

A Companion to Michael Jackson Academic Studies

I

Edited by Elizabeth Amisu | 2015



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Michael Jackson
Academic Studies

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MICHAEL JACKSON is regarded as one of the most influential musicians of the twentieth-first century, and his music and short films continue to be enjoyed throughout the globe. In addition to Jackson's widely recognised recording success, he continues to hold the record for the biggest selling album of all time, *Thriller*, Jackson was also an accomplished poet, composer, actor and filmmaker. Jackson's contributions to popular culture, along with his highly publicized personal life, made him equally a figure of public admiration and prejudice. This *Companion* considers Jackson's life's work but focuses principally on his solo adult career. The volume also contains a detailed chronology of the work of this influential artist and closes with further information for future contributors to the growing field of Michael Jackson Studies.

ELIZABETH AMISU is co-founder and editor of *The Journal of Michael Jackson Academic Studies*. She has seven years' experience as a college lecturer of English Literature, English Language and Film Studies. Her academic research at King's College London focuses on high status representations of black people in the work of poet, Ben Jonson and playwright, William Shakespeare. *The Dangerous Philosophies of Michael Jackson: His Music, His Persona, and His Artistic Afterlife* (2016) is her first book and the first to give academic insight into Jackson's entire canon of creative work.



MJAS

Michael Jackson Academic Studies

Keeping the Academic Conversation Alive

The Journal of Michael Jackson Academic Studies (MJAS), is a peer-reviewed online academic journal which aims to bring wider attention to Michael Jackson as artist, by creating and implementing an academic model for the study of his multi-modal art.

Every year we publish *A Companion to Michael Jackson Academic Studies*, and in it we include some of the freshest and most ground-breaking academic analysis of Jackson's life and art.

Our sponsorship allows us to present the articles here for free and also to offer you the opportunity to [be part](#) of the emerging discourse on Michael Jackson Studies.

A Companion to Michael Jackson Academic Studies I

Compiled and Edited by Elizabeth Amisu

Logo and Cover Design by Karin Merx

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The moral right of the authors has been asserted.

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Michael Jackson: A Selected Chronology

By Elizabeth Amisu & Karin Merx

- 1958 Michael Joseph Jackson born on 29 August in Gary, Indiana, to Katherine Esther Scruse and Joseph Walter Jackson, eighth of ten children.
- 1963-1968 *The Jackson 5*, a musical group consisting of Jackson and his brothers; Jermaine, Tito, Jackie, and Marlon, perform at several talent shows and on the adult 'chitlin circuit'. They also perform at the Apollo Theatre, Harlem, New York.
- 1968 The Jackson 5 release their first single, *Big Boy* with Steeltown Records. In the same year they are signed to Motown Records.
- 1969 The Jackson 5 perform on the televised, *Ed Sullivan Show*.
- 1970 The Jackson 5's first four singles, *I Want You Back*, *ABC*, *The Love You Save*, *I'll Be There* peak at number one on the Billboard Hot 100. Jackson is the youngest artist to reach number one.
- 1971 ABC-TV air an animated television series based on The Jackson 5.
- 1972 Jackson's first two solo albums *Got To Be There* and *Ben* are released. The latter includes his first number one single, *Ben*. Subsequent solo album releases at Motown were *Music & Me* (1973) and *Forever, Michael* (1975).
- 1969 The Jackson 5 release several albums, including: *Diana Ross Presents The Jackson 5* (1969); *ABC* (1970); *Third Album* (1970); *Jackson 5 Christmas Album* (1970); *Maybe Tomorrow* (1971); *Goin' Back to Indiana* (1971); *Lookin' Through the Windows* (1972); *Skywriter* (1973); *The Jackson 5 in Japan* (1973); *G.I.T.: Get It Together* (1973); *Dancing Machine* (1974); and *Moving Violation* (1975).
- 1976 The Jackson 5 leave Motown and move to CBS Records. Motown's ownership of the band name causes the group to rebrand as *The Jacksons*. *The Jacksons* release several albums, including: *The Jacksons* (1976), featuring Jackson's first published song, *Blues Away*; *Goin' Places* (1977); *Destiny* (1978); *Triumph* (1980), *The Jacksons Live!* (1981); and *Victory* (1984).
- 1978 Jackson stars as the Scarecrow in his first feature film, *The Wiz*, directed by Sidney Lumet, and meets the film's score composer, Quincy Jones.
- 1979 Jackson releases his first adult solo album, *Off The Wall*, produced by Quincy Jones, the highest selling album of all time by a black artist to date. Number one singles from *Off The Wall* include *Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough* and *Rock With You*.

