

Post scriptum

25 June 2009

Michael Jackson will not perform on 13 July at O2 Arena in London. He will not perform, not on that day, not on any other. *This Is It!* – now this title takes on a symbolic meaning, a sense I have been reflecting upon for several weeks.

It was not on 13 July, but on 25 June 2009 that something happened, unquestionably; something came to an end. A disbelief and a shock, these words appear in numerous reactions to the news about Michael Jackson's death.

Looking back at the online statements from several weeks and months ago, or even years that have passed since Jackson's trial ended, they often involve a thread about the idol's increasing physical vulnerability. News titled *Michael Jackson is dying*¹ showed up already by the end of 2008. Why is it then so hard to believe in the idol's death today?

The media culture would not exist if not for people like Jackson. It was due to the media that Michael Jackson's life became a pop culture show – perhaps the greatest of all time. Sadly, also his death is part of this spectacle. Photographs of Jackson, fragments of his music videos, reports from Los Angeles where the idol died and where crowds gathered, among others, at the UCLA hospital and in front of his house; numerous comments of his fans (and also their tears), statements made by journalists, co-workers and well-known show-business personas – it all adds up to an impression that death (at least in this case) ceases to be a private, intimate event. Due to the media, Michael Jackson's death, similarly to his life, became an event that was experienced globally by the public worldwide. On 26 June this year, TV stations (including news channels) shared news only about the tragic death of the king of pop. The media repeatedly showed last photographs of Jackson, the road via which the unconscious man was transported from his home to hospital, a video showing a helicopter landing with the idol's body to be taken to a morgue, as well a record of a phone call to the emergency services. One could hear Jackson's songs, music videos were recalled. There were numerous reports from different locations worldwide showing people's reactions after the king of pop's death. Jackson, specifically, his death, was the most impor-

¹ See: *Michael Jackson umiera?*, <https://muzyka.interia.pl/pop/news-michael-jackson-umiera,nId,1640677>.

tant topic that day in the media – both on the Internet and on television. I wonder if this is solely due to the idol's fame?

When I was writing this book, particularly while reading Internet users' comments about Jackson, I often had the impression that everyone is an expert on this matter; everyone has an opinion about Jackson. Now it seems that not only did he become – in various ways – an important part of our common social life, but also our private worlds.

The work on the publication of this book was completed in June 2009. We received the sad news about Michael Jackson's death shortly after the *Afterword* was finished. We decided not to make any changes. At the same time, we would like to note that the numbers of Jackson's sold albums specified in this book are outdated (June 2009).