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I don't know where the moral is
or where this song should end,
but I wonder just how many wars
are fought between good friends.

Tommy Sands, *There Were Roses*

1. Introduction

Young adult literature (YAL), literature written and published for a younger readership, can serve as useful material for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). Usually portraying characters and experiences that are similar to those of its teenage readers, YAL can potentially increase students' motivation to read for pleasure, which, in turn, can have a beneficial influence on their language skills. It can also be a way for teachers to introduce sensitive or controversial topics. The Yugoslav Wars could be regarded as one such topic. Not only was the violent breakup of Yugoslavia one of the deadliest conflicts in Europe since the Second World War, it also resulted in thousands of refugees seeking shelter and finding a new home in Austria. Given that by now many of these immigrants have acquired citizenship and the right to vote, Austria's relations to the countries of the former Yugoslavia and the different political views on the breakup of Yugoslavia are frequently the source of political controversies and debates. This raises the question how teachers can address the Yugoslav Wars. This thesis therefore intends to examine the potential of YAL in English for teaching about this particular conflict. Apart from giving a brief overview of the different forms of YAL that deal with the breakup of Yugoslavia, this thesis will analyze two young adult (YA) novels, Arthur Dorros' *Under the Sun* and Els de Groen's *No Roof in Bosnia*, from both a literary and a didactic standpoint. By looking into some of the essential elements of a narrative text, like the narrative voice or the character perspective, I will assess the two novels' potential for the EFL classroom. This will be done in reference to the requirements and goals of peace education, a pedagogical framework that puts teaching for and about peace at the heart of education. Without ignoring the texts' minor drawbacks that could require some additional clarification or information, I will outline why the use of these two novels can be recommended for teachers wishing to incorporate the Yugoslav Wars in their classroom.

2. Why Young Adult Literature?

Before going into any detail about specific texts, it is necessary to answer the question why literature, and YAL in particular, should be read in the EFL classroom at all. Conscientious teachers will immediately refer to the instructions given in the Austrian curricula, and they would be, of course, right to do so. The Austrian foreign languages curriculum for the *Allgemein bildende höhere Schulen* (AHS), the general educational upper secondary schools, not only prescribes that literary texts are to play an appropriate role in the choice of teaching materials, it also states that students should be encouraged to enrich their vocabulary by using their free time to read English-language literature.¹ However, apart from the wish to comply with the curriculum, there are additional arguments that support the use of literature in the EFL classroom. Thaler has singled out six of them that are repeatedly mentioned by scholars (23):

- language development
- interpretational openness
- motivational value
- intercultural learning
- personal enrichment
- social prestige

While Thaler's list of arguments pertained to the use of literature in general, I would like to apply it to the use of YAL in particular. As will be expressed later, this does not mean that I advocate the use of YAL *instead of* traditional literary texts from the English-language canon; I intend to argue that YAL can and should be taught *in addition to* canonical works.

Before dealing with each of Thaler's arguments, we first need to look at the various definitions that have been used in reference to the term *young adult literature*. Several factors seem to play a role in the definition of this elusive and rather fuzzy term. The most straightforward definition would be to consider the age of its target audience, which is mostly limited to ages 12 through 20 in an attempt to distinguish it from the

¹ https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/lp/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs_11854.pdf?61ebyg (Apr 13, 2018)

traditional genre of children's literature (Nilsen et al. 3). Other sources put the content of the texts at the heart of their definition by focusing on the age of the main characters, the length of the text, the specific register used in it, as well as the themes and experiences represented in the plot (Small 282-283, quoted in Herz & Gallo 8-9). Finally, the intention of the authors as well as the marketing strategies of publishers have also been taken into considerations in some definitions of YAL (Coats 322).

Language development. One of the more pragmatic reasons educators can give for the use of literary texts in the EFL classroom lies in the beneficial role that reading, and extensive reading in particular, can play in second-language acquisition. Summarizing the different definitions of extensive reading, Hedge labels reading as extensive when large amounts of texts are regularly read out of pleasure and curiosity, either in school or at home (202). Krashen, one of the most prominent researchers in the field of reading and second-language acquisition, has conducted several studies that confirm the didactic benefits of what he terms *free voluntary reading*; they range from improved reading skills and a larger lexicon to greater control of spelling and grammar (15). Therefore, the use of literature, irrespective of genre and form, can provide students with plenty of opportunities to engage in extensive reading, provided that they are not just reading to finish a class assignment. This implies that teachers should create classroom settings that will invite students to read for the sake of reading. There are several factors to be taken into consideration when trying to ensure a school environment that will foster extensive reading. One of them certainly lies in providing and maintaining school libraries. Research examining the situation in the USA not only shows that well-stocked school libraries are an important factor in students' reading motivation, but also that the lack of libraries disproportionately affects students from lower-income families (Adkins 2014, Adkins & Brendler 2015). While the maintenance of school libraries is a duty of schools and education systems, there are also measures individual educators can take in order to support extensive reading among their students; these measures mostly pertain to the choice of literary texts used in class. Depending on factors like teaching format and lesson aims, teachers can either choose a text for the whole class, present a variety of texts for the class or individual students to choose, or let every student choose their own text. Whichever approach a teacher opts for, the choice of text has to ensure that the pupils' attention

will be captured and that the learners will be provided with optimal language input that is neither too demanding nor too simple (Thaler 63-64). Having been tailored to a young readership, YAL can potentially meet all these requirements. It goes without saying that not even the best literature lesson will enthrall every single student, but providing students with enough opportunities to read interesting literature in- and outside of the classroom is the first step to enabling extensive reading with all its didactic benefits. Day and Bamford have put forward ten principles for teaching extensive reading, with the first and most important being: "In the absence of interesting texts, very little is possible" (136).

Interpretational openness. Since YAL, just like other literary texts, is a piece of art that asks for a personal interpretation, one can argue that it can be of particular benefit to the EFL classroom. One of the past century's major paradigm shifts in foreign language teaching has been the emergence of communicative language teaching (CLT), which puts interaction and the negotiation of meaning at the core of language learning (Richards & Rodgers 83). Given the communicative aspect of literary interpretations, the use of literature in the EFL classroom can provide learners with favorable opportunities to interact in a goal-oriented and meaningful way (Hall 116). One of the manifold ways in which this can be ensured lies in the reader-response theory and its implementation in the teaching of literature. Probst argues in favor of putting the students/readers at the heart of a literary classroom activity:

Students need [...] to learn that literary meaning is largely an individual engagement, that it results from the creative effort of a reader working with a text. [...] Answering someone else's questions is only one way to work for meaning. [...] There are other productive ways of dealing with texts and readings, and students need to know and appreciate them. One of the most valuable is in some ways a departure from the text. It is to tell your own story as it was evoked by the literary work (41).