- 1982 Jackson releases his second adult solo album *Thriller*, co-produced with Quincy Jones, which becomes the highest selling album of all time. Number one singles from *Thriller* include *Billie Jean* and *Beat It*.
- 1983 Jackson debuts 'the moonwalk', at the televised NBC special, *Motown 25: Yesterday, Today and Forever*. *Say Say Say*, a duet with Paul McCartney for McCartney's album, *Pipes of Peace* is released. The 14-minute *Thriller* short film, directed by John Landis, airs on MTV. *The Making of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'*, directed by Jerry Kramer, is released on video. Alongside *Beat It* (directed by Bob Giraldi) and *Billie Jean* (directed by Steve Barron), these short films serve to break down racial barriers.
- 1984 While filming a commercial for Pepsi, Jackson is burned in a pyrotechnic accident and rushed to hospital. He wins eight Grammy awards in ten categories for *Thriller*. In the same year, he receives a Special Achievement Award from President Reagan at the White House. Jackson embarks on *The Victory Tour* with *The Jacksons* and announces that he is leaving the group.
- 1985 *The Making of Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'* wins a Grammy for Best Video Album. The charity single, *We Are the World* is released and peaks at number one. It is estimated to be the highest selling single of the 1980s. Jackson purchases the ATV catalogue of music publishing rights for \$47.5 million. This catalogue includes 251 Beatles songs.
- 1986 Jackson stars in *Captain EO*, a 17-minute short film, co-directed by George Lucas and Francis Ford Coppola for a new 3D-ride at Disneyland.
- 1987 Jackson releases his third adult solo album, *Bad* and becomes the first artist to have five number ones from one album: *Bad*, *The Way You Make Me Feel*, *Man in the Mirror*, *I Just Can't Stop Loving You*, and *Dirty Diana*. Jackson embarks on his first solo tour, which breaks several records of attendance. He uses the tour to visit several hospitals and orphanages.
- 1988 Jackson is commended for his generous financial contributions to the United Negro College Fund through the Michael Jackson Scholarship Fund. He releases his first autobiography, *Moonwalk*, published by Doubleday and edited by Jacqueline Onassis which becomes a New York Times Best Seller. Jackson moves to Neverland Valley Ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley in Los Angeles, California, and performs at Wembley Stadium with Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales in attendance. He also donates several hundred thousand dollars to the Prince's Trust, Great Ormond Street and the Motown Museum Historical Foundation. Jackson also releases *Moonwalker*, an anthology film, directed by Jerry Kramer, Jim Blashfield and Colin Chilvers.
- 1989 Jackson appears on the cover of *Vanity Fair*, photographed by Annie Leibowitz. He also befriends Ryan White, a teenager haemophiliac, who became a poster-child for AIDS after contracting HIV from a transfusion.

