Maciej Skowera, "Entry on: Omega by Marcin Szczygielski", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/386. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

Marcin Szczygielski

Omega

Poland (2009)

TAGS: Odysseus / Ulysses Olympic Games Omega Telemachus





Courtesy of the publisher.

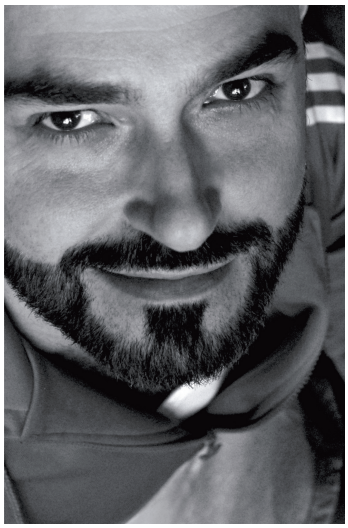
General information	
Title of the work	Omega
Country of the First Edition	Poland
Country/countries of popularity	Poland
Original Language	Polish
First Edition Date	2009
First Edition Details	Marcin Szczygielski, ill. Bartek Kociemba aka Arobal, *Omega*. Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Latarnik im. Zygmunta Kałużyńskiego, 2009, 600 pp.
ISBN	9788360000328
Awards	2010 – Mention in the 2nd "Halina Skrobiszewska Children's Literature Contest," organised by Warsaw Museum of Children's Books, and addition of the novel to the Museum's "Treasure List"; 2010 – Mention in "The Most Beautiful Book of the Year" contest, organised by the Polish Association of Book Publishers; 2010 – Main literary award and the title of the "Book of the Year" for young adults awarded by the Polish Section of IBBY.
Genre	Bildungsromans (Coming-of-age fiction), Fantasy fiction, Fiction, Novels
Target Audience	Crossover (Children and young adults – according to the Polish Section of IBBY: 11+)

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Author of the Entry	Maciej Skowera, University of Warsaw, mgskowera@gmail.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Portrait, courtesy of the Author.

Marcin Szczygielski , b. 1972
(Author)

Writer, journalist, graphic and interior designer. Formerly artistic director of the Polish edition of *Playboy* magazine, creative director of Ahoj.pl, Gruner+Jahr Polska publishing house and Latarnik publishing house, Editor-in-Chief of *Moje Mieszkanie* (interior design magazine). A member of the Polish Writers Association. He debuted in 2003 with an adult novel *PL–BOY. Dziewięć i pół tygodnia z życia pewnej redakcji* [PL–BOY: Nine and a Half Weeks in the Life of a Certain Newsroom]. His career as an author for children and young adults begun in 2009 with *Omega*. Since the success of this book, he focused on writing for the juvenile audience. His later works for children and young adults are: *Za niebieskimi drzwiami* [Behind the Blue Door] (2010), *Czarny młyn* [The Black Mill] (2011), *Arka czasu* [Rafe and the Ark of Time] (2013), *Teatr Niewidzialnych Dzieci* [The Theatre of Invisible Children] (2016), *Serce Neftydy* [The Heart of Nephthys] (2017), and a fantasy novel cycle about Maja, which – by now – consists of: *Czarownica piętro niżej* [The Witch One Floor Down] (2013), *Tuczarnia motyli* [Butterfly Feedlot] (2014), *Klątwa dziewiątych urodzin* [The Curse of the Ninth Birthday] (2016), and *Bez piątej klepki* [With One Loose Screw] (2018). He is one of the most popular and critically acclaimed contemporary Polish children's authors. He received an outstanding number of awards in various literary competitions, such as: Halina Skrobiszewska Children's Literature Contest, Astrid Lindgren Literary Contest, the Polish Section of IBBY's Book of the Year competition, or Warsaw Literary Prize in Poland, and Jury of Young Readers contest in Germany. He was also longlisted for the Hans Christian Andersen Award 2018, one of the most prominent international prizes for children's authors.

Sources:

"Marcin Szczygielski: Author – Poland", *Bookbird* 55.4 (2017): 31.

"Marcin Szczygielski" [biography], in Marcin Szczygielski, *Omega,* Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Latarnik im. Zygmunta

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Kałużynskiego, 2009, 3.

Marcin Szczygielski, available online at latarnik.com (accessed: February 23, 2018).

Bio prepared by Maciej Skowera, University of Warsaw, mgskowera@gmail.com

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Additional information

Translation

Although *Omega* has not been translated into English yet, a short excerpt from the book, translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones, is available at eurolitnetwork.com (accessed: July 11, 2018).

Summary

Based on: Katarzyna Marciniak, Elżbieta Olechowska, Joanna Kłos, Michał Kucharski (eds.), *Polish Literature for Children & Young Adults Inspired by Classical Antiquity: A Catalogue*, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2013, 444 pp.