Motivational value. While the last two arguments could be equally applied to any literary text, irrespective of its form or genre, I claim that the argument that literature can increase students' motivation is especially applicable to YAL. When having a look at the findings of research conducted in the interdisciplinary field of learning sciences, we can discern factors that influence a learner's individual feeling of motivation. The

psychologists Richard Ryan and Edward Deci name three factors that influence people's motivation: relatedness, support of competence, and autonomy support (64). Translating their research to the use of YAL in the EFL classroom, one could say that students are likely to enjoy literature when they a) find the text to be of personal relevance to them, b) they feel competent enough to understand the text language-wise, and c) they maintain a degree of self-determination in the choice of texts. All three factors should be taken into consideration when choosing the right teaching methods and texts for in-class reading assignments. Assuming that a) students are likely to relate to the characters and the plot of YAL, b) that they will not feel overwhelmed by its language, c) and that they, when given the opportunity to choose a text on their own, would opt for YAL, all three factors appear to militate for the teaching of YAL (Elliott-Johns 42). While it is difficult to predict a student's personal involvement with a text and his or her individual reading habits at home, teachers can rely on some research that examined the effect of linguistic complexity on extensive reading. There is evidence that learners will feel overwhelmed by a text if they understand less than 98% of its vocabulary (Hsueh-Chao & Nation 2000). The use of YAL might thus be especially advisable in EFL classrooms, where learners, depending on their degree of language proficiency, might quickly feel overchallenged by many classics of the English-language literary canon. Again, the choice of texts plays a central role for the success of any literature lesson in the EFL classroom, or as Bushman and Haas put it: "All teachers want their students to become involved with the literature they are reading, understand its message, view it as relevant, respond to it, and eventually become readers themselves. For students to do so, though, they must be given appropriate literature to read" (178).

Intercultural learning. The Austrian foreign language curriculum places special value on the imparting of intercultural competences. Moreover, the Austrian Ministry of Education has reinforced its commitment to intercultural education in 2017 by issuing a decree on the topic.² Educators thus have to find teaching methods and materials that will allow them to realize these educational goals in their classrooms. This could prove to be difficult in light of the various definitions and descriptions that exist for this

² https://bildung.bmbwf.gv.at/ministerium/rs/2017_29.html (Apr 16, 2018)

extremely elusive term. While intercultural or multicultural approaches to teaching are often associated with phenomena like globalization and migration, it would be too simplistic to reduce intercultural education to ethnic or religious differences in a society. A much broader understanding of the term intercultural education also pays attention to groups that have been marginalized due to other factors, like gender, age, health, ability, sexual orientation, or income (Hayn & Burns 135). Furthermore, intercultural learning has an additional dimension in the foreign language classroom; one that deals with the cultures of anglophone societies and, more recently, with the connection between culture and language use (Kramsch 2014). All of these aspects raise the question how teachers, and EFL teachers in particular, can take on their responsibility to impart intercultural competences next to their numerous other duties in the classroom. It also prompts the question whether successful intercultural learning is really measurable or even achievable as such. This should not, however, discourage teachers from the addressing issues like the fluid and subjective nature of cultures and identities, conventional patterns of thinking, and traditional perceptions of one's environment. Many have argued that literature is a suitable tool for such an educational endeavor. Bredella affirms how reading can produce tensions between inner and outer perspectives, which, in turn, can lead to the empathetic broadening of a young reader's horizon (17). Arguing for the use of YAL in particular, Reichl states how

such a moment of doubt, or a cognitive dissonance, provides a promising learning opportunity; in this case the learning outcome is not focused on a culture or on a particular identity so much as on the more general process of identification and signification. In fact, learning happens on a meta level, that is students learn about the way their own perception and cognition works, how quickly they fall into easy comprehension patterns, and awareness of these processes sharpens their meta-cognitive skills. (114-115)

Others have emphasized the concept of literary identification of young readers with characters as a crucial moment of intercultural learning, defining it as a binary process that involves both finding similarities as well as recognizing essential differences between oneself and the characters (Alsup 9). By incorporating YAL that challenges rigid concepts of culture and identity and invites its young readers to reassess their conceptualization of the world, teachers can provide young people with small, but significant impulses that can potentially lead to more intercultural awareness and

increased empathy. Hesse argues that YA historical fiction, i.e. the novels analyzed in this thesis, could be particularly suitable for such an attempt (42).

Personal enrichment. One of the general pedagogical functions that Thaler's list ascribes to the use of literature in the classroom is connected to the notion of personal enrichment through reading literature. Teachers are not merely knowledge brokers who impart knowledge, skills and competences, they are also important caregivers and role models in whom students can confide. One of their tasks is to support young people in their emotional and social development. Adolescents experience substantial changes in puberty, from physical to mental and emotional changes, next to the ordinary day-to-day problems life can sometimes entail. This opens up the question how teachers can actually offer their pedagogical help to students in this difficult period. Although by far not the only possibility, the use of YAL can offer educators ways to address issues that are typically of relevance to adolescents. As Bushman and Haas have argued, YAL can be a suitable instrument in dealing with teenage challenges, from "achieving mature relations with age-mates" (8), "independence from parents and adults" (10), "acquiring a personal ideology" (12), to the "development of moral judgement" (13). Teachers can also draw on a wide choice of YA literary texts when wishing to provide individual students with emotional support. By drawing a student's attention to literature that features protagonists with whom he or she can identify, be it in the form of ethnic or religious minority characters, queer characters, or characters with disabilities – to name just a few – teachers can add to the positive personal development of their pupils. Furthermore, apart from the individual support YAL can offer, it can also help students to become informed and avid readers of literature themselves.

Social prestige. The last argument that, according to Thaler, is often mentioned in connection to literature and the English curriculum is the social prestige ascribed to reading and teaching literature. The notion of social prestige is often associated with the literary canon of a language, which Hall defines as "[a]n authoritative list of books considered to form the centre of the literary curriculum" (106). Teaching some of the literary classics is still often regarded as one of the main duties of both first language and EFL classrooms, and many English curricula demand the use of the most

prestigious works by some of the most appreciated writers. The Austrian curriculum has adopted a more liberal approach by not prescribing any mandatory texts, thus leaving the decision to the teachers. There have been lively scholarly debates about opening the canon in teaching and the inclusion of YAL in the English curriculum (Thaler 100-102). One way of including children's and YA fiction while still ensuring that students are familiarized with prestigious texts could lie in the teaching of some of the classics of children's literature. Novels like Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, or Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* can certainly be regarded as canonical, prestigious works despite the fact that they have been written for a young readership originally. Arguing for the combination of contemporary YAL and the classics in literature teaching, Herz and Gallo have noted that the use of YAL can serve as an introduction to the teaching of the classics, as many contemporary YA texts deal with themes that are central to canonical works as well (25-73). We must not forget, however, that social and literary prestige are highly subjective and constantly changing notions. What teachers of English consider prestigious and aesthetically valuable might not always correspond to the literature read and appreciated by their students. Even though usually not regarded as representatives of highbrow literature, writers such as J. K. Rowling (*Harry Potter*), Stephanie Meyers (*Twilight*), Suzanne Collins (*The Hunger Games*), or Veronica Roth (*Divergent*) have written YA novels that have garnered popularity and global attention, partly owing to hugely successful blockbuster screen adaptations. Rather than ignoring such media hypes, teachers are well-advised to represent YAL trends and their students' private media consumption in their literature classes.

