Rap originated from black culture in the 1970 New York "underground music scene" and over time other races have adapted this form of music to express their individual cultures and backgrounds. This form of music is generally spoken, rather than sung, to various beats and rhythms usually expressing themes of gang affiliation, drug use, women (who are almost always misrepresented), money, and -- most of all -- the struggles that African Americans faces on a daily basis. Although rap is now seen as a derogatory form of music, those of the Caucasian, Latino, and Asian races have started to create rap music of their own reflecting their own culture and lifestyle.

### White Rap Artists

Many white rappers try to establish themselves as tough and dangerous by pretending to be someone they’re not (such as Vanilla Ice). Many of them make up life stories and hardships they’ve been through. The baggy designer name clothing and expensive jewelry they wear represents their willingness to be like African American rappers. Although they also talk about struggles they’ve experienced throughout their life, they also rap about women and personal issues on a more emotional level. Mac Miller, for example, has multiple songs with recurring themes of love and wanting a girl he can’t have.

### Black Rap Artists

African American’s lyrics revolve around poverty and their struggles, and they often rap about upholding their superiority as a group rather than individually. Black rappers over time have developed a derogatory view and misrepresentation of women; it is their source of dominance and they take pride in their status. If you have money and are a “player” with a lot of women, then you are more dominant and have “respect” from others. Despite the segregation they went through, rap was a way to express their frustrations under unequal treatment. They often talk about their hometown in their music to build credibility about their experiences and hardships. “Keeping it real” is a term used to sum up the authenticity of their lyrics about their life and the problems they’ve been through.

### Asian Rap Artists

Asian music values women in a more respectful sense than that of African American and Latino rap. The social issues of Asian Americans are also talked about in much of their music. Some rappers, like Jin, choose to talk about their race in their lyrics to connect with other Asian Americans. Others choose not to mention their race or ethnicity knowing that it could effect their fan-base since they are not a group from which rap originated.

### Latino Rap Artists

Similarly to African Americans, Latinos tend to rap about good times, their pursuit of money, women, and achieving a high status. Cypress Hill was the first Cuban-American hip hop group to produce platinum and multi-platinum albums in the U.S. Two of the groups members, B-Real and Sen Dog wrote their songs in English mixed with Spanish language as well. Big Pun is another Latino rapper of Puerto Rican-American descent emerging from the Bronx who infused his music with phrases and situations that Hispanics would be able to relate to.

### Authenticating Street Credibility

Vanilla Ice, one of the first few white rappers years after the Beastie Boys, faked much of his life to his fans and the rest of the public. He was said to have grown up in Miami; while there he claimed to have been “stabbed five times and lost half his blood.” To be considered “tough,” like other artists, such as Biggie Smalls or Tupac, the biography about his life had to establish street credibility. Once people found out he was raised in Texas, had not been stabbed, and has not lived through the experience and struggles of living in the streets, his success quickly diminished.

Many rappers talk about where they are from – more specifically, their hometowns – in their music to authenticate and build credibility about their experiences and hardships. In Fabolous’s song featuring Jay-Z called “Brooklyn,” they pay tribute to the borough in which they resided in growing up. In his first verse, Fabolous gives a shout out to various neighborhoods in Brooklyn such as Bedford, Bushwick, Brownsville, Redhook, and a number of others. These neighborhoods are known for the poverty, crime, and drug use in the late-1980s.

### Conclusion

Rap has inevitably become a widespread phenomenon upon all races in America. Through thorough research and analysis, we have established that the music each race produces has a different meaning to their personal values and lifestyles. African Americans still are currently the most predominant race in the industry, however, Caucasian, Latino, and Asian races have been extremely involved as well. African Americans have expressed the most common themes in their music to be about poverty, women, and the struggles they have dealt with in their history. Caucasians are fond of story-telling in their rap songs and rap about personal issues on a more emotional level. Latinos tend to put their own twist of their Spanish heritage incorporating Spanish phrases in their lyrics and rap about their struggles as a minority group in the U.S. Asians generally choose to rap about their views on society and use race in their lyrics to connect with other Asian Americans. Although each race touches upon different aspects in respect to their individual cultures, rap has definitely become a powerful form of artistic expression bringing races of all people together in America.

### References