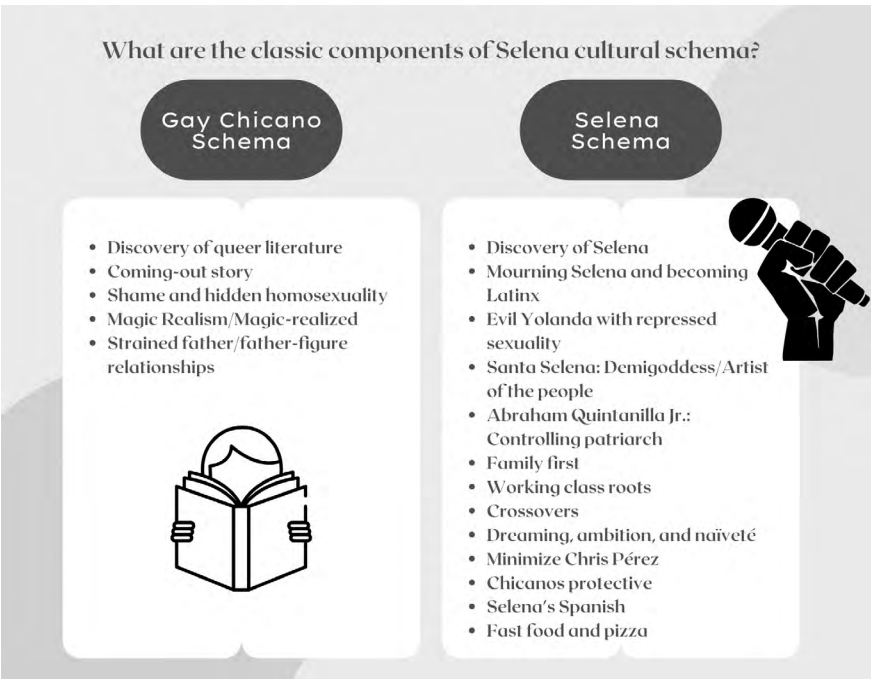

Figure 1. Classic Components of Selena Schema by Amanda L. Matousek

Like Nava's film, *Selena: The Series* adheres to traditional Selena cultural schema. Selena's sister Suzette's role as an executive producer influences the development of other family members' perspectives. The program could be aptly titled: *The Quintanillas*. "[A]n intrinsically American story" labeled as a "Latin American original, with a modest budget," the show is *kitsch-tastic* with wigs and scenes to rival the gaudiest *telenovelas* (Villarreal).

Judy Berman suggests that the series was destined to disappoint given Jennifer Lopez's "…captur[e] of [Selena's] electric charisma and Gregory Nava's kinetic, music video-style direction" ("Who was Selena?"). She likens Serratos' Selena to a Disney Princess. Kristen

Lopez agrees that "…there's absolutely no talk about Selena's feelings towards anything…there's no in-depth discussion about how she feels about being the breadwinner as a teenager" ("Netflix Biopic Fails"). Finally, she argues that the series mutes Selena as "…little more than the goose who laid the golden egg that everyone wants to use [for] profit" ("Netflix Biopic Fails").

In the series finale depicting the aftermath of Selena's murder, an interview is telecasted at her boutique. Selena states that she wants to be remembered not just as an entertainer, but also as a woman who gave her all. This encapsulates her portrayal on the show and nourishes Santa Selena schema by transforming her into a flawless demigoddess. Critics on García's podcast say the series is belittling considering Selena has little agency and dialogue and mostly talks about glitter and fashion.

Abraham Quintanilla Jr., the rigid and prideful patriarch, is also a mainstay in Selena narrative. On García's podcast, the real Abraham admits to firing Chris Pérez for fear he would destroy everything for which the family had worked. If Chris were *machista,* he might forbid Selena from performing. When back-up singer Pete Astudillo leaves the band for a solo album tour, Abraham emphasizes that Selena's success has engendered his—like new branches from the same tree. Astudillo declares Abraham the tree ("Qué creías").

Additionally, when the Quintanillas require food stamps, Abraham justifies receiving government aid by explaining that he always pays his taxes. This anticipates dominant culture fantasies that minorities exhaust Anglo-American resources. Thus, Abraham accentuates their status as hard-working, *documented* Americans. Similarly, Selena is marked American first. She is not initially interested in singing in Spanish and the band is called "Southern Pearl" before switching to "Selena y Los Dinos" after Abraham discovers the profitability of Tejano music ("Daydream").

Faithfulness to working class roots is another Selena cultural schema. She is proud to live in the same La Molina neighborhood in Corpus Christi as her family. When Selena tries to save money on a used car, Suzette tells her not to settle. This dance reminds viewers of Selena's work ethic as she purchases the iconic red convertible, still displayed at the Selena Museum. With financial stability and a gold record, Selena insists on starting the English album when EMI Latin

wants a platinum Spanish-language record first. Here, Abraham reinforces the us (working-class Chicanos) versus them (upper-class executives) dichotomy, explaining that the fans own the building, not the empty suits. After he tells executive José Behar that people are interested in *her*, not "her Latin records," Abraham encourages Selena to keep doing things her way ("Gold Rush").

Selena's close relationship with fans as an artist of the people is a schema that relates to both success and tragedy. Selena does not want a bodyguard "like Madonna's" to get between her and the fans. Akin to the later "Jenny from the Block" (Jennifer Lopez) and "*Mariposa del barrio*" (Jenni Rivera), Yolanda affirms that fans love Selena because they see themselves in her. Lozada-Oliva's text ruminates extensively on this theme ("Qué creías").

The series also minimizes Chris Pérez's role, a typical trend with Selena schema. The Quintanillas' stronghold on her brand leaves little room for her husband's perspectives. As Selena's soulmate, Pérez's characterization is hollow. He is treated as a harmless obstacle to Selena's success when he wants his own band after the English crossover. Applying the Quintanilla's family first model, Selena and Chris elope. She blames Abraham for forcing her hand. Doubling as product placement and a nod to Selena's fast food schema, the newlyweds eat Popeyes after the wedding ("Como la flor").

