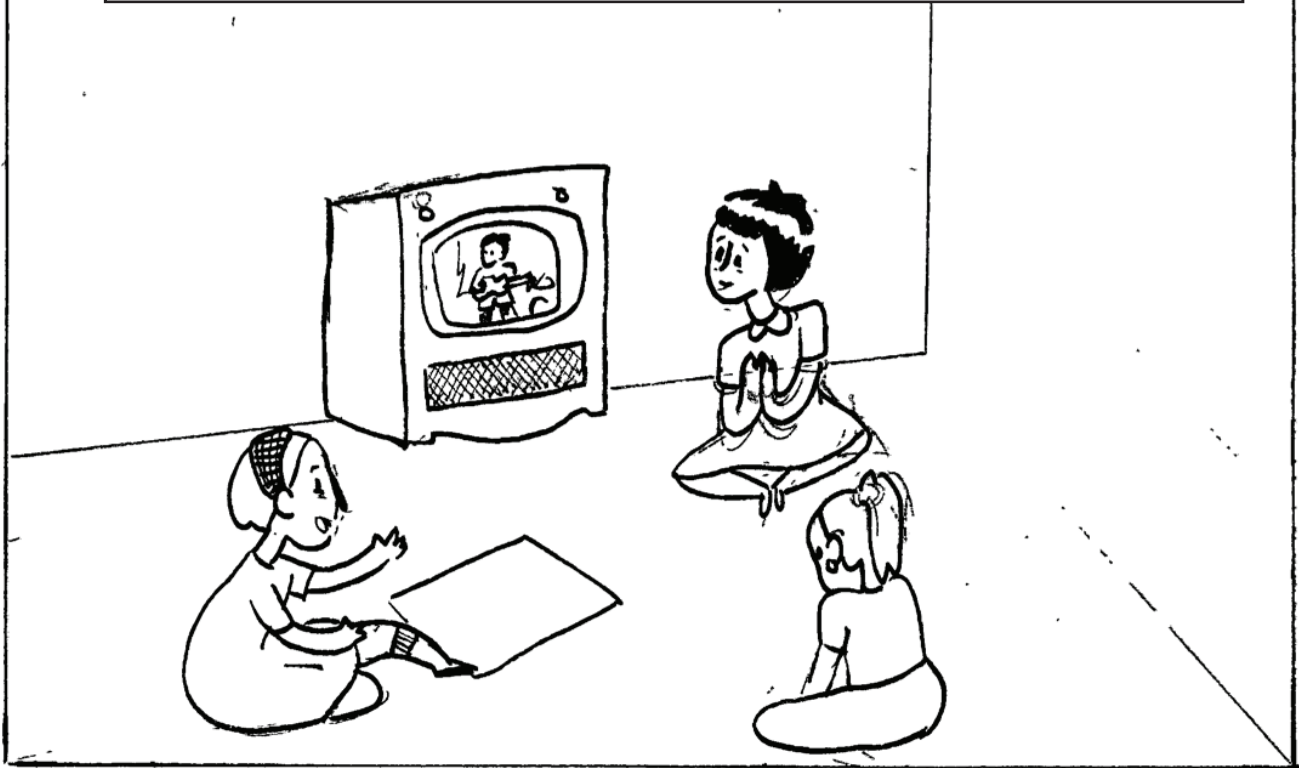
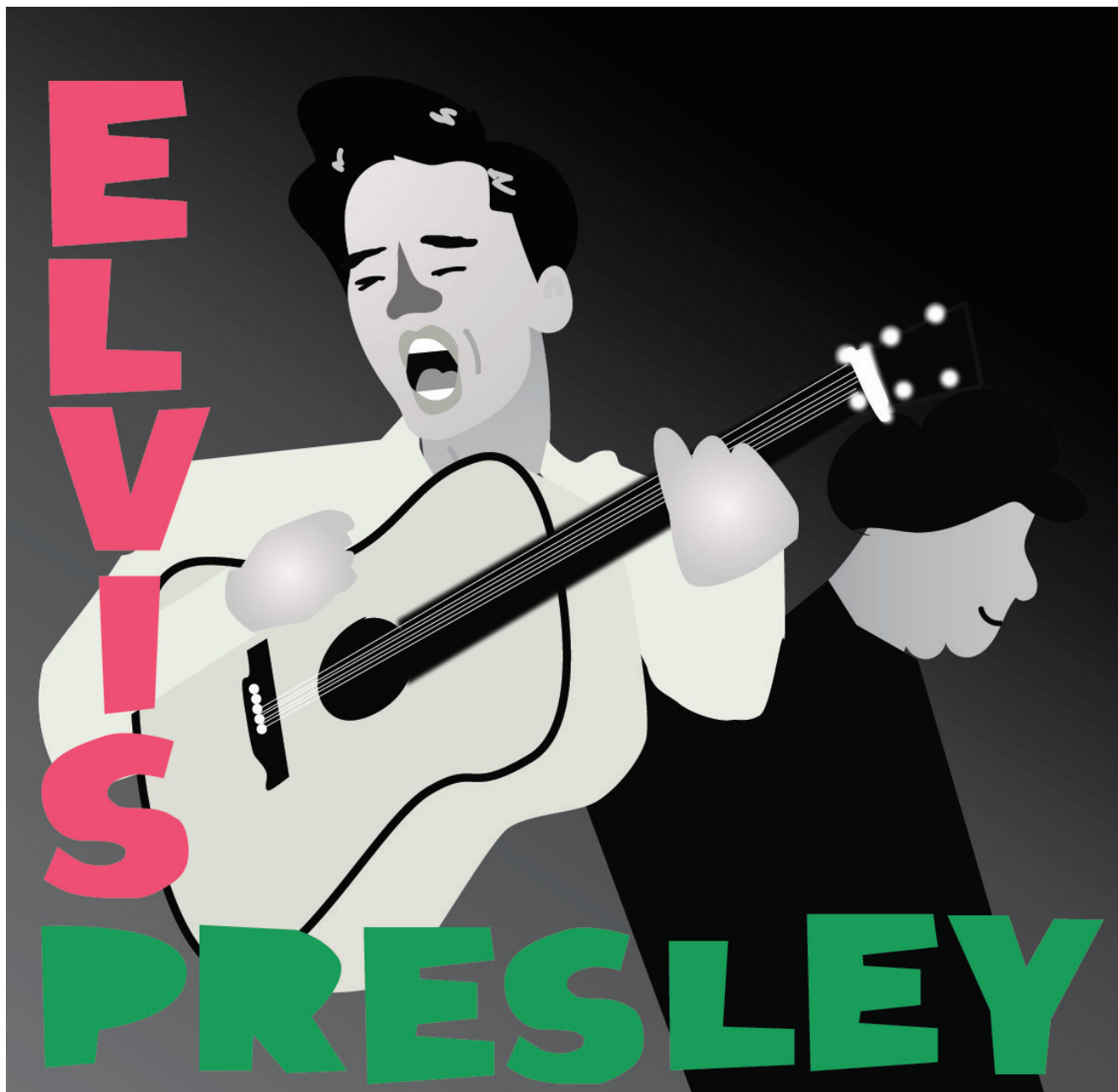