All of these abovementioned factors can be regarded as arguments in favor of generally using YAL in the EFL classroom. This thesis, however, does not focus on the general benefits of YAL, but on specific didactic and pedagogical aims, whether in EFL or a different subject, that can be fulfilled with the use of YAL. One such aim lies in the teaching about the Yugoslav Wars. I will therefore present arguments that support my assertion that the Yugoslav Wars should be addressed in Austrian classrooms.

3. Why the Yugoslav Wars?

Critical readers of this thesis might call into question whether teaching the Yugoslav Wars can or should be combined with teaching the English language. One could easily dismiss such an interdisciplinary approach by pointing to the history class as the right place to discuss wars, especially those that seem to lack any connection to the anglophone countries and societies. I would therefore now like to give answers to the question how compatible teaching the Yugoslav Wars is with EFL teaching. To answer this question, it is necessary to give a short historical definition of the Yugoslav Wars and argue their potential relevance for Austrian students in general, before looking at the concrete possibilities of combining them with EFL teaching.

It is safe to say that the breakup of Yugoslavia constitutes a significant event in contemporary European history; one that has left its marks on Austria as well. Considering the presence of numerous people of ex-Yugoslav descent that have settled in Austria as a result of the conflict, it is surprising to find that the Austrian history curricula do not explicitly mention the wars or their aftermath. This is even more astounding given the longstanding historical ties between Austria and the Balkans. The Habsburgs have exerted political and military control over the ex-Yugoslav region for most of modern history, all up to World War I. The ensuing dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was followed by the creation of a Yugoslav kingdom that was to encompass all South Slavic peoples. Partly owing to internal political instability and ethnic conflicts, the first Yugoslavia was abolished, and the region again came under occupation during World War II. The Nazis, along with their fascist allies, orchestrated the mass killings of Serbs, Jews, and Roma people. After they were driven out by the communist Partisans, a local anti-fascists resistance group, Yugoslavia was re-established as a socialist federation under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito. Introducing a communist regime that aimed to diminish the Yugoslav population's ethnic and religious differences, Tito kept a firm grip on the country until his death in 1980. After his death, religious and ethnic tensions re-emerged, most notably in Kosovo, an autonomous province inhabited by a majority of Albanian Muslims. Exploiting an increasing public climate of Islamophobic anxiety, Slobodan Milošević rose through the

ranks of the Yugoslav communists and seized power by the end of the 1980s. With the downfall of communism in Europe in 1989 and the introduction of multi-party elections, Milošević revoked Kosovo's autonomy and began to oppress its Albanian population. Faced with Milošević's staunchly nationalist agenda and the re-emergence of ethnic tensions, but also in the face of growing economic disparities between the northern and southern parts of Yugoslavia, four of the six constituent republics declared their independence between 1990 and 1992, namely Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia. Following the goal of keeping all ethnic Serbs, who lived almost all over Yugoslavia, in one country, Milošević reacted with military force in what is now referred to as the *Yugoslav Wars*, first against Slovenia, then against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later against Kosovo. While Slovenia fended off the Yugoslav Army relatively quickly, the fighting in Croatia, which harbored a significant Serb minority, was much more intense, leading to several massacres and the shelling of numerous towns. Owing to its ethnic and religious heterogeneity, the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, inhabited by Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and minorities of Jews and Roma people, was even more fatal. The Bosnian conflict involved several belligerents, from the armies of the neighboring countries over nationalist paramilitaries to foreign mercenaries. Forced displacement, rape, and massacres characterized the war, with the Srebrenica massacre with its more than 8,000 victims serving as the most horrible example. As will be outlined later in the analysis of one of the YA novels, Sarajevo was under constant sniper fire, witnessing a siege that lasted for almost four years. Only after the mass killings in Srebrenica, and the fatal bombing of one of Sarajevo's biggest marketplaces, the Markale (a local version of its former German name 'Markthalle'), did the NATO forces decide to intervene with airstrikes against the Bosnian Serb forces, which forced the warring parties to negotiate. After peace negotiations in Dayton, Ohio and the signing of the so-called Dayton Agreement in 1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into two entities, one governed by Serbs and one jointly governed by Bosniaks and Croats. Since the Dayton Agreement only settled the ethnic fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina and disregarded the situation in Kosovo, public unrest and the call for independence grew among the oppressed Albanian part of Kosovo's population. Milošević again reacted by a show of military force, which led to the NATO bombing of the remaining

territory of Yugoslavia in 1999. Kosovo was put under control of a United Nations missions before gaining independence in 2008. It is estimated that more than 60,000 people from the former Yugoslavia settled in Austria as a result of the war.³ The historical assessment of the wars and the relations between Austria and the successor states of ex-Yugoslavia continue to spark off controversial debates in the Austrian public, as was recently exemplified by the comments of several high-ranking Austrian politicians.⁴ The *Beutelsbacher Konsens*, one of the major ethical codes for teachers of civic education in the German-speaking countries, states that anything that is discussed controversially in the public must also be addressed as a controversial issue in the classroom (Wehling 179-180). This is, however, only one of the reasons why Austrian students deserve to hear about the Yugoslav Wars. Another reason can be discerned when reading Wolfgang Klafki's concepts about modern general education. Klafki argues in favor of a modern understanding of general education, which he bases on the teaching of so-called *epochaltypische Schlüsselprobleme*, key problems that define our modern era, with wars and their ethical assessment being one of them (57).

As indicated before, there are also reasons that would speak in favor of teaching about the Yugoslav Wars in combination with EFL teaching. One of them would be the combination of history and EFL teaching in *content-and-language integrated learning* (CLIL), "an educational approach in which curricular content is taught through the medium of a foreign language", typically English in its function as a global lingua franca (Dalton-Puffer 183). That alone, however, does not explain why, of all historical events, the Yugoslav Wars should be taught in CLIL history classes, given the fact that the curriculum does not explicitly direct teachers to do so. I therefore want to give two possible reasons that both speak in favor of addressing this particular conflict in the history classroom.

One of them is an educational approach that intends to react to the changing social and demographic structure of classrooms in light of phenomena like the heterogenization of society, globalization, and migration. By taking heed of learners'

³ http://medienservicestelle.at/migration_bewegt/2011/06/21/kriege-in-ex-jugoslawien-fuhrten-zu-drei-grosen-fluchtlingswellen/ (April 19, 2018)

⁴ <https://kurier.at/politik/ausland/strache-gegen-staat-bosnien-herzegowina/307.132.098> (Apr 19, 2018), <https://diepresse.com/home/politik/innenpolitik/4999072/Hofer-sieht-Kosovo-als-Teil-Serbiens> (Apr 19, 2018)

complicated identity formation processes in modern transcultural ways of life, such an approach puts the emergence, amalgamation and the dissolution of new identities at the heart of teaching, alongside the idea of *Transkulturalität*, the assumption that culture and identity are fluid notions that are undergoing constant changes (Göhlich et al. 24-5). Not only can the Yugoslav Wars be adduced as one of history's prime examples of the arbitrariness of cultural identities, they are also a constitutive element in the identity formation processes of many young Austrians of ex-Yugoslav descent. Bettina Alavi similarly calls for the critical discussion of identity formation processes, the arbitrary emergence and sudden rupture of identities throughout history, but also the imparting of empathy and multiperspectivity as essential competences in historical education (178-9). Transcultural approaches to history didactics thus aim to represent students from marginalized parts of the society without resorting to culturalist discourses that define cultural differences as something inherent and rigid. On the contrary, they are an attempt to leave behind static definitions of culture by highlighting the universalities of human existence and addressing history as "verwobene Geschichte", i.e. by showing how histories other than a country's traditional national history can be relevant (Juneja-Huneke 2004). In so doing, such an approach intends to reaffirm the history classroom as the right place to address controversial historical debates, instead of yielding the teaching of history to the private sphere, or to religious and cultural organizations.

