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Texas A&M professor bases psychological research on Elvis Presley's life

BY BRANDI BALLARD  
Staff writer

Women loved him. Teenagers swooned over him. He has been labeled "The King of Rock and Roll." And now Elvis Presley is the subject of psychological research.

Dr. David Rosen, a professor of psychology at Texas A&M, is currently researching Elvis Presley and his connection to ancient figures such as kings or whether he represents a new archetype in society.

"Instead of dealing with their own inner sense of authority and links to the divine, people project this onto him," Rosen said.

He first mentioned Elvis in his 1993 book *Transforming Depression: Healing the Soul Through Creativity*. In his book, he discussed how people avoid suicide by committing "egocide."

He coined the term "egocide" after he interviewed ten people who jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge and survived.

"A part of their ego was troubled and self-destructive," Rosen said. "When they jumped, this part of themselves died. They had generalized those several parts of their whole being. They all had a spiritual experience — they confused the divine with the unknown. In other words, they were reborn and found a purpose to live."

Rosen has developed a way of working with depressed and suicidal people. He uses an innovative theory called "egocide" and transforms them. The suffering person goes through a symbolic death of the negative and destructive parts of themselves and then experiences new life.

"It's like a heart attack, except it's a soul attack," Rosen said. "A part of the psyche dies, and like with the recovering heart attack victim, there is regeneration and healing."

In his book, Rosen explains Elvis' tragedy and how he was unable to

let go of part of his destructive side. "Elvis identified with this negative part of himself that pulled him down," Rosen said. "He wasn't able to realize a new sense of self."

Now, Rosen is researching what can be learned from Elvis' death and his rebirth as a mythic figure in our society.

"It is the very same thing with Princess Diana," Rosen said. "We

as long as Elvis, she probably would have had continuing emotional problems too."

Fans of Elvis span all generations and the attraction comes from various facets of his personality and career.

Bethany Robinson, a junior elementary education major, likes to collect Elvis paraphernalia.

"He's good-looking," Robinson

Rock' and moves when it rings," Zetuche said. "I want to go to Graceland, but I'm not an Elvis freak."

Rosen is currently doing research on Elvis' death. He has talked to Elvis' dentist, who was the last health professional Elvis saw before he died.

"I thought Elvis may have committed suicide," Rosen said. "The dentist said he wasn't distraught. They even had made future plans of going to California and visiting their daughters. He didn't seem to have death on his mind."

Rosen said he now believes it was not suicide, since there was no suicide note. Rosen said Elvis did take too many drugs, but he had done that before. He said perhaps Elvis was groggy and did not know what he was doing.

"Elvis was addicted to drugs, hence he was involved in self-destructive behavior," Rosen said. Rosen is also working on why Graceland has become such a religious shrine.

"There is something more or why would 50,000 people participate in a candle light vigil on the twentieth anniversary of his death just over a month ago?" Rosen said.

He wants to know why more people live their lives through these people. He said he thinks people need to look at themselves and how they participate in the deaths of these people.

"Wouldn't it be best to withdraw our projection off of these celebrities, however it may be too late," Rosen said. "For example, there are already four churches established in his name. Why do so many identify with Elvis? Why is Elvis such a popular archetypal mythic figure?"

Perhaps it is some way for people to redeem themselves. "With such wide spread dedication to Elvis and his memory, some people find it difficult to accept the death of a cultural icon."

"Ladies and Gentlemen, Elvis has left the planet."



project onto these celebrities things we aren't dealing with in ourselves. We want them to represent something we lack or are not in touch with. We make them larger than life."

Rosen said he wonders why people want to make Elvis into a king. He said it is like the postage stamp. People voted for the young, good-looking, talented Elvis over the stamp of the old, fat, drug addict Elvis.

"The same thing is happening with Princess Diana," Rosen said. "Already there have been reported sightings of her. If Diana had lived

said. "It's not so much his music, rather it is that he's a leader. He still influences the people of today."

Robinson said she thinks he led a fascinating life, taking initiative and doing things others did not deem appropriate.

Rosen wants to find out why people make him into a deity like Marilyn Monroe.

Michael Zertuche, a junior accounting major, is a fan of Elvis. He mainly listens to the music.

"I have a couple of posters and an Elvis telephone that plays 'Jailhouse

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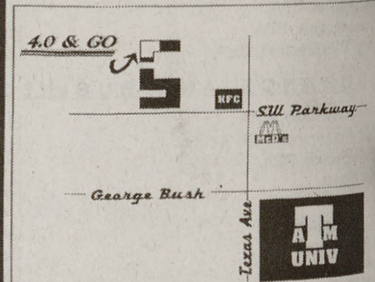
(First 5 to call with answer get free review!)

Last week's answer: Brown is the most frequent M&M!

Answer appears Thursday

846-TUTOR (8886)

The week of September 28 - October 2				
Acct 229 All Profs	Part I Mon Sept 29 3pm-5pm or 8pm-10pm	Part II Tue Sept 30 6pm-8pm or 8pm-10pm	Part III Wed Oct 1 6pm-8pm or 8pm-10pm	Part IV Thu Oct 2 6pm-8pm or 8pm-10pm
Acct 229 Billy's Video	Stasny & Cassidy Sun Sept 28 9pm-12am	Thornton & Rose Mon Sept 29 10pm-1am	Rose Tue Sept 30 10pm-1am	Joiner Wed Oct 1 10pm-1am
Acct 315	Part II Sun Sept 28 3pm-6pm	Tickets Go On Sale Sunday At 2:00 p.m. Ask us about our season passes for the semester! Located next to Kentucky Fried Chicken and Lack's Furniture across from Kroger's and McDonald's on Southwest Parkway and Texas Ave. Call 846-TUTOR (846- 8886)		
Acct 327	Part III Sun Sept 28 6pm-9pm			
Bana 303 Buffa	Part I Thur Oct 2 5pm-8pm	For Test 1		
Bana 305 Stein	Part I Sun Sept 28 4pm-7pm	Part II Mon Sept 29 4pm-7pm		
Bana 305 Bretthauer Anthony	Part I Tue Sept 30 4pm-7pm	Part II Wed Oct 1 4pm-7pm		
Econ 322	Part I Tue Sept 30 7pm-10pm	Part II Wed Oct 1 7pm-10pm		
Gene 301	Part I Sun Sept 28 7pm-9pm	Part II Mon Sept 29 7pm-9pm	Part III Tue Sept 30 7pm-9pm	Part IV Wed Oct 1 7pm-9pm
Math 142	Part I Sun Sept 28 11pm-1am	Part II Mon Sept 29 11pm-1am	Part III Tue Sept 30 11pm-1am	
Math 151	Part I Sun Sept 28 9pm-11pm	Part II Mon Sept 29 9pm-11pm	Part III Tue Sept 30 9pm-11pm	Part IV Wed Oct 1 9pm-11pm
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