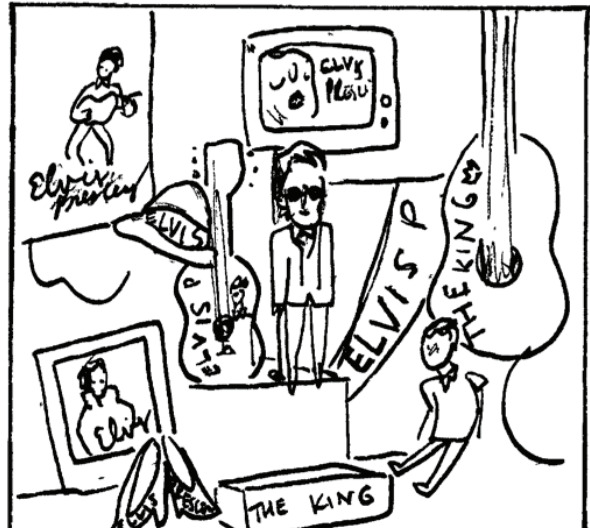
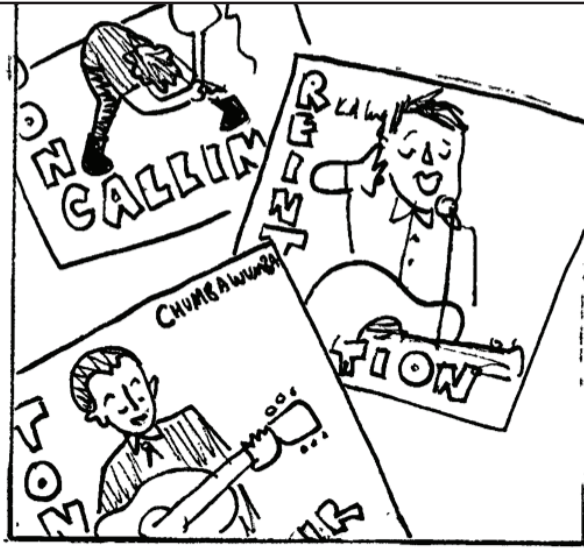
ALBUM COVERS OFTEN FEATURED IMAGES OF PERFORMERS, BUT NO ALBUM COVER CAPTURES HOW THE ARTIST BECOMES LINKED TO THE SOUND OF THE MUSIC QUITE LIKE ELVIS PRESLEY'S 1956 SELF-TITLED ALBUM. LISTED AT NUMBER 40 ON ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE'S LIST OF 100 GREATEST ALBUM COVERS, PRESLEY'S DEBUT ALBUM DEMONSTRATES THE KING'S INFLUENCE ON THE CREATION OF ALBUM ARTWORK.⁸