Again, critical readers might interject that my arguments so far only related to students whose parents or grandparents migrated to Austria from the former Yugoslavia. One might rightly ask the question how the Yugoslav Wars affect students with different migrant backgrounds or those without any migrant background at all. I would therefore like to give a second argument that favors dealing with the Yugoslav Wars in an Austrian classroom, namely the pedagogical approach of peace education. The Yugoslav Wars can, as already implied, be understood as a prime example of a global phenomenon. In addressing this particular conflict teachers have ample opportunities to discuss issues like ethnocentrism, agitation against minorities, ethnic or religious strife, Islamophobia, antisemitism, or antigypsyism. The anti-immigrant rhetoric that has emerged in light of the arrival of thousands of refugees fleeing the Syrian Civil War and other conflicts is only one of the possible parallels between the breakup of

Yugoslavia and the present political situation in Europe and the United States (Manojlovic 86). Teaching these potential parallels and educating students about issues like violence, war, peace, and reconciliation would thus be one of the main objectives of peace educators addressing the Yugoslav Wars. Even though teaching for and about peace is not a new concept in pedagogy, peace education as such still represents an elusive and broad term that lacks a succinct definition. David Selby views peace education, next to approaches like environmental education or human rights education, as a branch of the even broader approach of global education, which aims at "helping students explore the dynamics, condition and future of the world in which they live (the ,global village') and through that exploration, helping them better comprehend, realise and utilise their own potential as human beings (the ,global self')" (147). This makes it clear that peace education must not be viewed as one distinct subject that can be taught through one clearly defined curriculum, but that it instead has to be understood as a general educational approach that should permeate the traditional subject boundaries in school, or as Daniel Bar-Tal puts it:

Peace education provides a prism through which the pupils learn to view and evaluate topics and issues raised in the various subjects, and through this process they learn to view and evaluate current issues in society. History, geography, the social sciences, literature, and languages are the most salient examples of subjects that should include suitable themes for peace education (e.g., the causes of war, its cost, the causes of discrimination, peacemaking, different types of peace, the meaning of justice, and the importance of equality). Teaching these subjects, using peace education orientations, and keeping its objectives in mind is the best way to implement peace education in schools. (36)

Teaching about the Yugoslav Wars can thus be regarded as only one of the seemingly countless ways to implement peace education in an Austrian classroom. Under the right circumstances, the EFL classroom can become the ideal place for implementing peace education. Apart from the fact that the proficiency in a global language itself can be seen as an important prerequisite in the education for peace and mutual understanding, the EFL classroom offers teaching methods that are particularly useful for addressing peace-relevant topics (e.g. role plays, reading literature, creative and argumentative writing, etc.) (Jacobs & Cates 45-46). In the next chapter, I will argue

therefore argue why the combination of YAL and teaching about wars, particularly the Yugoslav Wars, could be particularly fruitful.

4. Why combine these two?

After giving several arguments for both using YAL as a medium and the Yugoslav Wars as a topic, it is now time to argue why these two can and should be combined in the EFL classroom, before giving concrete examples of such combinations in the following chapters.

The narrowest approach to answering the title question of this chapter would again lie in a specific look at students who are of ex-Yugoslav descent. If teachers really wish to represent the ethnic backgrounds of their students in their choice of teaching materials, they can do so by picking literature that depicts characters of a particular ethnic background. Writing about the situation in the United States, Ingram Willis argues that the “continued use of the literary canon assures the experiences of underrepresented groups will remain unvoiced and marginalized in school settings. Multicultural literature clearly offers a wide range of literature choice for teachers” (142). Including literature that positively depicts marginalized groups can not only have a positive effect on the personal development of students from said groups, it can also serve as a helpful tool in motivating students who are not fond of reading literature (Kelley et al. 83).

A broader approach that includes all students, irrespective of their personal backgrounds, would, again, be to refer to peace education and the opportunities YA war fiction can provide for peace educators. Addressing horrible things like wars and crimes against humanity in a classroom will inevitably prompt questions whether young students are mature enough to process such topics. “Will reading the literature of violence prepare young people to think beyond the thrills to the underlying moral problems? Or should they be spared exposure to horrors in fiction that they may never encounter in real life?” (Goodenough & Immel 7). Those who deny that reading about war is suitable for students essentially challenge teaching about wars in general. The

history curricula clearly state that students are to be acquainted with some of the most gruesome periods in history, i.e. the Holocaust. To assume that they could cope with history textbooks and other non-fictional sources but that they are not mature enough to read literature that depicts wars and war crimes would be an underestimation of their capabilities. It would also be an underestimation of the potential of YA war fiction, since some argue that "literature leads to a more in-depth understanding of painful conflict and hopeful responses than historical documents possibly can" (Powers 190). YA war literature can thus be a useful addition to conventional teaching materials like history textbooks and historical documents (Rodwell 29). This, however, raises questions about the pedagogical and didactic implications of using YA war novels in the classroom. History teachers aim to provide students with skills for interpreting, analyzing, and deconstructing historical sources. It would be the duty of EFL teachers, then, to teach students the skills needed for deconstructing and interpreting the narrative of a piece of historical fiction (Wilson 8). Analyzing a literary text's implicit expression of ideology, identity, and the underlying norms and views is also a crucial element of a peace educational approach to teaching literature (Carter & Pickett 21). By promoting the deconstruction of a text's underlying messages against the use of violence, EFL teachers can become peace educators with the use of the right YA war novels. Kate McLoughlin, who has dedicated a lot of her research to the literary representations of war, has given a convincing statement in favor of teaching wars with literature:

Can war literature stop war? To ask this question is to raise queries about literature's impact in the real world. 'Make lit, not war' might be effective in two ways. The first might be through argument, using words to dissuade from force, or take the place of it. The second might be through mimesis: showing, rather than telling, the cost of armed conflict. On an appropriately grand scale, the result might be social and political action: protesting, voting, lobbying, consulting, decision-making. [...] [W]ar writing has the capacity to reveal and commend love. It does this by showing the face of the Other. And perceiving and embracing the Other's otherness is the beginning of not killing, of acceptance, of non-totality, of pluralism (31-32).

5. How to proceed?

The previous chapters presented arguments for addressing the Yugoslav Wars in an EFL classroom and for using YA fiction for such an endeavor. Any educator wanting to incorporate literature for young readers when dealing with the Yugoslav Wars will be confronted with the challenge of finding the right reading material for his or her students. This chapter will present a varied selection of YAL that addresses the wars. I will also refer to some aspects that I deem important when preparing students for the reading of a literary text about the Yugoslav Wars.

