

**Original Article**

**YOU AIN'T WOMAN ENOUGH TO TAKE MY MAN:  
FEMALE INTRASEXUAL COMPETITION AS PORTRAYED  
IN SONGS**

Maryanne L. Fisher

*Department of Psychology, Saint Mary's University*

Cristina Candea

*Max-Planck Institute, Andechs*

**Abstract**

The goal of the current study was to explore, via qualitative means, female intrasexual competition for mates as documented in the lyrics of popular songs that are sung by female musicians. Similar to the recent Darwinian analyses of art and literature, we sought to explore the various tactics and emotions underlying the female competitive experience by way of examining a selection of these songs. Our review shows a wide array of topics, such as reactions to mate poaching, feelings of ownership for mates, attempts to persuade a mate that the rival is not a suitable alternative, and noting differences in mate value between oneself and a perceived potential rival. Most of these topics fall within the documented strategies for intrasexual competition. We discuss these findings within the context of women's competition for mates, as well as the applicability of Darwinian literary analysis to other human artifacts.

**Keywords:** Mate value, mate poaching, mate retention, intrasexual competition, women's mating strategies

**Introduction**

*Applying Darwinian Literary Analysis to Other Media*

Recently, there has been much interest in how popular culture can be understood using evolutionary psychological theory and findings. For example, in June 2012, there was a special issue devoted exclusively to this topic for the journal *Review of General Psychology*. The underlying premise is that if texts can be understood using the framework of Darwinian analysis, whereby one can examine characters and their actions to see how they align with predictions grounded in evolutionary psychology or how they reflect evolved motives (Carroll, 1995), for example, then other media products can also be explored. Indeed, Fisher and Salmon (2012) propose that one can use the methods and

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AUTHOR NOTE: Please direct correspondence to Maryanne L. Fisher, Department of Psychology, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, NS, B3H 3C3. Email: [mlfisher.99@gmail.com](mailto:mlfisher.99@gmail.com)

logic of Darwinian literary studies to better comprehend other products, such as art and music. These artifacts reveal human's evolved motives, emotions, cognitions, and responses to situations in at least two ways. First, one must create these products using an evolved brain, so the product itself represents human nature. Second, an audience consumes these products, perhaps vicariously learning from them (De Backer & Gurven, 2006; Fisher, 2012), which means that we can learn about the human nature of consumers.

We contend that the consumption of a media product is linked to humans' evolved interests, just as it is produced using humans' evolved brains. In effect, consumers are "voting with their money" as to what interests them (see Salmon & Symons, 2001; Voracek & Fisher, 2006). Consequently, what is produced and consumed is not random, but instead reflects topics that can be predicted by theory that is informed by evolution, such as placing an emphasis on issues related to the number of children one might have, or acquiring high quality mates.

Based on the fact that the production and consumption of media products is conjoined with human nature, one can proceed to study a wide variety of media with the goal of comprehending human nature. Indeed, the applicability of the tenets of Darwinian literary analysis have been used to explore art produced by female painters (e.g., Chang, Fisher, & Meredith, in press), the content of comedian Chris Rock (Kuhle, 2012), the reasons underlying celebrity status (De Backer, 2012), sex-specific preferences for pornography versus romance novels (Salmon, 2012), and understanding horror movies (Clasen, 2012).

#### *Prior Evolutionary Analysis of Song Lyrics*

There are two pivotal studies on evolutionary psychology as revealed by songs. First, Kurzban (2012) discusses country music songs and how they reflect an evolved human experience. He proposes that these lyrics have very large (indirect) consequences for fitness, in that they reflect the formation and dissolution of sexual relationships, and acts of serious interpersonal violence. Based on their applicability to fitness, they capture listeners' attention. The current study uses identical logic. Like Kurzban, we posit that songs by women about female intrasexual competition for mates capture listeners' attention because they can be used to increase fitness via indirect, social learning. That is, these songs could be popular because they address the listener's evolved interests, but moreover, they could be providing opportunities to vicariously learn potential solutions to problems related to mate acquisition and retention (see Fisher, 2012, for a review).

