

Assignment 1 Due Monday February 10th, 2002

Common's "I Used to Love H.E.R." [lyrics available at www.ohhla.com] (off his 1994 album Resurrection) is regarded as one of the best songs ever written about hip-hop (along with KRS One's "Emcees Act Like They Don't Know" and Dead Prez' "Hip Hop" -- Let's Get Free). Common's use of metaphor, analogy, and simile, tell the story of a 'girl' he knew and how she grew up.

I offer this song's lyrics to you as a roadmap for this course. Although written in 1994 (or earlier) it brings us close enough to the present (hip-hop has been stagnant since 1996) where the reader can use it as a timeline as we read "Hip-hop America."

Your assignment is to write a 2 to 3 page paper describing your experiences with hip-hop. Please use SPECIFIC examples [places, songs, people] to back up your opinions. While an opinion paper, I will frown upon papers which do not come across as genuinely introspective in nature.

Alternatively, Erykah Badu and Common have teamed up on a new song called "Love of My Life (An Ode to Hip-hop)." After several listens, you will realize that it is an extension of "I Used to love H.E.R." with Erykah Badu describing her relationship with hip-hop and Common giving us some insight into post 1994 hip-hop. While there are several esoteric references which require prerequisite knowledge, as a challenge, write a 3 to 4 page paper breaking down the lyrics of this song and offering a critique of Common's final verse.