- 1990 White dies of AIDS-related complications. Jackson immediately flies to Indiana to console his bereaved mother, Jeanne. In this year Jackson is briefly hospitalised for stress-related illness.
- 1991 Jackson co-writes and co-produces the song, *Do The Bart Man*, for the character of Bart (Nancy Cartwright) in *The Simpsons*. He also appears in the episode, *Stark Raving Dad*, under the name John Jay Smith. Jackson signs a new recording contract with Sony Records worth approximately 890 million dollars, and receives a royalty rate of 25%. The widely-referenced biography, *Michael Jackson: The Magic and the Madness* by J. Randy Taraborrelli is published by Citadel. David Lynch directs the television ads for Jackson's fourth adult solo album, *Dangerous*. Number ones from *Dangerous* include *Black or White*.
- 1992 Jackson tours Africa and is given the title King of Sani in the Ivory Coast. He publishes his second book, *Dancing the Dream: Poems and Reflections* with Doubleday and begins his second solo world tour. He also launches the Heal the World Foundation and performs at the Super Bowl Halftime Show. *The Jacksons – An American Dream*, a televised mini-series based on the Jackson family is aired on ABC-TV.
- 1993 Jackson gives a live interview entitled, *Michael Jackson Talks... To Oprah*. His first televised interview in over a decade. He also receives the Grammy Legend Award, presented by his sister, Janet. The Los Angeles Police Department begin a criminal investigation of Jackson, based on accusations by a 13 year-old named Jordy Chandler. The international press begin disparaging coverage of the allegations and Jackson cancels his tour in order to begin treatment for painkiller dependency. *Dangerous: The Short Films*, is released on video. Jackson's four-minute statement of defence airs on American television.
- 1994 Although no corroborating evidence has been found, representatives of both Jackson and his accuser settle out of court for an undisclosed sum. In the same year Jackson marries Lisa-Marie Presley, the only child of Elvis. Delores Martez Jackson, the former wife of Jackson's brother, Tito, is found dead at the bottom of a swimming pool. Donald Bohana would be convicted of her murder in 1998.
- 1995 GQ publishes the landmark article, *Was Michael Jackson Framed?* Written by Mary A. Fischer. Jackson releases his fifth adult solo album, *HIStory: Past, Present and Future Book 1* in a double-disc format with 15 of his greatest hits. Its commercial success is widely ignored by the mainstream media but it remains the highest-selling double album of all time. Number ones from *History: Past, Present and Future Book 1* include *You Are Not Alone* and *Earth Song*.
- 1996 Jackson and Presley divorce. Jackson begins his third solo tour. His short film, *Ghosts* (directed by Stan Winstone) premieres. Jackson marries his second wife, Debbie Rowe, a dermatological nurse.

- 1997 Son, Michael Joseph Jackson Jr., is born. Jackson releases his sixth solo adult release, *Blood on the Dancefloor: HIStory in the Mix*, a remix-album.
- 1998 Daughter, Paris Michael Katherine Jackson, is born.
- 1999 Jackson and Rowe divorce.
- 2000 Jackson enters the Guinness Book of World Records for supporting more charitable organisations than any other individual.
- 2001 Jackson delivers a speech, *Love: The Human Family's Most Precious Legacy* at the Oxford Union, and appears with the band, N'Sync at the MTV Video Music Awards. He also reunites with his brothers for the *Michael Jackson: 30th Anniversary Special* at Madison Square Gardens. The day after the final performance, September 11th, terrorists attack the World Trade Center. A month later, Jackson releases his seventh adult solo album, *Invincible*.
- 2002 After its initial success, *Invincible's* promotion becomes embroiled in a feud between Jackson and Sony Records executive, Tommy Mottola. Jackson stars in *Men in Black II*. Son, Prince Michael Jackson II is born.
- 2003 *Living with Michael Jackson*, a controversial documentary directed by Martin Bashir, is broadcast on ITV in the UK. It is soon followed by *Michael Jackson - The Footage You Were Never Meant to See* and *Michael Jackson - Private Home Movies* on FOX in the USA. Jackson is nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize. A compilation CD/DVD album, *Michael Jackson Number Ones* is released. Shortly after, the Los Angeles Police Department formally charge Jackson based on accusations by a 13 year-old named Gavin Arvizo, who was featured in the documentary, *Living with Michael Jackson*. Jackson's Neverland Valley Ranch is raided by the police.
- 2004 Jackson features in *Miss Cast Away and the Island Girls*, directed by Bryan Michael Stoller.
- 2005 After a lengthy trial, Jackson is acquitted of all charges.
- 2006 *Thriller Live*, a musical showcasing the music of Michael Jackson and The Jackson 5 premieres at the Dominion Theatre, London.
- 2008 *Thriller 25*, the anniversary special edition of *Thriller* is released.
- 2009 *Thriller Live* begins its run at the Lyric Theatre in London. Jackson announces *This Is It*, a fifty-concert residency at the O2 Arena, in North Greenwich, London. *This Is It* sells out approximately one million tickets. Michael Jackson dies on 25 June of acute propofol and benzodiazepine intoxication. His sudden death provokes an unprecedented outpouring of grief. Several of Jackson's albums chart highly around the world.