However, Kurzban goes further and argues that social learning, as an explanation, does not fully account for why a listener may revisit the same song several times. He, like others, proposes the "cheesecake" explanation might best match music. That is, Pinker (1999, p. 534; see also Carroll, 1998 and Kurzban, 2012), when writing about music as a byproduct, stated, "music is auditory cheesecake, an exquisite confection crafted to tickle the sensitive spots of our...mental faculties." The pleasure we (or at least some of us) derive from eating cheesecake is similar to that we obtain from abstract concepts, such that "Because figuring out something new and true about the world is correlated with good fitness outcome, it feels good—eureka!—to make discoveries" (Kurzban, p. 187). Thus, "songs...differentially activate human reward systems depending on how the information they contain fits with the properties the mind finds rewarding" (Kurzban, 2012, p. 188). Listeners pay to "satisfy their informational appetite...Songs survive and

persist to the extent that people will pay for the privilege of listening to them” (Kurzman, 2012, p. 188).

The second study of relevance is Hobbs and Gallup (2011), who analyzed song lyrics of Billboard charts for R&B, Pop, and Country for reproductive messages. They found that 92% of the top ten songs that made the charts for 2009 contained this type of information. Their findings suggest that some songs deal with topics that tap into female intrasexual competition, such as derogation of a rival’s reputation or mate poaching. However, their categorical analysis grouped together behaviors that might relate to competition more readily than others; for example, promiscuity was considered to be in the same category as derogation or reputation management.

Therefore, using a similar logic to Kurzman (2012), and following up on the interesting findings of Hobbs and Gallup (2011), we sought to conduct an exploratory, qualitative study to examine the specific issue of female intrasexual competition for mates. Moreover, the previous studies did not examine sex of the singer; for our analysis we only examine songs sung by women, given that we are interested in women’s views of competition. We further note that similar to both prior studies, we are not addressing the evolution of music, nor making any evaluation about its aesthetic composition. Instead, we intended to investigate whether female intrasexual competition is a topic about which women sing, and if so, gather some information about the variety of ways it is portrayed.

### *Female Intrasexual Competition*

Generally, women invest the majority of care and bodily resources in all stages of human development, as compared to men. For example, women’s gametes are larger and fewer in number than men’s gametes, and women become pregnant, lactate, and are involved in postpartum care. For women, development is a lifelong concern, in that they typically remain involved in their children’s lives, and later, the lives of their grandchildren. Given this difference, women are thought to be more concerned with the emotional investment of mates and pursue mates who have the ability and willingness to invest in themselves and any children. Thus, they presumably select high quality mates (although women should also select mates with high genetic quality, if given an option).

Women’s higher investment also has direct ramifications for the ways they compete with rivals for mates. Given that women are seeking high quality mates and are very selective, high quality mates are in demand. Although there are individual differences in mate preference, competition exists among women for these desired mates. Furthermore, women who have mates will need to compete to retain them and protect the relationship from potential poachers (see Fisher, in press, for a review).

There are many ways that women intrasexually compete to acquire and retain mates. As Fisher and Cox (2011) discuss, these include making oneself look better than rivals (i.e., self promotion), making a rival look worse relative to self (i.e., competitor derogation), manipulating a rival to reduce the need for competition (i.e., competitor manipulation), and blocking a mate’s attention to rival or manipulating the mate’s activities (i.e., mate manipulation). Each of these strategies encompasses a range of various activities, as determined from the Fisher and Cox qualitative study, whereby participants were asked all the ways in which they compete with others of the same-sex for mates.

For example, self promotion includes enhancing one's physical appearance, improving one's body and athleticism, advertising positive personality features, showing autonomy (e.g., independence, thinking outside the box), direct contact with a mate (e.g., flirting, seducing the mate), and "general activities" such as trying to outshine others. In contrast, competitor derogation involves derogating a rival's appearance, personality, or sexuality, gossiping about the rival (e.g., spreading rumors about the rival, telling the rival's secrets), using direct action such as bullying, or behaving indirectly whereby one does not defend a rival or hides information about a rival.

The strategy of competitor derogation is distinct from competitor manipulation, in that with the latter strategy, there is an effort to directly influence the rival. Competitor manipulation includes items related to appearance (e.g., tell rival to wear unattractive clothing, hide one's own outfit from rival in order to outdo rival), eliminating the target of the competition whereby, for example, one tells the rival the mate is a homosexual or diverts the rival's interest to someone else, and "general activities" in which one might look at a rival to make them feel self-conscious, or hide the fact that one is competing at all.