5.1. Preparing a class

Using YAL on the Yugoslav Wars does not necessarily have to depend on factors like age or the degree of foreknowledge of students, however, they will likely influence how a literary text can be used in the EFL classroom and how much class time should be dedicated to discussing information that might be crucial for understanding it. In particular, there are some aspects that could require some additional attention in class, depending on how accustomed students are with topics like the history of the region, certain cultural conventions of the Balkans, or the circumstances of violent conflicts in general. Naturally, the intensity of the discussion will also depend on the text itself. While some texts might themselves already clarify things that are essential for understanding the context of the Yugoslav Wars, other texts will presuppose significantly more historical or cultural background knowledge. The amount of preparation or support will also depend on the teaching aims of the lesson and the didactic concept behind them, i.e. a CLIL lesson will inevitably need more time dedicated to the historical and cultural context of the Yugoslav Wars than an EFL lesson that focuses on extensive reading and the literary text itself.

As mentioned earlier, one aspect that might influence the effect of YAL on teaching the Yugoslav Wars is the familiarity with the history of the region. It might be necessary to discuss the co-existence of several religions, like Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity,

Islam, or Judaism, and ethnic groups, like Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, or Roma in the region. In both novels analyzed in this thesis, ethnic and religious diversity among the main characters is a key element of the text, often mirroring the ethno-religious strife that played a significant part in the Yugoslav Wars. Dealing with the geopolitical context of the Balkans could also prove to be essential for a deeper understanding of literary texts that deal with the Yugoslav Wars. The fact that the Balkans have been subject to the influence of several cultures and powers, like the Byzantine Empire, the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Austro-Hungarian Empire could be relevant when working with novels about the history of Yugoslavia. Especially the occupation of Bosnia-Herzegovina by the Habsburg Empire in the late 19th century could be of particular relevance to EFL classrooms in Austria, as it demonstrates the longstanding historical links between Austria and the Balkans. Likewise, it might be wise to discuss other armed conflicts that have taken place in the region throughout the 20th century, particularly the Second World War and the mass murder of Serbs, Jews, and Roma people, as there has been the construction of a historical narrative in which the Yugoslav Wars are regarded as a continuation of these previous conflicts (Ashplant et. al. 64). This is also represented in some of the texts discussed, especially in Dorros' *Under the Sun*, where an older Jewish character draws a comparison between World War II and the violence of the Yugoslav Wars by recounting his own experiences of persecution. Explaining terms like *Chetnik* or *Ustashe*, both of which are used in some of the YA novels, could also prove helpful for a better understanding of the literary texts.

There are cultural aspects of the Balkan societies that could be unfamiliar to students and would therefore require some preliminary attention in class. One example could be the ethno-religious character of names in the Balkans. Both given names and surnames often reveal a person's ethnic background. Both novels analyzed in this thesis address the potential dangers of this phenomenon in great detail, for example, by having the protagonists conceal their names when talking to enemy soldiers. Especially younger readers might need some introductory explanations on this phenomenon, depending on their own experiences with multiethnic communities. In addition, it might be useful to address the deep-rooted connection between ethnicity and religion. Given the minimal linguistic differences between the South Slavic peoples,

religion served as the main vehicle for the consolidation of ethnicity and nationhood, with most Catholics identifying as Croats and most Orthodox Christians identifying as Serbs. In addition, a distinct ethnicity developed after the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans and the acceptance of Islam by parts of the population, which came to be known as either "Muslim" (denoting both ethnicity and religion) or "Bosniak" (Eller 257-263). As a result, the Balkans witnessed a close link in the perception of ethnicity and the corresponding religion, with religion not only fulfilling a spiritual function, but also serving as an instrument for self-identification on an ethnic level. This circumstance is featured several times in both novels, especially with secular characters who defy these common expectations. In *Under the Sun*, for example, the main character comes from a mixed secular Bosniak-Croat family that does not adhere to Islam in terms of religion. Upon meeting a Bosniak boy whose family members are devout Muslims, Ehmet has to explain and justify his identity as a Bosniak who does not practice Islam.

This aspect is closely related to another question that has come to be significant to the Balkan societies, namely the distinction between ethnic and national identity. Inhabitants of multi-ethnic countries tend to have a multilayered approach to their own identity, for example one that separates ethnic identity from the national one. In the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, for example, this leads to people identifying as Croats, Serbs, Bosniaks, etc. on an ethnic level, while feeling related to the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina on a national level and referring to themselves as Bosnian or Bosnian-Herzegovinian in that regard (Andjelić 123-4). Equally, there will also be people who do not feel any connection to Bosnia-Herzegovina on a national level, instead only drawing on their ethnicity and religion for self-identification, or, alternatively, people who fully adopt the national identity without giving any emphasis to their ethno-religious background, as is the case with the protagonist of *Under the Sun*. While this is not an inherently Balkan phenomenon, it might be necessary to explain it in further detail in some classes. Other multi-ethnic countries like the United Kingdom or Spain could be adduced as examples that might be more familiar to young readers in Austria or any other region outside of the Balkans.

Teaching about the Yugoslav Wars is also a good opportunity for educators to address violent conflicts in general. Despite the fact that portrayals and depictions of wars are omnipresent in the everyday lives of most students, some war-related phenomena

could still require some additional attention in a classroom setting, such as the gravest crimes against humanity like genocide, concentration camps, rape, torture, but also other forms of physical and psychological violence, like abductions, detention camps, looting, the besiegement of cities or villages, forced displacement, malnutrition and starvation, the lack of adequate health care in times of war, or broader issues like ethnic and religious hatred, racism, chauvinism, and propaganda. One could also try to make the experience of war more tangible to children and teenagers by inquiring the living conditions of their age-mates in wars and discuss topics like the lack of adequate education in times of war, the loss of parents, the abuse of children as soldiers, or the danger of mines for children. Non-fiction texts written for a YA audience could be helpful to raise young readers' awareness about any of these issues. Of the numerous texts that can be recommended for teachers who are looking for additional material to use when dealing with genocide in class, Brendan January's work *Genocide: Modern Crimes against Humanity* can be singled out as especially recommendable. January's texts are written in a simple register and published for a younger audience. *Genocide* allows students in EFL classrooms to gather additional information about crimes against humanity in general and those of the Yugoslav Wars in particular. With several chapters covering different instances of genocide and mass murder, there is a whole chapter dedicated to the war crimes in the Yugoslav Wars, where matters like genocide or the concealment or denial of genocide are addressed in an age-appropriate way. The infamous massacre of Srebrenica is described as follows:

Over the next few days, the staccato of machine-gun fire and the concussion of grenade blasts filled the area around Srebrenica. When asked, Serb commanders explained that Serb soldiers were celebrating their victory by firing into the air. Yet disturbing accounts were related from the first Muslim women and children to arrive in safe territory. They spoke of a blur of horrible images – of the men pulled from their families, of dead strewn along the road, of young women taken by Serb soldiers and never seen again. (January 97)

While this kind of information can be useful in classes with YA readers of a particular age, very young readers could easily feel overwhelmed by accounts like these. Teachers looking for materials that are more adequate for children will find an array of specially written informational texts. To name just one example, Julia Waterlow's *A Family from Bosnia* (1997) is a children's book that introduces young readers to the

life of a Bosnian family during the Siege of Sarajevo. With a large-sized font and ample illustrations, it is particularly suited for familiarizing younger readers with the hardships of surviving in a besieged city.