Next, Santa Selena's charisma quells conflicts and connects people. After she tells Abraham that he is her model of a good man, he welcomes Chris into the family. Family strength also foreshadows Selena's murder. When Selena wants to be honest about her marriage, Abraham lectures that there is a thin line between fans loving her and turning against her. As *la artista del pueblo*, Selena acknowledges that fans expect more from her. At a 100,000-fan-strong concert in Monterrey, Mexico, she announces Chris as her guitarist and husband ("Enter My World"). Perhaps we still expect more from Selena *because* she gave us her all.

Selena's ambition is also an integral shared cultural schema. It is challenged by the gendered stereotype that "women can't have it all" and is attributed to her demise. What if she had not opened the boutiques? When Abraham points out that music is her dream, Selena says: "Dad, I have many dreams." Suzette wonders how much more Selena could want. Correspondingly, Selena's brother/

songwriter/producer A.B. feels underappreciated when Abraham says that Selena's voice is what matters. A.B. retorts that he makes the music fans want to hear. While this conflict is resolved idyllically, the episode connects the production of the song "*La llamada*" with Yolanda's call to Selena regarding managing the boutique. The scene fades out with Yolanda beside her bedroom shrine dedicated to Selena ("The Call").

Following traditional Selena schema, Yolanda is the sexually repressed villain whose jealousy and resentment lead to Selena's demise. In a room full of cardboard promotional Selenas, Selena remarks that there is enough Selena for everyone—a statement in direct contrast with Yolanda's feelings. While Selena is elated that her cousin Debra is working at the boutique, a covetous Yolanda crumples Selena's autograph photo behind her back ("Oh No"). Yolanda is rarely contextualized in Selena narrative. In this case, when confronted by Abraham about the financial records and the fan club fraud, Yolanda counters that she built a "thriving" fan club from nothing ("Astrodome"). The real Abraham was bothered by how Selena always saw the good in people (García).

Crossovers are also a shared Selena cultural schema. While the English market is often deemed *the* crossover, the series reminds us that she had already charmed other Pan-Latin(x)-Americans. For example, after winning a Grammy in New York, two Dominican and Puerto Rican fans profess their love for Selena (Later, these same fans are shocked by her death—overhearing the news at a *bodega* ("Lo más bello"). Before this, though, Behar announces the Houston Astrodome concert recording of the new live album as Selena is served papers for unpaid boutique bills ("Si una vez").

In addition, Selena schema include dreams of having children. Sometimes this is through Yolanda's assertion that Selena was pregnant at the time of her death. The series depicts Selena excitedly telling her mother, Marcella, and Suzette that she wants to start a family. On the other hand, unfinished dreams form part of the tragedy as Selena died just as she was achieving her most-cherished childhood goals. In a series that largely lacked depth, the ending is genuinely moving. Her family hears her vocals from "Dreaming of You" for the first time after her death and Selena fans know the rest: Yolanda lures Selena to the Days Inn on the pretense that she was assaulted in Mexico. Selena

confirms this farse at the hospital and returns Yolanda to the hotel where Selena again asks for the financial records.

The series does not recreate the murder. Housekeepers hear the fatal shot, which indicates that Selena will bleed out in the lobby while naming her murderer and her room number. The void deepens symbolically as Abraham and A.B. realize that she is not late for being "on Selena time" and rush to the hospital. Young Selena's recording of "Feelings," plays to empty spaces in their homes symbolizing her eternal absence. As usual, Chris' reaction is barely noted. Later, Suzette continues Selena's commitment to education and A.B. is on the road with his band, Kumbia Kings. He pokes a hole in the middle of his burger bun the way Selena used to (an allusion to his obsession with cleanliness and his compulsion to not eat food touched by others). As "Bidi Bidi Bom Bom" plays, Suzette snaps a photo of Selena walking off stage and waving her final goodbye.

María García's podcast, *Anything for Selena*, is both an ode and a journey of personal discovery. García was born in Mexico and felt "defined" and "divided" by the border. She describes being Mary on weekdays in El Paso and María at weekend family parties in Ciudad Juárez. Discovering Selena made García realize that it is possible to be loved on both sides of the border. If Selena spoke with a "Texas twang" and made errors in Spanish, yet claimed her Mexican heritage, García could too. Publicly mourning Selena made Mexican Americans visible on television. Resolving "language trauma" made García wonder if it was time for Chicanos to finally live "out loud" ("Selena and Me," "Spanglish").

García complicates Abraham the authoritarian by interviewing him (a monumental feat since he notoriously rejects journalists). She explores conspiracy theories, including the falsity that Selena died because he refused blood transfusions as a Jehovah's Witness. García explains that Abraham is playful and aware of his image as a greedy Latino Joe Jackson. He recounts his childhood, musical career, and family life. He reveals that Selena was delivered by Republican politician Ron Paul and that she frequently cried for attention as a baby. Abraham agrees that he was strict and critical to teach his children to only trust God and family.

Similar to Paredez's grief that influenced *Selenidad,* García's conversations with Abraham provide an outlet for grieving the death

of her own father who perished in a semi-truck accident. García links Selena not being able to describe having Abraham as a father to the fact that her dad cannot answer why he left when she was a child. Different from typical Selena schema, García finds Abraham's love for his children "alluring." She affirms that Abraham and Selena are more nuanced than their fictional counterparts and that Selena's identity was defined by devotion to her family ("Selena and Abraham").

García talks about colorism and how *Latinidad* excludes blackness. She explores comments about Selena's body (her derrière) and Black music's influence on her artistry and the 1999 Latin explosion. She illustrates Selena's connection to Afro-Latino roots through cumbias, Soul Train dance moves, and R&B vocal styles. García highlights protective Chicanos who criticize Jennifer Lopez's casting and the gradual whitewashing of Selena from a light-skinned Puerto Rican to an even whiter Christian Serratos ("Big Butt Politics").