In contemporary Warsaw, Joanna, a young girl from a broken family, who calls herself Omega, spends most of her time at the computer. On her 12th birthday, Omega receives an e-mail that links to a mysterious game. When she installs it, the application absorbs her into its world – a grotesquely transformed Warsaw. The girl must finish the game if she wants to return to her reality. Her companion is a talking infant (the Child) who joins her at the beginning of her journey. Omega visits many places referring to various literary and cultural phenomena: a house made of meat, a cemetery inhabited by zombies or a werewolves' castle and some alternate versions of Warsaw neighbourhoods, such as Stadion Dziesięciolecia (the 10th-Anniversary Stadium, now the National Stadium) where a preposterous sports event takes place, or a shopping centre Cascades of Gold (a bizarre version of Złote Tarasy [Golden Terraces] – Warsaw's huge shopping mall). After completing each quest, Omega grows intellectually and her companion – the infant – grows up physically. At the end of the book it is revealed that the Child is the girl's evil double. She defeats her double and comes back to her reality, more mature and with an integrated personality.

Analysis

The main character's nickname and the novel's title – Omega – allude to the last letter of the Greek alphabet* and symbolically an ultimate end, a total fulfillment and a definitive limit. In Szczygielski's book, this word refers to the fulfillment of a specific rite of passage by the heroine and the end of her childhood – the protagonist's initiation process, as Weronika Kostecka (2016, 343**) writes, lies in *the fight for her individuality*.*** The unique moniker is particularly important

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

here, as Omega chooses it instead of using her given name, Joanna (which is a very common name in Poland and, therefore, refers to sameness and unification). This is to express the girl's need to, as Kostecka (2016, 343) puts it, "shape her own autonomy."

In the novel, we also witness an event called *The Olympiad* [*sic!* – M.S.] *of Senses* which refers to the idea of ancient Greek Olympic Games. These games, in which Omega has to compete many times in the book, are one of the stages of her peregrination through an alternate Warsaw which she must complete in order to defeat her evil double and overcome the pains of childhood. Initially Omega, blinded by the vision of victory, tries to win successive competitions (referring to her personality and the events from her life) – and she fails four times. She cannot understand why this happened. The girl succeeds only after the fifth time, when she realizes that – contrary to "real" Olympics – her goal is not to win successive competitions against the representatives of particular groups (the "Omnipotent Corporation," the "City's Bedroom," the "Suburban Boundaries," and the "Intellectual Valley"). During the last competition, she doesn't try to fight anyone but, basing on her own skills and experiences, does her best in struggling with her own self – which, in a way, corresponds to Henri Didon's hendiatris: *Citius, Altius, Fortius,* which, proposed by Pierre de Coubertin in 1894, became the official motto of the modern Olympic Movement.

Omega as a heroine could also be seen as an incarnation of Odysseus (note: the allusion is not direct). The girl's journey resembles the hero's adventures: both have to deal with adversity in different fantastic locations inhabited by odd creatures before they are able to come back home and to take their rightful places there – the hero by winning the contest of the bow and slaughtering the suitors, and the girl by finishing *The Olympiad of Senses* and defeating her evil double, the Child. It also interesting that Kostecka (2016, 343) calls Omega "a 21st-century *Bildungsroman*." One of the most widely known early examples of the genre, a prototypical *Bildungsroman*, was François Fénelon's *Les Aventures de Télémaque* [The Adventures of Telemachus] (1699), in which the travels of Odysseus's son, Telemachus, were recounted.

---

* It may also be interpreted as alluding to the expression *I am the alpha and the omega* from the Book of Revelation (1:8, 21:6, and

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

22:13), which refers to God as the beginning and the end.

** See: Weronika Kostecka, *(Po)nowoczesne przestrzenie popkultury. Studium przypadku: "Omega" Marcina Szczygielskiego* [*(Post)modern Spaces of Popculture. A Case Study: "Omega"* by Marcin Szczygielski], in *Geografia krain zmyślonych. Wokół kategorii miejsca i przestrzeni w literaturze dziecięcej, młodzieżowej i fantastycznej* [*The Geography of Imaginary Lands: Place and Space in Children's, Young Adult, and Fantasy Literature*], Weronika Kostecka and Maciej Skowera, eds., Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SBP, 2016, 337–350.

*** All quotations translated by Maciej Skowera.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Odysseus / Ulysses Olympic Games Omega Telemachus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Child, children Coming of age Identity Pop culture references Travel

Further Reading

#RivetingReviews: Antonia Lloyd-Jones reviews Omega by Marcin Szczygielski, available at eurolitnetwork.com (accessed: July 11, 2018).

Kostecka, Weronika, "(Po)nowoczesne przestrzenie popkultury. Studium przypadku: *Omega* Marcina Szczygielskiego" [(Post)modern Spaces of Popculture. A Case Study: *Omega* by Marcin Szczygielski], in Weronika Kostecka and Maciej Skowera, eds., *Geografia krain zmyślonych. Wokół kategorii miejsca i przestrzeni w literaturze dziecięcej, młodzieżowej i fantastycznej* [The Geography of Imaginary Lands: Place and Space in Children's, Young Adult, and Fantasy Literature], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo SBP, 2016, 337–350.

"Marcin Szczygielski: Author – Poland," *Bookbird* 55.4 (2017): 31.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Maciej Skowera, "Entry on: Omega by Marcin Szczygielski", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/386. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.