- 2010 Conrad Murray, Jackson's personal physician, is charged with involuntary manslaughter. Ubisoft release *Michael Jackson: The Experience*, a multi-platform game based on Jackson's choreography.
- 2011 Cirque du Soleil perform *Michael Jackson: The Immortal World Tour*. *Immortal*, a compilation soundtrack to the tour is released. *Man in the Music: The Creative Life and Work of Michael Jackson*, by Joseph Vogel is published by Sterling. The posthumous album, *Michael*, is released. Murray is convicted with involuntary manslaughter.
- 2012 The posthumous album, *Bad 25*, is released. Jackson features posthumously in the documentary, *Bad 25*, directed by Spike Lee.
- 2013 Cirque du Soleil perform *Michael Jackson: One*.
- 2014 The posthumous album, *Xscape* is released. *Dangerous* by Susan Fast is published by Bloomsbury. The first academic journal dedicated solely to Jackson's art and creative work, *The Michael Jackson Academic Journal* is founded.
- 2015 Jackson's former home, *Neverland Valley Ranch*, is put up for sale by Colony Capital and the Michael Jackson Estate.

Foreword

By Elizabeth Amisu

When *The Journal of Michael Jackson Academic Studies (MJAS)* was started online in 2014, we were particularly interested in the epistemology of a field, which has been denied academic legitimacy for far too long. Now, as we enter our second year it is becoming clear that the roots of Michael Jackson Studies lies in what Willa Stillwater calls, 'connection and defiance'.¹

Michael Jackson Studies exists, very much like the artist himself, within the margins of what we call acceptable social norms. It skirts the circumference of what one considers "normal", whether that be in a sense of heteronormativity, easily definable genres of form, or an instantly recognisable aesthetic. Like many great artists, Jackson's most defining characteristic is the fact that his work, art and artistic life require the viewer to engage, rather than passively observe. To put it simply, everyone has an opinion on Michael Jackson.

The idea for this journal came from my own academic study of early modern poets such as Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare. In my research at King's College London, I found that I relied heavily on the academic companions which had been compiled by knowledgeable editors, works entitled *Shakespeare and Race* or the *Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*.² This got the editors at the *MJAS* thinking. Why didn't Michael Jackson Studies have something similar?

This inaugural edition of *A Companion to Michael Jackson Academic Studies* boasts work from a wide range of academics in many forms:

¹ Willa Stillwater, *M Poetica: Michael Jackson's Art of Connection and Defiance* (Kindle, 2011, 2013).

² Stanley Wells and Catherine M. S. Alexander, *Shakespeare and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Michael D. Bristol, 'Shakespeare: The Myth' in *A Companion to Shakespeare*, ed. by David Scott Kastan (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), pp. 489-502.

from journal articles and monographs to the blog entries and essays. These are fantastic examples of emerging literary criticism written for the education of a whole breadth of people interested in the academic study of the artist, Michael Jackson.

Since we are not able to publish all these works in their entirety, we have included full citations as well as links to where they can be found, downloaded and bought online.

We hope this will be a yearly practice for *The Journal of Michael Jackson Academic Studies*, a way of presenting just a small selection of the critical discourse available. For a wider resource list of well over two-hundred sources please see *The Journal of Michael Jackson Academic Studies* [resources](#) page.

