The following is based on my attempt to educate female and male students of the sixth grade in the framework of a project orientated education toward humanity. In this attempt, I start from the first demand of Theodor W. Adorno on education: “…that Auschwitz may not happen again” (Adorno 1981:88–104; Winkel 1987:325).

The first part of this work constitutes a coming to terms with the past and the “burden” (Giordano 1998:17) of being a German. Here, my own thoughts and experiences flow into this discourse with the history of inhumanity, because they should be made fruitful for the present. The outline of problems should make transparent my claims on education: I orientate myself throughout this essay according to the tradition that reaches from the Socratic demand for truth and justice over F. D. Schliermacher to Herman Nohls claims on education. I try always to connect their claim – to be the “advocate of the child” (Funk Kolleg 1970:56–68) – with the modern demand for orientation according to the “key problems” (Klafke 1991:178) of our society. Today, among those

1 This chapter is an edited version of a larger work. It was translated from the German by Rudolf J. Siebert.
key problems is the revival of nationalism, the wars originating from it [the Yugoslav civil wars] and the question of refugees as a consequence of these wars.

When I confront the female and male students with the questions of nationalism, war and refugees, I have to transform “the claims that grow out of the objective culture” (Funk Kolleg 1970:58) in a way so that they do justice to the demands which result from the life connection with these children. Thus, I must always again ask myself the question,

what sense does this demand make in the connection with the life of this child for his or her structuring and the escalation of his or her energies, and what means does this child have in order to deal with them adequately (Funk Kolleg 1970:58).

In order to make this transformation meaningfully, I have selected the stories of refugee children and of children who go on the basis of their different nationalities between the fronts of nationalism. They are the stories of Anna and Duro, Nils, Zelka, Tihana and Borna. The goal of this education is to educate the children against the coldness of the “social monad” (Adorno 1981:88–104; Winkel 1987:329) toward the empathy and warmth in the relationships among human beings. What matters is also always a “higher development of man and world” (Hänsel 1987:89).

Children who have an idea of what a refugee child has lost will be able to counter him or her with humanity and warmth and they will facilitate and make his or her integration easier. Young people whose heart has already once touched the pain of the “foreigner” will also not be able to decide to ignite and burn down emergency quarters and the homes of asylum seekers.

The part “my own understanding of the war,” i.e., the war between Croatia and Serbia, is destined for the reader of this work. I considered it to be necessary to take into this work the completely different experience of the war, which deviates from the interpretation in the Croatian or Serbian mass media because my engagement to “educate toward humanity” originated certainly out of the experience of the “inhumanity” of the Yugoslav civil war.