Similarly, while it is true that Yolanda killed Tejano music by murdering Selena, García uncovers another power struggle with Regional Mexican music. She describes clashes that emerged after NAFTA in 1994 between assimilated Mexican Americans and recent Mexican immigrants (which include García's own mother). Tejano music exploded in the 1980s and 1990s, especially with Selena who "united Mexicans and Tejanos" and both represented the genre and "transcended it." After Selena's death, García explains that the "Telecommunications Act of 1996" gutted Tejano by allowing corporations to buy radio stations in multiple cities. Since Mexican immigrants outnumbered Mexican Americans, companies focused on Regional Mexican music instead. Abraham informs that the Tejano category that Selena won at the Grammys has been replaced by Regional Mexican ("Tejano Tension").

Further, García's and her producer's discussion of our "canonized diva's rich archive" adds to Selena schema by defining eight categories of Selena internet memes. Here, they ask the questions that Lozada-Oliva's work strives to answer. They wonder what Selena would be like now, ponder "the eternal what-ifs," interrogate Selena's conservative 1990s stance against abortion, and fear reaching the archives' end. They ask if the end of the archive will feel like losing Selena again ("Selena and the Internet"). Lozada-Oliva and I would say that the archive never ends as long as we remember and reimagine Selena in new contexts.

García's podcast concludes with a love letter to Selena that exemplifies many classic Selena cultural schema including: Selena's "disarming laugh," artist of the people image (band-aid on broken fingernail and burp during interview), and profound impact on Latinxs. However, García did not foresee the emotional "personal reckoning" with her father's death and other trauma. She believes that "the universe knew she needed Selena" and signs off with a triumphant "Anything for Selena!" ("Selena and Us"). This exemplifies the impact and staying power of Selena schema.

2. SELENA SCHEMA: EVOLUTION

Melissa Lozada-Oliva is a self-proclaimed *Guatelombian*-American poet. She went viral with her 2015 National Poetry Slam Championship-winning poem, "Like Totally Whatever." It is her response to Taylor Mali's poem "Totally like whatever, you know" that criticizes passive speaking and interrogative tone typically associated with women's speech. Mali mocks meek ways of speaking: "In case you hadn't noticed, it has somehow become uncool to sound like you know what you're talking about?" Lozada-Oliva retorts with: "In case you haven't realized it has somehow become necessary for old white men to tell me how to speak (?)" Her poem interrogates how the patriarchy regulates female speech, which, in turn, engenders verbal defense mechanisms. Selena's embodiment of the model daughter and performer explain her motivation to elope with Chris and to confide in Yolanda. Everywhere else she used verbal defense mechanisms to uphold her image. Lozada-Oliva deploys metaphor to equate "inarticulate" or soft speech with the intent to defuse conflict, aggression, and violence—which Selena perfected:

> And it's like maybe I'm always speaking in questions because I'm so used to being cut off.
>
> Like maybe, this is a defense mechanism: Maybe everything girls do is evolution of defense mechanism.
>
> Like this is protection, like our 'likes' are our knee pads.
>
> Our 'ums' are the knives we tuck into our boots at night.
>
> Our 'you knows' are best friends we call on when walking down a dark alley.
>
> Like this is how we breathe easier.

Lozada-Oliva's verses recall Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's redondilla, "*Hombres necios*" (1689). The poem outlines the paradox of how "foolish men" blame women for what they cause and sustain, like expecting a virgin wife, while taking virginities. This parallels Paredez's and other scholars' queer readings of Selena's murder where Yolanda embodies the devastating effects of patriarchal society and *machismo/marianismo* cultural norms.

Mali defends speaking with authority without questioning who determines what it should sound like. Though his poem only refers directly to "the most aggressively inarticulate generation," Mali erases race, culture, and social class to blame women and other minorities for not speaking like white men, even though, when they do, they are met with defensiveness and aggression. Similarly, Lozada-Oliva's poetic interaction with Mali also evokes Mexican writer Rosario Castellano's response to 19th century Spanish romanticist poet Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer. In Rima XXI (1871), familiarly known as "¿Qué es poesía?," the lyrical subject responds to his lover's question telling her that she is poetry. Essentially, she is his muse. Castellanos counters with "Poesía no eres tú" (1972) telling women that they are not poetry; nor objects to be possessed by men. Rather, she emphasizes women's intellectual capacity in declaring that real poetry happens when their voices are heard: "la humanidad, el diálogo, la poesía, comienzan."

Like the clapback poems above, Lozada-Oliva's *Dreaming of You* challenges traditional Selena cultural schema. The genre-bending book begins with descriptions of the cast members, including Melissa Lozada-Oliva (the protagonist), Yolanda Saldívar (Selena's murderer), Mami (Melissa's mother), Papi/Abraham Quintanilla (Selena's father and Melissa's father-figure), Selena Quintanilla-Pérez, She (Melissa's evil side), *Las Chismosas* (Greek tragedy-style commentators) and You (the male object of Melissa's affection/symbol of the poetic voice). The story imagines Selena's future and the repercussions Melissa faces by resurrecting her through a séance. It explores idolization, disappointment, and female sexuality, among other themes.

Lozada-Oliva's book asks why she is so obsessed with "…a star [she] can only see because it has died" (2). She describes how fans dehumanize their idols by glorifying them and asks: What happens when they disappoint or do something horrible? Lozada-Oliva both adores and wants to emulate Selena. Poetry and narrative are her vehicles for

becoming a similar Latina role model who pushes *Latinidad* forward. Thus, Melissa, the protagonist, exorcises her demon (She) and chases her lover/seeks her poetic voice (You) to lead readers in contemplating new Selena cultural schema. Lozada-Oliva speculates: What if Selena had lived? What if she had grown up to disappoint her public or to "post cringy content" on Instagram like Britney Spears? We witness this disappointment when resurrected Selena ultimately leaves Melissa for another go at fame. In an interview on Twitter, Selena wants to cancel Yolanda for good and claims that she does not know a "Melissa Losado-Oliviana" (128). By invoking fear and dark humor, Lozada-Oliva mixes paying tribute to Selena with satirizing our obsession with her ("Interview with J. Mendoza").

