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Children's "Confessions" about World War II. Methodological Dilemmas

The core of my paper is an analysis, from the methodological perspective, of the collection of homework assignments which were written by young Polish students (aged 8-16) in the post-war period, between May and November 1945. These original and unpublished texts are the evidence of the war experience of young people from a number of areas of Poland, but all of them share the same (or similar) title, i.e. „My war experience” or „My war memories from the German occupation 1939-1945”. The homework assignments were sent to the competitions most probably organized by regional Boards of Education. My methodological controversies related to way of analyzing this collection are the following: 1. How can we analyze these texts in order to capture their structure? Are they documents (e.g. confessions), or not? Many texts include, on the one hand, both intimate details and features of a confession which is full of regrets, but, on the other hand, they partly demonstrate the official opinion about the war, e.g. about the Red Army. 2. Who were the actual authors of these texts, if an educator/teacher probably oversaw the process of writing them? 3. A child's outlook on WWII was different from that of an adult. Young authors focused on the details which were directly connected with their daily life during the war (e.g. nuclear family, school environment, friendships, playgrounds). To what extent does the content of these texts exist in today's novels about WWII?

Maciej Wróblewski is a Professor of the Polish Literature at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. He is a head of the Laboratory of Children's and Young Adult Literature and Culture Studies at the University. He has examined children's literature and literary anthropology. He published about these subjects 3 books (only in Polish language): *“Reading of the Future”*. *Polish Science Fiction for Young Reader* (2008), *A Human in the School Space* (2014), *Literature and Machine* (2015) and *Childhood Experience. Study of Literary Anthropology* (2019). In 2015 he established scientific series “Children Library”, till present were published four books: *Children's Arts and New Media*, *Theatre and Drama for Children*, *Andersen's Inspiration in the Polish Literature and Culture*, *A Child in the World of the Motion Pictures*. Moreover, he published several articles in English language, e.g. *Young People's Blurred Identity. Life Between Reality and Virtual World*, “Childhood Remixed Journal” 2018, University of Suffolk and *The Betrayal of Childhood in a Socio-Cultural Context*, “Literatura Ludowa” 2018, No 3. He is a member of IRSCCL.