THIS ALBUM COVER, MUCH LIKE THE BEGINNING OF ELVIS'S MUSIC CAREER, EXUDES SEX APPEAL. ELVIS STANDS IN THE CENTER OF THE COMPOSITION, DOMINATING THE SPACE. HIS EYES ARE CLOSED, AND HIS MOUTH IS OPEN AS HE BELTS OUT AN ORGASMIC NOTE AND STRIKES A CHORD ON THE GUITAR. HIS NAME APPEARS IN BOTH GREEN AND PINK BLOCK LETTERS -- PINK BEING A COLOR THAT EVOKES FEELINGS OF SENSUALITY. THE GREEN TEXT MAKES THE PINK MORE VIBRANT, THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THOSE TWO COLORS AS WELL AS THE HIGH CONTRAST WITHIN THE PHOTOGRAPH ITSELF AS THE FIRST EVER ROCK ALBUM TO HIT NUMBER 1 ON THE BILLBOARD CHARTS, THIS ALBUM COVER EMBODIES EVERYTHING ROCK 'N' ROLL IS ABOUT.⁹ ONCE AGAIN, THIS ALBUM ARTWORK ACTS AS AN INVITATION FOR THE VIEWER/LISTENER INTO THE WORLD OF ELVIS PRESLEY. IN EXPERIENCING THIS ALBUM, THE LISTENER HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO STEP INTO THIS WORLD OF "BLUE SUEDE SHOES" AND "TUTTI FRUTTI," LOOKING AT ELVIS IN ALL OF HIS EUPHORIC GLORY BECOMES A PART OF THE JOURNEY THROUGH THIS ALBUM. ELVIS IS THE STAR-MUSICIAN REIGNING SUPREME OVER THE DOMAIN OF ROCK 'N' ROLL ALBUM ARTWORK.¹⁰

BY THE END OF 1956, ELVIS PRESLEY MERCHANDISE HAD SOLD UPWARDS OF \$22 MILLION IN JUST SIX MONTHS.¹¹ IN THE 62 YEARS SINCE THIS ALBUM COVER HAS EXISTED IN THE POPULAR IMAGINATION, IT HAS BEEN REIMAGINED FOR THE CLASH'S LONDON CALLING, K.D. LANG'S REINTEGRATION, AND CHUMBAWAMBA'S SINGLE, "TONY BLAIR."