Apart from betrayal and murder, what else separates us from Yolanda? Are we not all Yolandas attempting to consume Selena? Lozada-Oliva alludes to this idea in the poem "Yolanda Leaves a Note." The last stanza demonstrates that Melissa cannot evade death while suggesting she reflect upon her own obsession with Selena:

> Tell me about how you've turned
> everyone you've ever met into a poem.
> You can't immortalize everybody.
> You can't just bring people back to life.
> I killed her, okay.
> I killed her just to see myself better.
> But what are you doing here, with your eyes? (Lozada-Oliva 131)

Seeing Selena through similar eyes and resurrecting and (re)killing her to see oneself turns the mirror on the readers. We, too, should evaluate our obsession with Selena. Lozada-Oliva situates readers in this uncomfortable space to shift our expectations of Selena, Yolanda, the other characters, and ourselves. In turn, Selena cultural schema evolve.

In confronting death, Lozada-Oliva also questions *Latinidad*. In fact, Melissa resurrects Selena and "re-kills" her to symbolize the act of revolutionizing Latinness. She wonders if Selena should still be considered the model Latina, given that she never claimed to be in life and that her memory (and Latina success more generally) is married to capitalism. Lozada-Oliva refashions being Latina by asking for more of and more than Selena; to reimagine her to reimagine oneself.

For example, Lozada-Oliva believes that Latinxs should push further than mainstream representation. She offers the imagery of little girls with dolls that look like them to shift the question from what kind of doll do we get to hold? to why are we holding a doll? Selena advertises her doll on Twitter because "…representation matters…We cannot truly see ourselves until we really see ourselves" (128). Like García's idea of "holding onto [her] traditions while embracing identity," Lozada-Oliva's novel demonstrates that telling new Selena stories is not sacrilegious to her memory, but serve to acknowledge new ways of being Latinx ("Interviews with J. Mendoza; Creative Independent; Dupuis"). Melissa and readers alike can adore Selena while shifting themselves, schema, poetry, literature, and more.[12]

Although Lozada-Oliva considers "horror the best place for metaphor" and is proud that her novel is "freaky," she recognizes that it could repel Selena fans. As of March 10th, 2022, the website *Goodreads* proves Lozada-Oliva's hypothesis. Many reviewers complain that her book dishonors Selena and the dead. The negative reviews are also influenced by Lozada-Oliva's *Guatelombian*-American roots. The aforementioned illustrates how diverging from traditional Selena cultural schema, including not being Chicana, produces cognitive dissonance for Lozada-Oliva's readers. Moya explains the cognitive processes involved in this type of reader response:

> …when a person is reading a work of literature that is structured according to schemas with which she is unfamiliar or to which, because of her past experiences, she has a conscious or unconscious aversion, she may initially judge it negatively as being poorly organized or excessively sentimental or simply not good. She may then locate the fault not in herself or in her inability to fully appreciate the text's schematics but in the text itself… (Moya 24-25)

Readers address this aversion repeatedly. Harmonica Thompson remarks: "And there's nowhere in the world I'd rather beeeee' than anywhere other than in this book" (2/4/22). Sofia simply states that it is "written for white hipsters" (2/1/22). Alexandra appreciates the focus on Yolanda Saldívar but quickly notes: "No, I'm not a fan of Yolanda, who could be? I just think the author did a great job of making her a three dimensional person than the total ghoul/evil person I grew up believing in" (1/10/22). Nathan disagrees and

advises Selena fans to "stay FAR FAR away from this book…[it] is disgraceful, disrespectful, rude, and I wouldn't be surprised if Abraham says something to the author" (6/6/21). An unidentified reader criticizes the absence of *Latinidad* despite "what the marketing would have you believe." They felt that "the writing was the strongest in the moments where the book clearly forgot it was supposed to be about Selena" and they connected with the narrative's emphasis on vulnerability (10/29/21).

Initially, I found *Dreaming of You* confusing, meandrous, and sacrilegious to Selena cultural schema for personifying and ceding narrative space to Yolanda. Despite also lacking connections to *mestiza consciousness*, Lozada-Oliva's meditation on writing oneself into legend is consequential. By confronting fears and death with humor, it is clear that defying classic Selena cultural schema in fiction can lead to reevaluating Selena, *Selenidad*, *Latinidad*, storytelling, and more in fresh contexts.

The novel is organized by the lyrics to Selena's song "*Como la flor*" plus a cast list, an epilogue, alternate endings, and a graphic representation of Melissa's resurrection séance.[13] *Las Chismosas* engage readers directly in Part I. This establishes genre flexibility and highlights the importance of reader response:

> Hello, querido reader?
> Do you like poetry?
> Do you like songs? [...]
> Are you afraid of dying and does it fuel you? [...]
> We all know the story of Selena Quintanilla.
> The Tejana pop star who was murdered
> by her best friend and the manager
> of her fan club, Yolanda Saldívar.
> There are heroes.
> There are villains.
> There are fans.
> There are girls trying to find
> their reflection in a rippling
> pond…
> This is about You,
> except when it's not about you.
> This is a love story.

But it isn't our story.
However, as chismosas, we feel
that it happened to us.
So we believe we are the best
ones to tell it. (7-8)

This Greek-style chorus introduces poetry, song, death fears, gossip, storytelling, identity, and love to frame the text as unstable and deem the poetic and narrative voices unreliable. While this creates confusion, it also gives readers permission to fill in the gaps and reflect on their own reactions. Further, this part ties Melissa's story to You, the male love interest/her poetic voice, that she struggles to grasp. If Yolanda kills Selena to see herself, Melissa resurrects Selena to find her own reflection. In so doing, Melissa unleashes her evil side: "She." "She" represents her detestable qualities, the ones that disturb her life and poison relationships, like the ones with You and Selena. Moreover, Melissa establishes her *Selenic* equivalency when describing her vocation as a poet in "Dreaming of You":

I help young girls see themselves.
I guess that makes me happy. (11)

Both Selena and Melissa make Latinas visible through their respective artistic mediums.