This companion presents a selection of twelve academic works within the greater body of critical discourse related to Michael Jackson, along with where to find these works and for what academic purposes one might read and cite them. While it is impossible to present the entire range of academic work, which has been constructed on Michael Jackson, this companion has been edited with a view to providing the reader with a very strong overview of the challenges and interpretations around the artist's work in the past thirty years.

Elizabeth Amisu
Editor

1

Introduction: Telling Stories About Michael Jackson

By Susan Fast

Citation: 'Telling Stories About Michael Jackson' in *Dangerous* (New York, London, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 1-16.

[Amazon US](#), [Amazon UK](#)

Published in 2014, Susan Fast's *Dangerous* is one of the landmark monographs in Michael Jackson Studies. Fast's intricate dissection of a single album takes the reader into Jackson's oft-denied 'deep political engagement, adult expressions of sexuality' and 'spiritual reflection'.³ Her introduction, a short sixteen pages in a page-size closer to octavo than quarto condenses the myths about Jackson and resoundingly refutes them while highlighting the significance of his work. This source is particularly for those who are interested in musicology, film and Jackson's misrepresentation.

Selected Further Reading:

- Fast, Susan, 'Michael Jackson's Queer Musical Belongings', *Popular Music & Society*, 49 (2012), pp. 281-300
- ——— & Hawkins, Stan (eds.), 'Michael Jackson: Musical Subjectivities', *Popular Music & Society - Special Issue*, Vol. 35 (2012)
- ———, 'Difference That Exceeded Understanding: Remembering Michael Jackson (1958–2009)', *Popular Music and Society*, 33 (2010), pp. 259-266

³ Susan Fast, *Dangerous* (New York, London, New Delhi, Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 1.

2

Michael Jackson and Television Before 'Thriller'

By Matthew Delmont

Citation: Delmont, Matthew, 'Michael Jackson & Television before Thriller', *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, 3 (2010), pp. 64-78.

[Link to the Source](#)

Moments like *Motown 25* and the *Black or White* short film debut typify Michael Jackson as an audio-visual phenomenon but Matthew Delmont's article investigates the roots of Michael Jackson's representation as a television star right from his early career. Delmont charts Jackson's early television appearances in the 1970s such as the Ed Sullivan Show. Published in 2010, in a fantastic collection by *The Journal of Pan African Studies* dedicated entirely to Michael Jackson, this article is particularly useful for those who are interested in cultural, media and film studies.

Selected Further Reading:

- Delmont, Matthew and Murray Forman, 'Sonic Visions: Popular Music on Television', *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 25 (2013), pp. 293-300

3

Monster Metaphors: Notes on Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'

By Kobena Mercer

Citation: Mercer, Kobena, 'Monster Metaphors: Notes on Michael Jackson's 'Thriller'', *Screen*, 27 (1986), pp. 26-43.

[Link to the Source](#)

Published 1986, Kobena Mercer's 'Monster Metaphors' deconstructs the metaphor of Jackson as monster, in terms of his racial heritage and sexuality through the use of film language. It is a choice example of contemporaneous criticism about Michael Jackson's art.⁴ Academic discourse in Michael Jackson Studies is often skewed because of subsequent reductions of the artist. Criticism that precedes the worst of these reductions (like Mercer's) is of great value. This source is a particularly useful text for those interested in film studies and ethnicity criticism.

Selected Further Reading:

- Mercer, Kobena, *Welcome to the Jungle New Positions in Black Cultural Studies* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013)

⁴ Contemporaneous criticism is a term that denotes works written at a similar time to the art they discuss.

**“When You Have to Say ‘I Do’”: Orientalism in Michael Jackson's
“Liberian Girl”**

By Jeremy Samuel Faust

Citation: Faust, Jeremy Samuel, “When You Have to Say ‘I Do’”: Orientalism in Michael Jackson's “Liberian Girl”, *Popular Music and Society*, 35 (2012), pp. 223-240.