Teachers using novels for peace education purposes will also have to decide how much explicit attention they want to pay to the concept of war and its deconstruction in class. As already mentioned, all students will be confronted with wars in their everyday lives in one way or the other, be it through newspapers, television, video games, etc. This does not mean that students will actually have given the issue a lot of thought. In order to maximize the educational impact of reading YAL, teachers could provide enough input and opportunities for an open and critical discussion that would enable students to reflect on their own perceptions and assumptions about war. Students could, for example, reflect on questions like:

- Why are there wars?
- Can there be “just” or “clean” wars?
- How do wars affect me?
- What and how do we hear and see about wars?
- Which different factors could influence an individual’s opinion for or against a war?⁵

By discussing the issue and following questions like these, educators would ideally problematize wars and increase their students’ consciousness about why questions of war and peace should matter to anyone, irrespective of origin and country of residence. One of the main aims of any lesson on the Yugoslav Wars should therefore be to raise students’ awareness that wars can potentially occur in any society at any given time and that peace requires the active commitment of both a society and its individuals. Teachers looking for a way to combine teaching about the Yugoslav Wars with key concepts of peace education in general should consider the valuable selection of materials provided by the British non-governmental organization Remembering Srebrenica. The organization’s website⁶ offers complete lesson plans and workshops for both primary and secondary grades that deal with war and genocide in general and the Srebrenica massacre in particular. In addition to the political aspects of teaching

⁵ adapted from Gugel & Jäger 1999

⁶ <http://www.srebrenica.org.uk/>

about wars, educators could also focus on the literary aspects of war novels by addressing and analyzing the genre itself before using YA novels on the Yugoslav Wars. One possibility would be to discuss the challenges of writing about real wars. McLoughlin has described six challenges authors experience when writing about wars:

- How to make a representation of war credible?
- How to make the enormity of war comprehensible?
- How to communicate the unique physical and mental experience of war?
- How to communicate the uncertainty and endlessness of war?
- How to find adequate words for war?
- How to communicate the illogicality of war?⁷

All of these questions could be used as prompts in pre-reading tasks to raise students' awareness about the genre-specific challenges of the war novel.

5.2. Choosing a text⁸

As already mentioned, the amount of English-language YAL dealing with the Yugoslav Wars seems to be rather low and bears no comparison to literary texts on the Second World War or wars that involved belligerents from the English-speaking world, like the Vietnam War. This can both facilitate and impede the choice of a text for teachers who wish to use YAL when teaching the Yugoslav Wars. While the comparatively small amount of published works ensures that teachers will not be overwhelmed by the variety of texts, it could also lead to teachers not deeming any of the texts appropriate for their classroom.

Choosing the right text for a long-term reading assignment can pose a considerable challenge for EFL teachers since both students' motivation and the didactic success of such an endeavor heavily depend on it. Apart from pragmatic criteria like length, linguistic complexity and the availability of texts, as well as highly subjective aspects like a teacher's assessment of a text's aesthetic quality, there is a number of student-

⁷ adapted from McLoughlin 2014

⁸ see Gangi 2014 for a more detailed list of YAL works on the Yugoslav Wars

oriented criteria that will likely influence the choice of a literary text for EFL teaching, i.e. the readers' age, language proficiency, interests, and backgrounds (Thaler 18-20). As regards the Yugoslav Wars, for example, not only students who are of ex-Yugoslav descent or who have other personal ties to the region could find the texts presented in this thesis particularly interesting. Classes with a majority of students that show a general interest in topics like war, refugees, migration, politics, or history could find YA novels on the Yugoslav Wars especially motivating as well.

The choice will also depend on what aspects of the Yugoslav Wars a teacher wants to present in his or her classroom. Lessons that focus on war-time crimes or coping with ethnic differences will call for different texts than those that put an emphasis on life as a displaced person. Similarly, teachers might want to specialize in a regional context, too, and therefore choose a corresponding text. As will be shown later in this chapter, most of the YA novels published on the Yugoslav Wars deal with the Bosnian War or the Kosovo War, two of the most violent confrontations of the Yugoslav Wars. Apart from the paucity of literary texts published in English, it is also noteworthy that most of the works have been published between the late 1990s and the early 2000s. This seems to indicate a decline in interest in writing or publishing YA novels that cover the topic already some years after the end of the Yugoslav Wars. While literary interest in the topic might re-emerge in the future, teachers wanting to teach the wars with the help of YAL will mostly have to rely on texts that were published more than a decade ago. Given the historical nature of the topic, this does not necessarily have to constitute a disadvantage. However, novels written in the direct aftermath of the wars might have to be evaluated differently than texts that were written with plenty of historical hindsight. Naturally, texts that were published immediately after the war cannot cover aspects like the reconciliation and the aftermath of the war in everyday lives.

When looking at the choice of English-language YA novels covering the Yugoslav Wars, it also becomes evident that hardly any of the literature has been written by local authors, with most of the texts coming from American writers (Gangi 393). The few publications by local authors published in English are mostly autobiographical accounts of childhood experiences in the war. Although there has been a considerable amount of literature published in Serbo-Croatian that deals with the wars from the perspective of children and young adults (Hansen-Kokoruš 2013), apparently almost none of it has

been chosen for translation into English. Some of the YAL in Serbo-Croatian has been criticized for following a nationalist agenda (Harambaša-Dugina 2016), which might partly explain the low amount of translated works.⁹

5.2.1. Autobiographies

As already mentioned, teachers wishing to use literature written by local authors will most probably have to rely on autobiographical accounts of children and teenagers who survived the wars. A literary format that is especially common among these accounts is the war-time diary, whose intimate details and authenticity make it a suitable way of introducing students to the horrid circumstances of war. Zlata Filipović's *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* was the first of its kind to be published at a time when the Yugoslav Wars were still ongoing. The diary gives an emotional insight into the life of an eleven-year-old in besieged Sarajevo and her family's attempts to escape the war. Chosen by the Sarajevo City Council and UNICEF for publication shortly before her family managed to flee to France, Filipović's diary reminds many of the diaries of Anne Frank, which some students might already be familiar with, making it easier to use other texts of the diary genre (Wahlstrom 46). With the author being so young at the time of writing it, the diary is adequate for readers of a similar age when it comes to factors like language or content. Some diary entries might be of particular relevance for readers in Austrian EFL classrooms, as the author mentions Austria as one of the designated destinations of Bosnian refugees. This might help raise Austrian students' awareness about their own country's role during the Yugoslav Wars and offer valuable parallels to the fate of refugees that sought shelter in Austria more recently.