The last strategy of mate manipulation involves mate attraction (e.g., tell the mate of one's romantic interest), establish commonality with the mate, mate guarding (e.g., sequester the mate, make sure the mate has limited time for the rival, misinform the mate by saying the rival is already in a relationship), and partner satisfaction, in which one compliments the mate, has more sex or makes statements that one knows the mate wishes to hear.

In the current study, we sought to explore, via qualitative methods, how songs that are sung by women portray these strategies.

## **Methods**

### *Songs and Procedure*

We collected as many English-language songs (all sung by female musicians) as we could, and qualitatively analyzed their lyrics for themes. Note that sample of songs was based on convenience and searching Google using various queries. We also asked colleagues and people with a background in music, such as DJs and music journalists, for suggestions of songs that might relate in some capacity to "women and competition for men." This process led to a list of 32 songs (see Table 1). We do not claim to have a complete list of all songs that pertain to female intrasexual competition, but we presume that our collection is representative of all the recent songs (sung by female singers, in English) that exist on the topic. We mention the word "recent" because although we obtained songs dating back to the 1960s (e.g., Patsy Cline's "She's Got You," Dolly Parton's "Jolene," and Etta James' "I'd Rather Go Blind"), the majority of songs we located were from the past decade or two.

In order to then determine how popular these songs were, we collected an assortment of available market-based information on each song. For example, we documented where the song was considered the "top song" for at least one week in the year of release, or the certification of the song (e.g., platinum sales in a particular country, which, according to the Recording Industry Association of America, indicates that two million copies of the song were sold). Due to brevity, we did not include all of

this data in Table 1; readers may request it by contacting the corresponding author. This information was primarily obtained through Wikipedia and musicians' websites.

**Table 1.** Examples of Songs Related to Intrasexual Competition for Mates

Theme	Song	Lyric
Self Promotion	LeToya, "She Don't" (2006)	Here you say you got a girlfriend / But I know / She doesn't even touch you like this / She don't even kiss you like this / She don't even treat you like I do
	#17 US Billboard R&B/Hip Hop Songs	
	Matisse, "Better Than Her" (2010)	I'm a girl who can take the lead / But I'm still the fall back type / I'll give you what you need / And even though I can't explain how I do the damn thing / I can show you tonight that I'll do it better than her
	#1 US Hot Dance List	
	Pussycat Dolls (with Busta Rhymes), "Don't Cha" (2005)	Don't cha wish your girlfriend was hot like me / Don't cha wish your girlfriend was a freak like me / Don't cha wish your girlfriend was raw like me / Don't cha wish your girlfriend was fun like me
	2X Platinum sales USA	
Competitor Derogation	Blondie, "Rip Her to Shreds" (1976)	Oh, you know her, would you look at that hair / Yeah, you know her, check out those shoes / She looks like she stepped out of the middle of somebody's blues
	#81 Australia Billboard	
	Loretta Lynn, "You Ain't Woman Enough (To Take My Man)" (1966)	You say you're gonna take him / But I don't think you can / 'Cause you ain't woman enough / To take my man / Women like you, they're a dime a dozen / You can buy them anywhere
	#2 US Billboard Hot Country Singles	
	Taylor Swift, "Permanent Marker" (2008)	I ain't jealous of you / Just thought you should know / You were never good enough for him / Or anything like me
	Single data not available; as of October 2012, album has sold over 6.6 million copies in the USA, second biggest- selling album in last 6 years, 6 <sup>th</sup> best selling digital album in history	
Competitor Manipulation	Brandy (with Monica), "The Boy is Mine" (1998)	You need to give it up / Had about enough / It's not hard to see / The boy is mine / I'm sorry that you seem to be confused / He belongs to me
	2X Platinum sales USA	