[Link to the Source](#)

Published in the 2012 in the *Journal of Popular Music and Society*, Jeremy Samuel Faust's "'When You Have to Say I Do": Orientalism in Michael Jackson's 'Liberian Girl'" really exemplifies the complexity of Michael Jackson's art in terms of musical composition and cultural intervention. Faust details how Jackson both engages with and then rejects notions of orientalism in terms of musical annotation, as well as in the short film of the eponymous track. This is a particularly useful text for those interested in music, literary criticism and ethnicity criticism.

**Michael Jackson, Black Modernisms and the Ecstasy of
Communication**

By Michele Wallace

Citation: Wallace, Michele, 'Michael Jackson, Black Modernisms and the Ecstasy of Communication', *Third Text*, 3 (1989), pp. 11-22.

[Link to the Source](#)

Michele Wallace's 'Black Modernisms: Michael Jackson and the Ecstasy of Communication', originally published in 1989, is another example of fantastic contemporaneous criticism which helps us to read Jackson's art, just as much as it enables us to understand the environment in which it was initially received. Wallace takes Jackson's work from a unique perspective, considering Jackson through the guise of the black man he was and the racially charged world he inhabited. This is a particularly useful source for those interested in ethnicity criticism, film studies and representation.

Selected Further Reading:

- Wallace, Michele, *Invisibility Blues* (London, New York: Verso, 2008)

6

Dancing with Michael Jackson

By Toni Bowers

Citation: Bowers, Toni, 'Dancing with Michael Jackson', *The Los Angeles Review of Books* (2015)

<<https://lareviewofbooks.org/essay/dancing-with-michael-jackson>>[accessed 15-05-2015].

[Link to the Source](#)

Published in 2015, Toni Bowers' essay landed like a meteor, helping to reignite the academic conversation about Jackson's work and his ongoing cultural vilification. In it she explores the collective marginalisation of Jackson as symptomatic of wider attempts to reduce Jackson's significance and whitewash his artistic contributions to both American culture and society. This is a particularly useful source for those interested in representation and cultural studies.

Selected Further Reading:

- Bowers, Toni, *Force or Fraud : British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance, 1660-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)
- ———, *The Politics of Motherhood : British Writing and Culture, 1680-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Love: The Human Family's Most Precious Legacy

By Michael Jackson

Citation: Jackson, Michael Joseph, 'Love: The Human Family's Most Precious Legacy', *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, Vol.3 (2010), pp. 4-13.

[Link to the Source](#)

Jackson's heartfelt and thought-provoking speech at the Oxford Union in 2001 was published almost a decade later by *The Journal of Pan African Studies*. It highlights Jackson's life of experience and is a primary source that everyone interested in Michael Jackson should read. This treatise on 'love' presents Jackson's belief in 'love' as the single most important legacy a parent can hand down to their children. In this speech Jackson was incredibly honest about himself, his life and his ethos.

Selected Further Reading:

- Jackson, Michael Joseph, *HIStory Past, Present and Future Book 1* (Liner Notes). MJJ Productions. Epic. 1995
- ———, 'A 1994 Open Letter from Michael Jackson to his critics', *Michael Jackson: A Visual Documentary. The Official Tribute Edition* (ed.) Adrian Grant (Omnibus, 2009)
- ———, *Dancing the Dream: Poems and Reflections* (London: Doubleday, 1992)
- ———, *Moonwalk* (London: Doubleday, 1988)

**“I Ain't Scared of No Sheets”: Re-Screening Black Masculinity in
Michael Jackson's Black or White**

By Joseph Vogel

Citation: Vogel, Joseph, “I Ain't Scared of No Sheets”: Re-Screening Black Masculinity in Michael Jackson's Black or White', *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 27 (2015), pp. 90-123.

[Link to the Source](#)

Published in 2015 by cultural critic and author, Joseph Vogel, “I Ain't Scared of No Sheets”: Re-Screening Black Masculinity in Michael Jackson's Black or White' takes a bold and in-depth look at the release of Jackson's *Black or White*. From the riots, which formed the backdrop to Jackson's release, to the ongoing issues of racial representation and fears surrounding miscegenation. This source is particularly useful for those who are interested in ethnicity criticism, and film studies.