In addition to the theme of seeing oneself, a void/hole is a powerful recurring image. *Las Chismosas* use it to connect Selena's murder with Melissa's fear of death:

It's only a matter
of how you fill those holes
before somebody puts a hole in you
and all of a sudden you're bleeding
out on the carpet of a hotel room,
amiright ladies? Ha.
What we mean to say is that
she tried going on a few dates. (19)

This part acknowledges the poem that doubles as a date and murder ("Looking for Something Casual" 20). In the next poem, Melissa morphs into dead Selena ("I Watch Selena's Open-Casket Funeral"):

> […] I can see myself bleeding out on a motel's clean
> carpet.
>
> I can see myself crying over a body but also being the body.
> I can see the way I must look to my mother, my Abuelita,
> my sisters, my friends, my fans. Here is my corpse, modest
>
> in royal purple. Here's my flower, resting against my chest.
> Here are my lips, locked and painted red. Here are my rogue
> baby hairs, gelled in a perfect curl. Here are my almond eyes, closed.
>
> I am so safe. (23)

"The Future is Lodged Inside of the Female" furthers the hole symbolism and Melissa's fear of death. Written in lowercase, reserving uppercase only for names and emphasis, it demonstrates how Selena embodies a fear of dying:

> […]
> passive tense because who did the lodging?
> or was it self-inflicted lodging? victim
> is suffering. victim pronounced dead on arrival.
> lodge big. lodge for the forgotten ones. lodge like it's 1995. […]
>
> in the future, i am not Spanish or Latina or Latinx instead i am:
> H I S (P A N I C) E D
> -ED because past tense because colonialism. as in, my identity is something that *happened* to me
>
> -PANIC to acknowledge crippling anxiety, lol […]
>
> realizing that all my life i've been trying to look like Selena?
> is Selena the hole that's been carved out for me? i can jam
> my body through it but I'll probably fall to the other side.
> is my body Selena-adjacent?
>
> the female is 23, hispanic(ed), with a bullet wound to the back.
> the female is 45, hispanic(ed), crying in her car with a gun.
> the female cannot have a lover if she is busy finding herself.

the female cannot have a lover if she is busy finding herself!
the female killed her best friend, because only one woman can exist at a time, whoops!
honestly so sad that she's dead but like, what if she lived long enough to like a tweet from a pro-life organization idk? (38, 40)

In contrast with traditional Selena schema, Melissa walks us directly into an abject and absurd abyss where her dark humor and sarcasm is meant to soften the blow. At a Halloween party, Selena kisses Dan who describes the encounter as "kissing a fuzzy version of a girl" who disappears after his hands are covered in worms (49).

Las Chismosas explain that Melissa opened the void and there are "reports of Selena in pizza shops" and "Selena signing on to another record deal" (85). Meanwhile, "[t]he evil Melissa points to the mirror and Melissa sees herself old, balding, forgotten" (85). Melissa has aged imperfectly, while Selena remains preserved. Yolanda also enters the void by shooting a prison guard and escaping through an opening in the bars ("Yolanda Saldívar Gets Away With It" 86).

Melissa resurrects Selena "[b]ecause it is not enough to be seen. Because [Melissa needs] to see […] Because [she misses] her…" even though they have never met (43). Melissa describes the process in 15 steps that satirize *curanderismo* and magic realism. She conjures Selena with chunky gold hoops, bright red lipstick, "a USB drive full of Selena's images, songs, and interviews [in] a pot of [her] period blood," and *Fabuloso* cleaner, among other objects and rituals (43-45).

Selena's language is unique in Lozada-Oliva's book. She only speaks words and phrases that she has said before. The font for her poetic voice is double printed to appear blurry. This symbolizes how classic Selena schema often mute the subtleties and contradictions of Selena's identity. When Selena meets You,

[…]
Selena embraces You, gives You a kiss on the cheek.
"I'm really tired," she says, *"Los labios. Hola."*

I look at You and You look at me.
I am excited. Two worlds meeting.

You go to the sink and pour a large glass of water.
You do not say anything to me. (58-59)

Here, You's indifference to Selena creates distance between him and Melissa. So, Selena replaces You as the guest of honor at Melissa's poetry reading. In "In the Middle of My Poem" Selena jumps on stage, grabs the microphone from Melissa, and exclaims:

> Melissa is my inspiration! […]
> Believe in yourself!
> Follow your dreams!
> Do what you LOVE! (62)

This example satirizes the genericness of other representations of Selena.

Next, "Dear Ms. Melissa Lozada-Oliva" portrays traditional Selena schema in an email where Abraham polices her language *à la* Taylor Mali and scolds Melissa for bringing his daughter back to life:

> This isn't your story!!!!!!!!!...The word 'Bitches' is not nice!!!!! Does your mother know you are talking this way????...Why are you so upset???? Your life has been good!!! You aren't even from Texas!!!...You should be nicer to your parents!!! I'm suing you for bringing my daughter back to life without my consent!!!...You could've been a dentist!!!!!!!!!!!! (81)

This quote merges Abraham with Melissa's father who would prefer she choose a medical career over being a writer. The poem, "Abraham Quintanilla Is Out For My Blood," implies that he is surveilling Melissa (84).

In Part III, *Las Chismosas* define Melissa as an unreliable narrator who "knows the story" but changes it by "[inserting] herself and now she can't get herself out. […]" (93). Furthermore, Melissa recalls going through customs in Guatemala with her mother and Colombian uncle. So that the agents believe that her uncle is Guatemalan, Melissa's mother underscores his devastation upon Selena's passing. ("March 31, 1995," 97). Here, mourning Selena takes on a practical purpose. Melissa confirms *Las Chismosas*' assessment by stating:

> The way we tell stories and the way we remember what really happened drive together somewhere and they fight over the directions and the place you end up is not better than before, but anyway, you're there. (97)

These reminders that fiction heeds not to historical accuracy and examines all angles of "the truth," give readers the sense that contextualizing Yolanda does not have to be true in order to teach us something. In "Remember that Yolanda Was a Little Girl Once," Melissa describes how despite yearning to be attracted to men, young Yolanda masturbated to the fantasy of her female teacher (103).