THE DESIGN HAS APPEARED ON COUNTLESS T-SHIRTS AND POSTERS. THROUGH THE ITERATIONS AND APPROPRIATIONS OF THIS DESIGN BY ARTISTS, THE AUDIENCE IS LEFT TO WONDER HOW ROCK N' ROLL IS BEING REPRESENTED. IS THIS ICONIC ELVIS DESIGN A WAY FOR ARTISTS TO BUILD UPON THE CANNON OF ROCK N' ROLL? OR IS IT A WAY FOR THEM TO CONSIDER HOW FAR ELVIS DEVIATED FROM THE REBELLIOUS ICON HE HAD STARTED AS BY THE END OF HIS CAREER?



WHILE PRESLEY INITIALLY LANDED ON THE SCENE AS A BONAFIDE COUNTER-CULTURE GOD, SUN RECORDS QUICKLY GOT TO WORK SCRUBBING HIS IMAGE CLEAN. IN ORDER TO GET A LARGER FAN BASE (AND OLDER FOLKS ON BOARD), ELVIS REINVENTED HIMSELF AS A WHOLESOME FAMILY FIGURE. CONSIDER THE FACT THAT ELVIS PLAYED HIS DEBUT SHOW THE INTERNATIONAL HOTEL SHOW ROOM IN VEGAS THE SAME WEEKEND AS THE WOODSTOCK MUSIC FESTIVAL IN NEW YORK.¹² ONE OF THE PERFORMERS WHO DID TAKE THE STAGE AT WOODSTOCK EPITOMIZED THE EVOLUTION OF ROCK N' ROLL AND ITS ALBUM ART: JANIS JOPLIN.



JANIS JOPLIN'S TURBULENT LIFESTYLE IS PERHAPS BEST CAPTURED BY BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY'S RECORD CHEAP THRILLS (PRELIMINARY FULL TITLE: SEX, DRUGS, AND CHEAP THRILLS).¹³ WITH GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARTIST R. CRUMB, CHEAP THRILLS EMPLOYS NO PHOTOGRAPHY (UNLIKE THE PRESLEY AND STEINWEISS COVERS). CONSIDER THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS ALBUM COVER. UNDERGROUND COMIC BOOK ARTIST R. CRUMB DESIGNED THIS ENTIRE ALBUM COVER. KNOWN FOR HIS SALACIOUS "COMIX," R. CRUMB CHAMPIONED THE UNDERGROUND YOUTH COUNTER-CULTURE COMIC BOOK MOVEMENT OF THE LATE 1960S. THE USE OF HIS GROTESQUE IMAGES IN A TRADITIONAL, FAMILIAR FORMAT INTENDED FOR CHILDREN EVOKES THE FEELING OF REBELLION THAT WOULD ACCOMPANY A LISTENER AS THEY LIT UP A JOINT AND LISTENED TO JOPLIN BELT OUT "PIECE OF MY HEART."

CHEAP THRILLS

BIG BROTHER & THE HOLDING COMPANY



R. CRUMB'S STYLE ALLOWS THIS ALBUM COVER TO COMMUNICATE INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALBUM WHILE STILL CREATING SOMETHING NEW AND EXCITING. HE CREATES CARICATURES OF BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY ALONG WITH VISUAL RENDERINGS OF SONGS ON THE ALBUM. NOT UNLIKE STEINWEISS, THIS ALBUM COVER HAS LINES THAT LEAD INTO A CIRCLE AT THE CENTER; THIS REMINDS THE VIEWER THAT ALTHOUGH THE ARTWORK READS "COMIC BOOK," THEY ARE STILL GOING TO PURCHASE A RECORD. CHEAP THRILLS GIVES THE BUYER TWO PIECES OF MEDIA IN ONE PURCHASE: ONE COULD PORE OVER THIS ALBUM COVER WHILE LISTENING TO BIG BROTHER AND THE HOLDING COMPANY'S FINAL ALBUM WITH JANIS.¹⁴