*Female intrasexual competition in songs*

	Dolly Parton, "Jolene" (1974)	I'm begging of you please don't take my man / Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene / Please don't take him just because you can
	Platinum sales USA	
Mate Manipulation	Annie, "I Know Ur Girlfriend Hates Me" (2008)	Who's wearing your trousers now / She's no good / Oh stop pretending she's misunderstood / I heard her saying it's either me or her / Smell the coffee boy, and open your eyes / Life's too long for you to get it wrong
	#54 UK Singles Chart	
	Avril Lavigne, "Girlfriend" (2007)	Hey hey, you you, I don't like your girlfriend / No way, no way, I think you need a new one / Hey hey, you you, I could be your girlfriend
	2X Platinum sales USA	
	Ayo, "Down on My Knees" (2006)	Do you really think she can love you more than me, baby / I know she won't / Cause I loved you, unconditionally
	In top 100 for Belgian, French, and Italian album charts	
	Beyoncé, "Ring the Alarm" (2006)	I been through this too long / But I'll be damned if I see another chick on your arm / You can't stay, you gotta go/ Ain't no other chicks spending your dough
	Gold sales USA	
	Cher Lloyd, "Want U Back" (2012)	I broke it off thinking you'd be crying / Now I feel like shit looking at you flying / I want you back, I want you back / Want, want you, want you back/ Please, this ain't even jealousy / She ain't got a thing on me / Tryna rock them ugly jeans
	Platinum sales USA	
	Shakira, "Objection" ( <i>Tango</i> ; 2001)	Next to her cheap silicone I look minimal / That's why in front of your eyes I'm invisible / But you've got to know small things also count / Better put your feet on the ground / And see what it's all about
	Platinum sales Australia	
Winning Competition (General)	Paramore, "Misery Business" (2007)	She's got a body like an hourglass that's ticking like a clock / It's a matter of time before we all run out / But when I thought he was mine she caught him by the mouth / I waited eight long months, she finally set him free / I told him I couldn't lie, he was the only one for me / Two weeks and we caught fire / She's got it out for me but I wear the biggest smile
	Platinum sales USA	
Competition Withdrawal	Sugarland, "Stay" (2006)	Why does she get the best of you / So next time you find you wanna leave her bed for mine / Why don't you stay
	Platinum sales USA	
Dealing with Betrayal	Carrie Underwood, "Before He Cheats" (2006)	I dug my key into the side / Of his pretty little souped-up 4 wheel drive / Carved my name into his leather seats / I took a Louisville slugger to both head lights / Slashed a hole in all 4 tires / And maybe next time he'll think before he cheats
	3X Platinum sales USA; Grammy winner country song of the year 2008	

*Female intrasexual competition in songs*

	Cher, "Dark Lady" (1974)  #1 US Billboard Hot 100, #2 US Billboard Hot Country Singles	Then I remembered her strange perfume / And how I smelled it once in my own room / So I sneaked back / And caught her with my man / Laughing and kissing/ Till they saw the gun in my hand / The next thing I knew / They were dead on the floor
	Jazmine Sullivan, "Bust Your Windows" (2008)  #31 US Billboard Hot 100, #4 US Billboard Hot Adult R&B	I bust the windows out your car /After I saw you laying next to her / I didn't wanna but I took my turn / I'm glad I did it 'cause you had to learn
	Taylor Swift, "Better than Revenge" (2010)  Album 4X Platinum sales USA	She came alone, got him alone, and let's hear the applause / She took him faster than you can say sabotage / I never saw it coming, wouldn't have suspected it / I underestimated just who I was dealing with... / She should keep in mind / There is nothing I do better than revenge
Loss of Competition	Chely Wright, "The Other Woman" (1996)  #25 US Billboard Top Country Albums	They tried to keep it undercover / But you would soon discover / That she's your worst nightmare coming true / You don't even know her name / But you wish her a life of pain
	Etta James, "I'd Rather Go Blind" (1968)  Album #21 US Billboard R&B	Something told me it was over / When I saw you and her talkin' / Something deep down in my soul said, "Cry, girl" / When I saw you and that girl walkin' around
	Kelly Clarkson, "Never Again" (2007)  2X Platinum sales USA	It was you / Who chose to end it like you did / I was the last to know / ...If she really knows the truth / She deserves you / A trophy wife, oh how cute / Ignorance is bliss
	Miranda Lambert, "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" (2007)  Platinum sales USA	I saw her mustang / And my eyes filled with rage / I brought my pistol but I ain't some kind of fool / So I walked right in barehanded / She was on his arm while he was playing pool / Just like I used to do
	Miranda Lambert, "More Like Her" (2007)  #90 US Billboard Hot 100, #17 US Billboard Country Singles	She's beautiful in her simple little way / She don't have too much to say when she gets mad / She understand she don't let go of anything / Even when the pain gets really bad / I guess I should've been more like that