While Filipović's diary is particularly suitable for pre-teen readers, adolescents might find the entries too simple and immature. Teachers still wishing to provide real-life diary-style accounts of the war can choose between two other diaries that have been published in English. One of them is Nadja Halilbegović's *My Childhood under Fire: A Sarajevo Diary*, which reveals the experiences of the twelve-year-old author during the Siege of Sarajevo, with retrospective comments from Halilbegović as an adult. This

⁹ Teachers can, of course, also draw upon literature written in German. See Reimann 2002 for a concise overview of German-language literary resources on the topic

juxtaposition of childhood diary entries with a personal adult perspective on the war creates a text that could be of particular interest to teenage readers. Apart from that, pre-teen readers will find many of the brutal details addressed in the diary too traumatic. Halilbegović retells her own difficulties with being confronted with horrible accounts of war crimes in the media: "On TV they showed a little girl who had been raped and an eighty-year-old woman who was beaten and forced to march for hours in the burning sun." (100).

Apart from the two diaries mentioned above, there is also Savo Heleta's *Not My Turn to Die: Memoirs of a Broken Childhood in Bosnia*, which gives account of the young author's flight from the war. Heleta is not only from rural Bosnia, he is also an ethnic Serb, which distinguishes him from the abovementioned diarists and makes his diary particularly suitable for young readers who find it easier to identify with male protagonists as well as readers who might be biased against local authors who are of Croat or Bosniak ethnicity. The diary depicts the pre-war life in Goražde, a small, ethnically diverse city in eastern Bosnia, as quiet and harmonious. It recounts the author's expulsion from his war-torn hometown and ends on a very optimistic note that focuses on reconciliation while deconstructing concepts of masculinity:

For a long time after the war, I considered reconciliation as a weakness. I saw revenge as the only way, the "manly" way to move on with my life. But with the help of my family, and after my life changed for the better and I got exposed to education and traveled all over the world, I realized that was wrong. I realized only brave and strong people can put years of suffering behind them, reconcile with the past, and move on with life. (225)

5.2.2. Novels

In addition to these real-life accounts of young people's experiences in the Yugoslav Wars, there are also several YA novels that can be used when teaching the wars in an EFL classroom. Two very compelling ones, Dorros' *Under the Sun* and de Groen's *No Roof in Bosnia* will be analyzed in greater detail in chapter 5. Both of them deal with the war in Bosnia and the dangerous escape of their young protagonists. Another convincing portrayal of a Bosnian teenager's flight from the war is Gale Hiçyilmaz's YA novel *Smiling for Strangers*. Hiçyilmaz depicts the life of fourteen-year-old Nina Topić

in war-torn Bosnia and her escape to the United Kingdom, where her grandfather sends her with the help of a UN convoy after their home is attacked. The young protagonist has to face the uncertainties of seeking asylum in a foreign country all alone while having to process her war traumas along the way:

Then, as she had hidden on the edge of the forest with the ruined home up on the mountainside behind and the bridge before, even then she had not felt as lonely as she did now. There, she had been surrounded by ghosts and she had had some knowledge of the patterns of their lives before all was ripped up and scattered by the war. The presence of those who had died had been as powerful to her as the smell of rain on hot summer earth. Out here there was nothing of that: here nothing belonged to her at all. (103)

So far, all of the YA novels presented in this chapter have dealt with the Bosnian setting of the Yugoslav Wars, mostly narrating tales of urban teenagers from Sarajevo. Teachers who wish to focus more on other battle zones, like the one in Kosovo, might find the following three young adult novels particularly interesting.

Alice Mead has written two novels for a YA audience that deal with the war in Kosovo. In *Adem's Cross*, she presents readers with the story of a young Kosovo-Albanian boy who has to cope with his sister's murder after she provokes the anger of Serbian militiamen by publicly reading a protest poem. In addition, he has to endure the repeated harassment of family members by Serbian troops. In Mead's second novel set during the Kosovo War, *Girl of Kosovo*, readers are introduced to Zana, an eleven-year-old Kosovo-Albanian girl, who loses not only her best friend, a Serbian girl, but also her father and two of her brothers. Herself maimed by a mortar attack, the girl tries to survive the horrors of war without giving in to the ethnic hatred that has possessed many of her family members: "We had nothing now – no home, no clothes, no food. Family members were dead. Neighbors were dead. My brother was filled with anger and hatred, following my uncle's path instead of my father's." (111). Due to its vivid and authentic, yet age-appropriate depictions, *Girl of Kosovo* appears to be especially recommendable for familiarizing pupils as young as eleven or twelve with the dreadful realities of war.

Those seeking to deal with the Kosovo War from the perspective of young refugees who had to flee the country are well-advised to consider Katherine Paterson's *The Day of the Pelican*. Paterson, who is best known for her YA classic *Bridge to Terabithia*,

tells the story of Meli Lleshi, another young Kosovar girl, who has to leave her home country after armed conflicts break out between Serbs and Albanians. The Lleshi family flees to the United States, trying to find peace in spite of all the terrible news coming from their homeland, including sad news from Meli's older brother who stayed in Kosovo to fight in the war. Meli is soon confronted with the hardships of life as a young Muslim immigrant in the United States, which only deteriorates after terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the ensuing Islamophobic hostility of her schoolmates:

"Explain what you mean, "them."" Of course, by now Meli knew full well what Brittany and the others meant by "them," but she wanted to make Brittany say it out loud, to her face. "How am I one of *them*?" She leaned so close to Brittany that she could see the pimples on the girl's cheeks set to explode. Brittany straightened. "Like the terrorists." (127)

By focusing on a refugee's life abroad, the novel's most evident potential lies in giving students an understanding of the life of young refugees in their new home countries, something that many a young reader from Austria might find relevant as well. Furthermore, both *Girl of Kosovo* and *The Day of the Pelican* provide readers with a concise and accurate informational text on the history of the region and the unfolding of the conflict, which can significantly facilitate teaching about the conflict.

Unfortunately, there seems to be no YAL in English focusing on the events of the Yugoslav Wars in any of the other ex-Yugoslav countries. There are, however, two novels that deal with the war in Croatia. Though not explicitly published for YA readers, they both portray the war from the perspective of young female protagonists. Sara Nović's novel *Girl at War* was written in English and tells the story of a ten-year-old girl from Croatia enmeshed in the Yugoslav Wars, narrated by her 20-year-old self. Similarly, Ivana Bodrožić's *The Hotel Tito* tells the story of a young girl that has to deal with the tragic events of the war in Croatia. The novel was translated into English in 2017.

5.2.3. Poetry

Teachers who are looking for a way to incorporate poetry into teaching about the Yugoslav Wars will find Maria Testa's *Something about America* particularly interesting. Recommended for readers as young as twelve, this collection of poems deals with the turbulent life of a young Kosovar girl who seeks asylum in the United States after suffering severe injuries in a fire. Chris Agee's anthology *Scar on the Stone: Contemporary Poetry from Bosnia* offers lyrical texts on the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. While not explicitly published for younger readers, most of the poems are suitable for the EFL classroom.