With Selena away, Yolanda possesses Melissa and "runs away with [her] flesh husk" to show Selena her new self only to find the hotel room empty ("We Cry About it Together" 129). "Yolanda Wears Melissa's Skin into Selena's Hotel Room," 137-138). Melissa can only solve her predicament by rescuing You from hell, re-killing Selena, and retrieving her skin from Yolanda (141). As she executes her mission, "a gun appears in [her] hand" and transforms into other firearms and objects—like a wet fish (An allusion to *Bidi Bidi Bom Bom?*—Selena insists that the song is not about fish and bubbles, but rather the sound a heart makes when falling in love)—before turning back into the original gun:

> Evil me shifts and shifts until I am inches away from her. […]
> I say, *Don't leave me, Selena*.
> She says nothing to me.
> *I say I swear to god I'll do it, Selena!*
> I point the gun to my head, but the gun is a red rose, […]
> I point the gun at Selena and it's just a gun.
> She turns around.
> *Don't go,* I say.
> There is no sound.
> She's crumpled on the floor.
> I kneel beside her.
> Her outfits change.
> The purple jumpsuit
> The black studded bustier and the newsboy hat. […]
> Oh Selena, it happened again.
> and it is my doing.
> My fault, my desire
> to turn a mirror
> into a person. […]
> You appear behind me,
> Your hand on my shoulder. (145-147)

As Melissa reclaims her identity by vanquishing Selena and the evil spirits, You returns.

In the epilogue, *Las Chismosas* wonder

[h]ow to tell
the end of
a ghost story
when everything
is haunted anyway? (161)

They challenge readers to think about why we may shudder at Melissa's séance when our acts of remembering Selena are ritually similar. The haunting contrapuntal poem, "Yolanda and Selena Don't Talk Anymore," follows *Las Chismosas*' question. The two lyric voices can be read separately or together to elicit different interpretations. This form symbolizes the process of understanding Selena's life, murder, and legacy in dialogue with the people around her, including Yolanda. Like Castellanos' lyrical subjects in "Poesía no eres tú," poetry begins when we give Others a voice. We do not have to like nor accept Yolanda, but we must confront and grow from her context.

The title of the poem follows the novel's predominant vertical page orientation, while the poem itself is printed below perpendicular to the title. Yolanda's verses are in the left column with a tab between Selena's in the right one. In the beginning and read separately, both Yolanda and Selena accept her death:

I stopped you just in time.	To dream about love
Now you'll be remembered	for all eternity. That's why
They'll never hear me sing.	death isn't so bad. I like to think I've been [pretty
Most of the time,	lucky for all of my life. (162)

Yolanda takes credit for immortalizing Selena, ensuring that she will never grow to disappoint anyone. The verses also parallel Yolanda's transformation from a former life-sustaining nurse to a murderer who disappoints everyone.

"They'll never hear me sing" recalls Selena's death and Yolanda's vow to protect her secrets. Yolanda relayed these to journalist María Celeste Arrarás who used them as a basis for the un-Quintanilla family-official television series called *Selena's Secret* (2018) based on

her bestselling investigative book of the same name (1997). Arrarás promised not to disclose information gleaned "off the record," respecting Yolanda's right to speak when ready. Juxtaposed with Arrarás' investigation, Lozada-Oliva's fiction is a superior space for dreaming up new Selenas. Negative reader response to what fans consider lies about Selena are more severe in Arrarás' nonfiction.

Selena's verses above reflect her gratitude and humility in contrast with Yolanda the jealous opportunist. However, as Paredez and others explain, Yolanda is also a victim of the patriarchy. She cites Chicana author Cherríe Moraga, who reads Selena's death as "the Latina *lesbiana tragedia*…

> Maybe Yolanda pulled the trigger, but what were all the events that led up to that, you know? And so you're talking about deep, deep, deep patriarchy…a family in which a man is running a little girl's life from the time she was seven years old and *destino* brought her to being wiped out ['by another Chicana']. And so, to me, that little girl's narrative is all of our narratives as Chicanas. (164)[14]

While García's perception of Abraham becomes more complicated through interviewing him, it is vital to consider how things would have turned out had Yolanda truly seen and accepted herself. When we read Yolanda's and Selena's verses as one poem, Yolanda vows to love and dream about Selena forever. The real Yolanda routinely claims that Selena knows the truth, yet still loves her.

Classic villain versus Santa Selena schema appear below:

Most of the time,	lucky for all of my life
I'm a villain	I'm a saint
or a lesbian.	who loved too hard, trusted too deeply. (162)

If they are not eliminating Yolanda from the narrative, Selena storytellers characterize her as an evil repressed lesbian who corrupts a naïve Selena. This is a reductionist story fit to patriarchal structure. Fill in the blank with Selena, *La Llorona, La Malinche*, or Latinas and other women that cross lines: When _____ ventured out on her own, leaving the protection of her family, strife or tragedy befell her. When read as one, the verses above suggest that Yolanda loved too hard and that Selena could have been a lesbian, as folklore and her status as a gay icon have implied.

Paredez describes Selena's paradoxical roles as "dutiful daughter" and sensual performer and her triangular relationships born of transgressing the former. She cites Emma Perez who notes the Oedipal narrative related to Selena's elopement. That is, betraying the law of the father by marrying Chris, leads to her downfall (162). Paredez also points out that "despite [this] oedipal force," the triangular relationship of Abraham, Selena, and Yolanda is "more commonly" referenced as the cause of her demise (163).[15] After reading Paredez, Lozada-Oliva reflected on her own changing perceptions regarding Yolanda's characterization in the novel. She began to view her as a powerless older woman wanting platonic intimacy with other women. Lozada-Oliva used her own life experiences to show empathy for Yolanda (Dupuis).