*Female intrasexual competition in songs*

<p>Patsy Cline, "She's Got You" (1962)</p> <p>#1 US Billboard Hot Country and Western Sides, #14 US Billboard Hot 100, #3 US Billboard Easy Listening</p>	<p>I've your class ring / that proved you cared / And it still looks the same as when you gave it dear / The only thing different / The only thing new / I've got these little things / She's got you</p>
<p>Paula DeAnda, "When it was Me" (2006)</p> <p>#25 US Billboard Rhythmic Top 40, #13 US Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles (a chart of songs that have not reached main Billboard Hot 100)</p>	<p>I'm not jealous, no I'm not / I just want everything she's got / You look at her so amazed / I remember way back when you used to look at me that way / Tell me what makes her so much better than men / What makes her just everything I can never be</p>
<p>Samantha Fox, "Another Woman" (1991)</p> <p>No noteworthy sales; song reportedly hit some Continental European charts, but unable to verify</p>	<p>Got nothing to live for, I'm losing the game / She has got the best of me, my man</p>
<p>Shakira, "Don't Bother" (2005)</p> <p>#42 US Billboard Hot 100, #25 US Pop Songs (Billboard)</p>	<p>She practices Tai Chi / She'd never lose her nerve / She's more than you deserve / She's just far better than me</p>
<p>Soko "I'll Kill Her" (2007)</p> <p>Song reached #1 in sales for Danish version of iTunes store, #9 in Triple J Hottest 100 (Australian radio station) 2007 radio poll</p>	<p>She stole my future, she broke my dream / I'll kill her, I'll kill her / She stole my future when she took you away</p>
<p>The Veronicas, "Everything I'm Not" (2005)</p> <p>Gold sales Australia</p>	<p>Cause the girl that you want / She was tearing us apart / Cause she's everything / Everything I'm not</p>
<p>Toni Braxton, "How Could an Angel Break My Heart" (1996)</p> <p>8X Platinum sales USA</p>	<p>I heard he sang a lullaby / I heard he sang it from his heart / When I found out I thought I would die / Because that lullaby was mine / I heard he sealed it with a kiss / He gently kissed her cherry lips / I found that so hard to believe / Because his kiss belonged to me</p>

*Note:* There are various awards these songs have won, or other indicators of their popularity. For brevity, we have provided a sampling of this information; readers may contact the corresponding author for complete details. All details are provided for the song, not the album unless otherwise specified, and any placement of the song on lists indicates peak placement. When market data (e.g., number of songs sold) are available, it is listed here, such that gold indicates 1 million sales and platinum indicates 2 million sales, and for brevity, if we could locate sales numbers, we omitted chart information. Note that we have reported data on the USA market, but mention that for approximately half of the songs, there is further data available on European and Australian sales.

## **Results**

Women sing about issues involving female competition for mates, as one would expect based on evolutionary psychological theory. We have included a sample of the lyrics in Table 1 in order to be transparent about the songs that we used in our study, and with respect to how they were categorized.

As shown in Table 1, the four strategies that have been previously documented are represented in songs. That is, women sing about self promotion (3 songs), competitor derogation (3 songs), competitor manipulation (2 songs), and mate manipulation (6 songs). Moreover, though, our collection also contained one song about winning in general terms, one that involved withdrawing from competition (in a context of being the “other woman” in an adulterous relationship), four that pertained to how women dealt with betrayal by a mate (hence, losing their mate to a rival), and 12 that were about loss of the competition, in that the singer lamented about the loss of the mate to a rival.

During our research, we encountered a wide assortment of songs that were sung by women and pertain to various facets of mating strategies. We mention them here because they may be considered tangentially related to female intrasexual competition for mates, and also because they represent directions for further study. Thus, there are many potential directions to go with future analyses of songs, and it seems particularly lucrative to examine, in particular, the variability of women’s mating strategies in songs. There are songs that focus on marriage (e.g., Beyonce, “Single Ladies”: “Cause if you liked it you should’ve put a ring on it”), whereas others focus on sex appeal (e.g., Kesha, “Tick Tock”: “Now the dudes are lining up cause they hear we got swagger / But we kick them to the curb unless they look like Mick Jagger”). There are songs where the woman dismisses the mate (e.g., Amy Winehouse, “Me and Mr. Jones”: “Nobody stands between me and my man / It’s me and Mr. Jones / ... You thought I didn’t love you when I did / Can’t believe you played me out like that / No you ain’t worth the guest list / Plus one of all them girls you kiss,” or Aaliyah, “If Your Girl Only Knew”: “If your girl only knew that you was trying to get with me / What would she do / If your girl only knew / That you was dissin’ her to talk to me ... She’s crazy to put up with you / Oh boy I won’t be no fool / Let you like what you see / It ain’t easy to get with me.”