Selected Further Reading:

- Vogel, Joseph, '[The Misunderstood Power of Michael Jackson's Music](#).' *The Atlantic*. 8 February 2012
- ———, *Featuring Michael Jackson: Collected Writings on the King of Pop* (Baldwin Books, 2012)
- ———, '[Am I the Beast You Visualized? The Cultural Abuse of Michael Jackson](#)', *The Huffington Post*. 2 November, 2011
- ———, *Earth Song: Inside Michael Jackson's Magnum Opus* (BlakeVision Books, 2011)
- ———, *Man in the Music: The Creative Life and Work of Michael Jackson* (Sterling, 2011)

The Roots and Routes of Michael Jackson's Global Identity

By Sylvia J. Martin

Citation: Martin, Sylvia J., 'The Roots and Routes of Michael Jackson's Global Identity', *Society*, 49 (2012), pp. 284-290.

[Link to the Source](#)

How exactly did Michael Jackson, an African-American child from a working class family in barely desegregated America, become a one-man international conglomerate, who wielded the power of his celebrity as a two-edged sword, which was as effective in fissuring his persona as it was in 'making the world a better place'? Published in 2012, 'The Roots and Routes of Michael Jackson's Global Identity' charts Jackson's meteoric rise and his journey from the heart of Americana to the heart of a global village and from a world of vinyl records to one of digital mp3s. This is a very useful source for those interested in cultural studies.

Selected Further Reading:

- Martin, Sylvia J, 'From Asia to Africa, the King of Pop Emerges as a Global Platform for Philanthropy and Social Change', *OpEdNews* (2013)
- ———, 'Remembering Michael Jackson: Moonwalking between Contradictions' in *LearCenter.org* (2010)

10

Michael Jackson's Death as a Social Event

By Aneta Ostaszewska

Citation: Ostaszewska, Aneta, 'Michael Jackson's Death as a Social Event' in *Post Script. After Michael Jackson's Death* (Tauro, 2010).

[Link to the Source](#)

This extract from the 2010 book by Polish academic, Aneta Ostaszewska takes a look at Jackson as a pop culture phenomenon from the perspectives of sociology and anthropology in an attempt to question how popular culture celebrates death. Ostaszewska first considers the reframing of Jackson's past and vilification by the media, then investigates the authenticity of public mourning before finally moving towards key historical moments of public grief. This is a particularly useful text for those interested in anthropology, cultural studies and celebrity studies.

Selected Further Reading:

- Ostaszewska, Aneta, *Post Scriptum. Po Śmierci Michaela Jacksona* (Tauro, 2010)
- ———, *Michael Jackson Jako Bohater Mityczny. Perspektywa Antropologiczna* (Wydawnictwa Akademickie I Profesjonalne, 2009)

**Throwing Stones to Hide Your Hands: The Mortal Persona of
Michael Jackson**
By Elizabeth Amisu

Citation: Amisu, Elizabeth, *Throwing Stones To Hide Your Hands: Mortal Persona of Michael Jackson*, 11 June 2014, *Writing Eliza* <<http://elizabethamisu.com/post/88515649217/throwing-stones-to-hide-your-hands-the-mortal-persona>>[accessed 25 June 2015].

[Link to the Source](#)

This article was written in 2014 after a long period research revealed just how little academic analysis of Jackson's representation there was. The essay draws upon the multi-modal art, political impact and cultural significance of Michael Jackson, in order to deconstruct his many personas: Idol, Wacko, Monster and Immortal and goes on to conclude that the most important representation Jackson engendered was his very own mortal persona. This article is particularly aimed towards those interested in cultural studies and representation.