Yolanda contends that she loved Selena and never meant to kill her. While it is easy to equate the murder scene with an escalating argument, Yolanda's trial proves premeditation, establishing that she bought the gun weeks earlier, returned it, and then acquired it again on March 26th, 1995. Not to mention that we expect former nurses to attempt life-saving measures. Selena's verses juxtapose Yolanda with the other fans that truly love(d) her. The pink heart turning blue refers to how surgeons described the singer's organ at the hospital:

When I called you "Bitch!"	I heard fans cheering. Their hands
	came together
and shot you	because they loved me.
what I meant was,	My heart was once the shape of
"Love!"	a pink fist before it turns blue.
I just didn't want you to go.	I was brain dead before I was a headline.

(162)

Read together, the verses recognize the voyeuristic side of Selena worship:

The contrast of "I shot you" versus the "fans' hands came together and shot you" makes Yolanda synecdoche. As fan club manager, she is their surrogate. By extension, if fandom killed Selena, Yolanda is also a victim of it. The poem transforms fans into accomplices. Their obsessions killed Selena, just like Melissa with her resurrection and (re)killing.[16] In the end, Selena and Yolanda were finally equal: both were headlines, albeit for opposite reasons.

García describes photoshopped images depicting Selena with a future she never realized—family, babies, iconicity, and beyond. Lozada-Oliva's alternate endings imagine what could have been. They are unfinished to reflect how Selena's life was cut short. She creates Selena's daughter, Flor, with a "normal" childhood and flaws. Selena gets cancer. Lozada-Oliva models filling in the gaps to communicate that Selena's archive is perpetual because fans continue creating new shared cultural schema and identificatory spaces.

March 2nd, 2018 marks my pilgrimage to Selena. After presenting a paper on Jenni Rivera's legacy in San Antonio, Bush and I travelled to the Selena Museum at Q productions in Corpus Christi. We arrived to the sound of seagulls, which combined with the modest industrial building, reminded me of my hometown in the "Rust Belt." The same birds circled the light posts in the Great Lakes Mall parking lot when I would report for my shift at Sears. After absorbing Selena's iconic outfits, awards, and personal items, we passed the "Czech-Mex Bakery and Café" on our way to Selena's statue, *El mirador de la flor.* I wondered if Czech polkas and accordions, Country music, or Cleveland Rock and Roll, R&B, and Pop destined me to love Selena. Or was the Latin marketing machine of the nineties and early aughts too strong to resist? Was consuming Selena inevitable in our shared capitalistic mall culture? Even if all or none of the above is true, as I stood alone over Selena's grave at Seaside Memorial Park, I was overwhelmed by the magnitude of being in the physical presence of her former body. I offered her mini white roses and pondered how life could go on for the inhabitants of a nearby apartment building. How do they function knowing Selena rests behind them?

Hogan says that in classical Indian aesthetics, "...artistic works communicate emotion through their 'dhvani' or suggestiveness." This refers to "…all the associations that cluster around anything that a reader encounters in a work of literature or a viewer encounters in a performance" (266). As long as we continue projecting our dreams and emotions onto Selena, her archive and schema will evolve and transform us in the process.

REFERENCES

Aldama, Frederick Luis. *The Routledge Concise History of Latino/a Literature*. Ebook, Taylor & Francis, 2013.

Alexandra. Review of *Dreaming of You,* by Melissa Lozada-Oliva. *Goodreads,* 10 Jan 2022.

Arrarás, María Celeste. *Selena's Secret: The Revealing Story Behind her Tragic Death.* Atria, 2018.

Bécquer, Gustavo Adolfo. "¿Qué es poesía?" 1868.

Berman, Judy. "Who Was Selena? The New Netflix Series About the Singer Doesn't Have a Clue." *Time.* 2 Dec 2020.

Bernaerts, Lars et al. *Stories and Minds: Cognitive Approaches to Literary Narrative*. University of Nebraska Press, 2013.

Bush, Doug P. *Capturing Mariposas: Reading Cultural Schema in Gay Chicano Literature*. The Ohio State University Press, 2019.

Castellanos, Rosario. "Poesía no eres tú." *Poesía no eres tú: Obra Poética (1948-1971).* Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1996.

García, María Elena. "Anything for Selena." *WBUR Futuro*, 2021.

Hogan, Patrick Colm. *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts: A Guide for Humanists.* Routledge, 2003.

Fernández, Delia. "Interview: Latinidad." *Latinidad: The Unity in Latino Communities.* Project Contributors: Adriana Carranza, Daisy García-Castro, and Fabián Hernández.

Flores, Tatiana. "'Latinidad Is Cancelled': Confronting an Anti-Black Construct." *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2021, pp. 58-79.

Greenburg, Rachael Anne. *"Is Yolanda Saldívar Homo La Flor? Revisiting Selena Commodities and the (im)Possibility of Queer Latinx Cultural Citizenship."* MA Thesis, The University of California, Los Angeles, 2016.

Harding, Charlie and Nate Sloan. *Switched on Pop: How Popular Music Works, and Why it Matters*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Holland, Sharon Patricia. *Raising The Dead: Readings of Death and (Black) Subjectivity*. Duke University Press, 2000.

de La Cruz, Sor Juana Inés. "Hombres necios." *Obras completes.* Porrúa, 1997.

Lane, Jeremy. "35. Reception Theory and Reader-Response: Hans-Robert Jauss (1922-1997), Wolfgang Iser (1926-) and the School of Konstanz." *Modern European Criticism and Theory: A Critical Guide*, edited by Julian Wolfreys. Edinburgh University Press, 2006, pp. 278-285.

Lopez, Kristen. 'Selena: The Series' Review: Netflix's Biopic Fails to Give Star a Voice." *Indiewire*. 4 Dec 2020.