Others sing about the fact that they could have the mate if they wanted him, with overtones of putting down another woman. Toni Braxton’s “He Wasn’t Man Enough” includes the lyrics, “Listen girl / Who do you think I am / Don’t you know he that he was my man / But I chose to let him go ... But you married him / Do you know I made him leave / Do you know he begged to stay with me / He wasn’t man enough for me.” This latter example may indeed fall within intrasexual competition, but since the woman has withdrawn from the contest because she felt the mate was of low value, we did not include it in our analysis.

In contrast, some songs talk about the fact that the woman has other mating options, aside from the mate. For example Billie Holiday's "Baby Get Lost" contains lyrics that say "I try to stop your cheating / But I just don't have the time / 'Cause I've got so many men / That they're standing right in line." Or, Rihanna's "Unfaithful" includes "And I know that he knows I'm unfaithful / And it kills him inside / To know that I am happy with some other guy? I can see him dying."

We also discovered female intrasexual competition is also sung about, by female singers, in many cultures. For example, Zaho's "C'est Chelou" contains (translated at <http://lyricstranslate.com/en/c039est-chelou-its-wierd.html>), "I do not appreciate / That she comes to my home when I'm not in / Then she climbs into my sheets / Dressed in my pajamas / I appreciate even less / That you check if I'm coming back with that suspicious look upon your face / And as soon as I get home / It's, 'Honey, come into my arms.'" We have collected nine Romanian songs as part of our investigation (the authors can provide a list upon request); for example, Bambi's "Doi Ochi Caprui" included (translated by the second author), "There was another girl who liked him / Who I thought is my friend/ But later I understood who she was/ And how much he loved her."

## **Discussion**

We analyzed an assortment of English-language songs that are sung by women and that pertain to female intrasexual competition for mates. We sought to observe how song content related to documented intrasexual competition behaviors, from the scientific literature. In effect, we could then determine whether the literature has included all the possible behaviors that women might use to compete for rivals. Based on the existing literature about women's competition, we expected that if women sang about their intrasexual competition for mates, the songs would deal with ways to self promote, the derogation of rivals, and manipulating competitors or mates. Indeed, we found songs with elements of these strategies. Interestingly, whereas previous empirical work shows that self promotion is an often used strategy (Fisher & Cox, 2011; Schmitt & Buss, 1996), our analysis revealed more songs about mate manipulation than the other three strategies. There are numerous explanations for why this is the case. It could be that mate manipulation makes for a more interesting narrative than the other strategies, or that one is more likely to sing a song to a mate than to a rival.

### *Betrayal and Jealousy*

We did not anticipate the inclusion of songs that dealt with how one copes with the betrayal of a mate to a rival, nor had we expected a large number of songs to pertain to loss of a mate to a rival. Indeed, the latter issue is a relatively frequent topic. Interestingly, neither of these issues is typically included under the umbrella of "female intrasexual competition for mates" in the scholarly literature. Researchers typically document the types of actions women perform (e.g., Buss, 1988; Buss & Dedden, 1990; Fisher & Cox, 2011; Walters & Crawford, 1994) but it seems to remain unknown how they deal with losing the competition, whether it be due to a rival's actions or the decision of the mate. There is literature on women's reactions to betrayal; for example, Easton and Shackelford (2009) examine morbid jealousy and how the sexes differ in their partner-directed violence. They report that among those classified as having jealousy that is more readily activated, men, more than women, use physical violence (often involving

their hands, rather than an object) in an attempt to kill, and actually do kill their partner. However, there apparently exists scant literature on women's experiences of betrayal or of losing the intrasexual competition for mates. Therefore, our analysis may have unearthed a new area for further investigation, in that the consequences of women's loss of competition may be a fruitful area to explore.