Selected Further Reading:

- Amisu, Elizabeth, '[Crack Music': Michael Jackson's Invincible](#)', 23 October 2014, *Writing Eliza*
- ———, '[Are We Losing Michael Jackson All Over Again?](#)', *The Journal of Michael Jackson Academic Studies*. 29 August 2014
- ———, '[The Isle is Full of Noises': Revisiting the Peter Pan of Pop](#)', 22 August 2014, *Writing Eliza*
- ———, '[On Michael Jackson's 'Dancing the Dream'](#)', 7 July 2014, *Writing Eliza*

12

The Real Abstraction of Michael Jackson

By Jeremy Gilbert

Citation: Gilbert, Jeremy, 'The Real Abstraction of Michael Jackson' in *The Resistible Demise of Michael Jackson*, ed. by Mark Fisher (Zero Books, 2009), pp. 137-149.

[Amazon UK](#), [Amazon US](#)

Jeremy Gilbert is a writer, researcher and activist. His essay, 'The Real Abstraction of Michael Jackson', is an undeniable work which forces the reader to accept that the construct, "Michael Jackson", lauded and vilified by the press and the public was entirely distinct and separate from the person, Michael Jackson, who lived and breathed between 1958 and 2009. With keen academic insight on the concepts of simulacrum, over-representation and hyper-reality, this essay traces the journey of Jackson's avatars, his as they jostled for supremacy. This article is particularly aimed towards those interested in cultural studies, philosophy and representation.

Selected Further Reading:

- Gilbert, Jeremy, *Anticapitalism and Culture: Radical Theory and Popular Politics* (Oxford: Berg, 2008)
- ——— and Ewan Pearson, *Discographies: Dance Music, Culture, and the Politics of Sound* (Routledge, 1999)

Contributors

TONI BOWERS is Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. She specializes in English Literature from the Restoration to the French Revolution. She is the author of *Force or Fraud: British Seduction Stories and the Problem of Resistance* (2011) and *The Politics of Motherhood: British Writing and Culture* (1996).

MATTHEW DELMONT is Associate Professor of History at Arizona State University & author of *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock 'n' Roll, and Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia* (2012). He has lectured widely on African-American history, mixed-race identity, the Obama presidency, hip-hop, oral history and social media.

SUSAN FAST is Professor of English and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, Canada. Her research interests include representations of gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity and geopolitical violence in contemporary popular music. She is author of *In the Houses of the Holy: Led Zeppelin and the Power of Rock Music* (2001).

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- MJ and Art History
- MJ and Theatre
- MJ and Literature
- Michael Jackson as Composer
- Michael Jackson as Persona
- Michael Jackson as Auteur
- Michael Jackson's Legacy
- Michael Jackson and the Creative Process
- Michael Jackson and Fashion
- (1968-1978) – Jackson 5/Jacksons
- *Off The Wall* (1979)
- *Thriller* (1982)
- *Bad* (1987)
- *Dangerous* (1991)
- ***HIStory* (1995)**
- *Blood on the Dance Floor* (1997)
- *Invincible* (2001)
- MJ and Tours
- MJ and Live Performance
- MJ and Dance
- MJ and Misappropriation/Contemporization
- *Moonwalk* (Doubleday, 1988)
- *Dancing the Dream* (Doubleday, 1992)
- *Earth Song*

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- Kirkland, Douglas, [*Michael Jackson: The Making of 'Thriller': 4 Days/1983*](#) (Filipacchi, 2010)
- Manning, Harriet J., [*Michael Jackson and the Blackface Mask*](#) (Ashgate, 2013)
- Mortilla, Syl, [*The First Book of Michael*](#) (Amazon, 2015)
- Shields, Damien, [*Xscape Origins: The Songs and Stories Michael Jackson Left Behind*](#) (Modegy, 2015)
- Smit, Christopher R. (ed.), [*Michael Jackson: Grasping the Spectacle*](#) (Ashgate, 2012)
- Stillwater, Willa, [*M Poetica: Michael Jackson's Art of Connection and Defiance*](#) (Kindle, 2011, 2013)
- Swedien, Bruce, [*In the Studio with Michael Jackson*](#) (Hal Leonard, 2009)
- White, Armond, [*Keep Moving: The Michael Jackson Chronicles*](#) (Resistance Works, 2010)
- Woodward, Susan, [*Otherness and Power: Michael Jackson and His Media Critics*](#) (Blackmore, 2014)