Lozada-Oliva, Melissa. "Conversation with Jonathan Mendoza." *YouTube,* uploaded by Women & Children First Bookstore, 23 Jan 2022.
—. "Conversation with Loré Yessuff: On How Creative Work Reminds Us We're Alive." *The Creative Independent*. 21 Sept 2021.
—. "Discussion with Sadie Dupuis." *YouTube,* uploaded by Harvard Book Store, 18 Jan 2022.
—. *Dreaming of You: A Novel in Verse.* Astra House, 2021.
—. "Like Totally Whatever, after Taylor Mali." *National Poetry Slam Championship*, 2015.
Martín-Rodríguez, Manuel M. *Life in Search of Readers: Reading (in Chicano/a) Literature.* University of New Mexico Press, 2003.
Mali, Taylor. "Totally Like Whatever, You Know." *What Learning Leaves*. Hanover Press, 2002.
Matousek, Amanda L. "Where Do We Draw the (Eye)Line(r): Makeup and the Consumption of Latina Bodies." *Hispanic Studies Review,* vol. 5, no. 2, 2021, pp. 17-38.
Molina Guzmán, Isabel and Angharad N. Valdivia. "Brain, Brow, and Booty: Latina Iconicity in US Popular Culture." *The Communication Review*, no. 7, 2004, pp. 205-221.
Moya, Paula M.L. *The Social Imperative: Race, Close Reading, and Contemporary Literary Criticism*. Stanford University Press, 2016.
Nathan. Review of *Dreaming of You,* by Melissa Lozada-Oliva. *Goodreads,* 6 Jun 2021.
Padilla, Felix. *Latino Ethnic Consciousness: The Case of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago*. University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.
Paredez, Deborah. *Selenidad: Selena, Latinos, and The Performance of Memory.* Duke University Press, 2009.
Quintanilla, Abraham. *A Father's Dream: My Family's Journey in Music*. Café con Leche Books, 2021.
Reader. Review of *Dreaming of You,* by Melissa Lozada-Oliva. *Goodreads,* 29 Oct 2021.
Selena. Directed by Gregory Nava, performances by Jennifer Lopez, Edward James Olmos, Jon Seda, Constance Marie, Jacob Vargas, Lupe Ontiveros, and Jackie Guerra, Q Productions/Warner Brothers, 1997.
Selena's Secret. Created by David Jasqui and Alejandro Aimetta, Disney Media, 2018.
Sofia. Review of *Dreaming of You,* by Melissa Lozada-Oliva. *Goodreads,* 1 Feb 2022.
Stavans, Ilan. *Latino USA.: A Cartoon History.* Basic Books, 2015.
Thompson, Harmonica. Review of *Dreaming of You,* by Melissa Lozada-Oliva. *Goodreads,* 4 Feb 2022.

Villarreal, Yvonne. 'Selena' Writers say Netflix Series Disrespected the Singer and Staff." *Los Angeles Times*. 11 Jun 2021.

NOTES

1 A gender neutral fragrance.
2 See: Frederick Luis Aldama, Delia Fernández, Tatiana Flores, Isabel Molina Guzmán and Angharad N. Valdivia, Deborah Paredez, and Ilan Stavans.
3 I define narrative broadly as a synonym for storytelling.
4 I previously examined acts of consuming Selena and other Latinas in my article, "Where Do We Draw the (Eye)Line(r)…" cited in the references above.
5 I use the terms Selena cultural schema and Selena schema interchangeably to refer to the narrative components that help create community among the social group of Selena fans.
6 According to Paredez, queer latinxs also strongly claim Selena: "Two of the most prominent queer memorial practices that proliferate within the sphere of *Selenidad* are Latina lesbian readings of Selena's death scene and queer performances of Selena…" (159). Also see Rachael Anne Greenburg on Selena and queer Latinx cultural citizenship.
7 "By *close reading*, I mean the kind of intensive reading and re-reading that calls for a heightened attention to literary language and form, considering both as semantic structures that mediate authors' and readers' perceptions of the social world" (Moya 9).
8 "In social psychology, and as I mean to use the term, schema refers to the active organization of past experiences (physical and emotional) and past reactions (sensory-motor and cognitive-affective) through which a person apprehends and interacts with incoming stimuli. As structures that have been built up through a person's past behavior and experiences in specific domains, schemas serve 'as patterns for one's current and future behavior' in those and perceptually-related domains" (Markus and Kitayama 229-230, qtd. in Moya 15).
9 Lozada-Oliva's lyric voice jokes about this connection: "We say we hate country songs to separate ourselves from whiteness but what's the difference between a country song and a ranchera, anyway?" (123).
10 Literary theorist, Wolfgang Iser, "…formulates a view of literary meaning which resides neither in the text (*qua object*) nor in the reader (*qua subject*) but in the interaction of the two, an interaction which is conditioned by its context. There are then three inseparable though distinguishable elements or aspects to the act of reading: the *text,* which directs its own reading but is also subject to indeterminacy; the *reader*, or more exactly the reading process, which realizes the text as the production of meaning through modes of concretization, involving progressive synthesizing of responses and information in order to obtain a coherent and significant result; and the *context* conditioning both text and

reading, that is the social and historical norms and assumptions governing both production and reception of any text (Lane 283).

11 Paredez also reads the gaps in Selena's iconic purple pantsuit that the Selena Museum mannequin does not fill (4).

12 For, Paredez this is *Selenidad* in action: "Taken together, the wide-ranging memorial acts explored and undertaken by *Selenidad* underscore that just as Selena engaged in a number of crossovers during her lifetime, she also continues to engender them. She, quite literally, moves us" (xvii).

13 Part I: Como la flor, tanto amor; Part II: Me marcho hoy; Part III: Yo sé perder; Part IV: Como me duele

14 *Las Chismosas*, who often echo Paredez's and Moraga's scholarly work, address this directly: "What does it mean when a woman pulls the trigger? Some scholars say that actually in many ways, the patriarchy influenced Selena's murder in all that it denied Yolanda, which is to say a reflection. Which is to say, whose side are we on here?" (82).

15 "It is precisely Selena's oscillation between family convention and these transgressive means of "Amor Prohibido" (Forbidden Love) that makes her biography a legibly queer text regularly invoked to affirm queer identification with such forbidden allegiances" (Paredez 163).

16 In her chapter on queer Selenidad, Paredez quotes author Sharon Patricia Holland in *Raising the Dead*: 'Bringing back the dead…is the ultimate queer act' (155).