Another issue that we had not considered *a priori* was the importance of infidelity to the topic of intrasexual competition, as this relationship is not well represented in the literature. We note that the songs do not clearly make the distinction between sexual and emotional infidelity, a division which has garnered much research attention (e.g., see Carpenter, 2012 for a review). Many of the songs listed in Table 1 mention the fact that the woman was in a relationship and her mate was poached, or that the woman herself is trying to poach the mate. The prevalence of women singing about mate poaching is hardly surprising, given that approximately 90% of adult men (i.e., over 30 years of age) report that someone has tried to attract them from a mate for a long-term relationship or short-term sexual encounter, with 13% (long-term) to 27% (short-term) of men saying this happens frequently (study 1 in Schmitt & Buss, 2001). It is possible that mate poaching (in reality or the threat of it) might serve as a trigger of much of female competition. These songs, then, could serve as a teaching device about the experiences one has had with mate poachers, potentially acting as cautionary tales, which is in keeping with the social learning hypothesis. It falls to future research to more fully document, using empirical methods, the relationship between infidelity and intrasexual competition. Perhaps those who suspect a mate is about to be, or might currently be, unfaithful will heighten their use of competitive tactics in general, via sequestering their mate, lying to the mate about rivals and improving their own appearance. Currently, the analysis of song lyrics does not provide sufficient information to collapse the category of "betrayal" with other categories, but due to its direct link to loss of competition for a mate, it was an important inclusion to our study.

Some of the songs about infidelity and rivals discuss the fact that the singer has discovered that she is the "other woman" and has effectively lost the competition. A portion of these songs are about being the long-term partner of the mate and reacting to the fact that he has been involved with another woman, whereas other songs are from the perspective of the other woman. Similar to some of the other topics mentioned, mate poaching is rarely discussed as part of intrasexual competition for mates. Indeed, in the canonical article in the area (Schmitt & Buss, 2001) the words "competition," "rival," "confrontation" or similar adjectives do not appear. It could be the case that scholars working in this area need to expand their view to include more behaviors as being involved in competition, or that the songs we selected that include elements of mate poaching do not represent competition. The latter, although possible, is unlikely, given the simple face validity of the lyrics, and instead, we suggest that researchers reconsider how they have conceptualized this topic. In any case, these songs collectively show that women sing about their competition for mates, and in many instances, provide clear details about the rival and their feelings towards the situation.

#### *Other Cultural Products*

It is important to note that the theme of women's intrasexual competition is prevalent not only in women's songs, but also in other forms of popular culture. For example, movies and stories from a wide assortment of genres also contain this

information (e.g., *Cinderella*, *The Witches of Eastwick* (in which three witches fight over a wizard), *The Girl with the Pearl Earring* (where a maid becomes a person of interest to the husband of the household, and his wife struggles to get the maid out of the house), and *Gone with the Wind* (featuring a lifelong jealousy of Scarlett against her sister, Suellen, because of Scarlett's unconditional love to Ashley). One could go a step further and examine whether the screenwriters and authors of these films and stories, respectively, are women.

Female intrasexual competition is also evident in ancient Greek legends. Medea avenges her husband's betrayal when he leaves her to marry the daughter of the King of Corinth. Medea took her revenge by sending Glauce, the rival, a dress and golden coronet, covered in poison. This resulted in the deaths of both Glauce and Glauce's father, when he went to save her. According to the tragic poet Euripides, Medea continued her revenge, murdering her own children whom she had with her betraying husband. These stories are apparent also in international folklore. La Llorona ("The Weeping Woman") is a widespread legend in Mexico, American Southwest, Puerto Rico, and Central America. The basic story tells of a woman who kills her children in order to be with the man she loved. He rejects her for another woman, and she kills herself.

We narrowed our analyses to include only songs that are sung by women, and thus, we excluded songs sung by mixed-sex groups, or by men. It may be informative to include songs that are sung by mixed-sex groups or men in the future. For example, ABBA's "The Winner Takes it All": "The winner takes it all / The loser has to fall/ ... But tell me does she kiss / Like I used to kiss you?" Alternatively, one could investigate male intrasexual competition as portrayed in songs that are sung by men, and compare the similarities to the results obtained in the current study.

### *Conclusion*

The applicability of the Darwinian literary analysis to other forms of media products is vast. We have demonstrated how songs that are sung by women, in English, about intrasexual competition for mates readily reflect known strategies, but also uncover some aspects of behavior that have yet to be discussed by researchers. These songs and stories may exist to reflect issues of evolutionary importance to women, thereby highlighting the various motives and emotions women experience in mating competition. They might also serve as learning devices (like gossip; De Backer & Gurven, 2006), allowing women to gather, indirectly, information on how best to compete for mates. We posit that these artifacts (i.e., songs and stories) are similar to gossip, for which research indicates we attend to information that would have conferred evolutionary relevant advantages to our ancestors. Therefore, by using media products, researchers might gain new insights into the ways they conceptualize their work, but at the same time, validating some of the existing findings within the literature.

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