Apart from printed sources, educators can also turn to the Internet when looking for poetry on the Yugoslav Wars. There are numerous websites with amateur texts that offer plenty of opportunities for discussions and interpretations. Using poetry in the classroom can be a particularly effective way of promoting the goals of peace education. Killingsworth Roberts argues that poetry deserves to be used in peace education, as it can provide both teachers and students with genuine and poignant accounts of war despite its textual brevity (70).

5.2.4. Drama

Tammy Ryan's *The Music Lesson* provides teachers with an opportunity to base their teaching about the Yugoslav Wars on the reading (and ideally performing) of a dramatic text. The play focuses on two Bosnian music teachers from Sarajevo, Ivan and Irena, who are forced to flee to the United States. While starting a new life by tutoring American teenagers, they have to cope with the murder of one of their most promising students, who was murdered in the war. The play provides ample opportunities to address topics like war traumas, the Siege of Sarajevo, or the role of children as victims of the wars.

Plays can generally be regarded as a valuable source for EFL or history teaching as their performative nature allows students to reconstruct, perform, and reflect on fictional or historical characters, as well as the accompanying scenes and settings

(Almond 10). Issues like cultural, ethnic, or ideological differences can be challenged and, ideally, overcome with the help of performing drama.

5.2.5. Picture books

There are some alternatives to the literary genres discussed so far that focus on a graphic representation of the Yugoslav Wars. Trish Marx's picture book *One Boy from Kosovo* presents the story of Edi, a twelve-year-old Kosovo-Albanian boy, who has to flee the war to a refugee tent camp in neighboring Macedonia. Documenting the arduous escape from Kosovo and the dismal living conditions in the camp, this picture book provides teachers with good opportunities to address and illustrate the experience of refugees, be it in the Yugoslav Wars or in general.

A similar resource deals with the personal experiences and hardships of children during the Yugoslav Wars. James P. Grant's *I Dream of Peace: Images of War by Children of Former Yugoslavia* is a multifaceted representation of the war from the perspective of its youngest victims. With drawings, short writings, and personal accounts of children from all over the region, this book can be used to give an authentic insight into the everyday horrors of war.

6. Two young adult novels on the Yugoslav Wars

After the previous chapter's general overview of the different kinds of literary texts on the Yugoslav Wars that lend themselves as valuable resources in the EFL classroom, this chapter will go into detail about two YA novels in particular. The two texts, Arthur Dorros' *Under the Sun* and Els de Groen's *No Roof in Bosnia*, both deal with teenage refugees of the Bosnian War, yet in different ways. The former combines elements of adventure and suspense fiction with the traumatic experiences of a childhood in times of war, whereas the latter focuses on the relationships between four wayward teenagers who are forced to get along with each other in order to survive. Both literary and didactic criteria will be taken into consideration when analyzing the two novels below. The aim of this chapter is to dissect different literary aspects of the novels to examine how these aspects potentially influence their use in peace education and lessons about the Yugoslav Wars.

6.1. Arthur Dorros' *Under the Sun*

Arthur Dorros is an American writer of children's and YAL. His work mostly comprises picture books about young Hispanic Americans and their lives in migrant communities. *Under the Sun* is not only his first, and so far, only book set in the Yugoslav Wars, it was also his first ever novel. It was first published in hardcover by Amulet Books in 2004, with a paper-back edition following in 2006. The 2006 paperback edition encompasses a hand-drawn map of the region in 1993, the year in which the story is set. While it does not give any historical introduction, readers get to read a few paragraphs on the history of the conflict in the author's notes, which includes some of the author's personal views on the conflict. Interestingly, although it is supposed to depict the region in 1993, the map still uses bold lines to demarcate the territory of former Yugoslavia while thin lines indicate the inner-Yugoslav borders between the republics and autonomous provinces of former Yugoslavia, which creates the impression that Yugoslavia still existed in its pre-war boundaries in 1993. Although this

is historically false, it mirrors the protagonist's understanding of the world. In YAL, maps can carry out more than just a descriptive function; they can also have highly ideological and pedagogical effects on the reading of a text (Pavlik & Sheeky Bird 2017).

6.1.1. Plot

Given that the plot is a crucial element of any narrative text, a literary analysis of a novel cannot take place without dissecting its plot and determining the major plot devices that propel its story. In addition, an analysis of a plot will usually attempt to uncover and categorize its underlying structure. In the case of *Under the Sun*, the plot resembles that of many YA war novels in which young protagonists are forced to leave their home and embark on a perilous journey in order to survive (Šubrtová 2009). In a broader sense, this search for a safe shelter can be categorized as a variant form of the 'quest plot', which DuPlessis, analyzing narrative structure from a feminist standpoint, called a "progressive, goal-oriented search with stages, obstacles and 'battles'" (200), a narrative structure that younger readers will likely be familiar with already, albeit from narratives far more positive and lighthearted than the refugee plot.

In *Under the Sun*, the first chapter serves as an integrated exposition in medias res in which the reader is plunged into the life of thirteen-year-old Ehmet during the Siege of Sarajevo. It introduces the reader to Ehmet, his parents, his best friend Milan, and the local bully, Darko. Since school has been shut down due to the siege, the two friends are trying to spend as much time as possible outside, either playing or running minor errands, which, of course, leaves their parents worried for their safety. After Ehmet's apartment comes under artillery fire, his mother decides to escape the city with Ehmet and move to her relative's place outside of Sarajevo, while his father, a reporter, stays in the city. After an unnerving flight through the tunnel systems that connect besieged Sarajevo to the outer world, Ehmet and his mother settle down at their relative's farmhouse. Their stay is interrupted one night when Serb paramilitaries break into the farmhouse and take away their relatives after raping his mother. Ehmet manages to hide in the nearby woods and is later joined by his mother. They both set out to reach Ehmet's grandparents on a perilous trek through rural Bosnia. They

eventually meet a young boy, Ali, who hid as well during an ambush on his parents' house. Together they continue their journey in order to find shelter at one of Ali's relatives, since Ehmet's mother is showing signs of a severe pneumonia. On their flight across the Bosnian countryside they encounter many different threats. Not only do they have to struggle to find food and shelter, they also have to manage to stay unnoticed by any of the several militias roaming the country. They come into contact with militiamen twice along their journey, once with a Serb soldier, and another time with a group of Bosniak soldiers. In both instances, the men do not harm the fleeing group. The group of Bosniak soldiers eventually even helps them to reach Ali's relatives. Once they arrive there, Ehmet has to face the next tragic setback when his mother dies from the infection she contracted on their arduous march. After he buries her with the help of Ali's relatives, Ehmet continues his escape on his own and bumps into an old man, who offers him shelter in his house. While this event is not really crucial to the plot, it does serve to introduce the character of Jakob and his wife Danica who fulfill other functions in the text, like providing moral lectures about the war and revealing more about the history of the region. After continuing the journey to his grandparents, Ehmet is soon again confronted with the obstacles of war, when Croatian militaries take him off a bus and forcefully put him in a refugee's camp. Miraculously, he meets Milan and his family in the camp, however, they are soon separated again, as Milan's family has to move to a refugee camp for ethnic Serbs. Milan tells Ehmet about a village for children in Istria that their former teacher, Mrs. Barisic, is building. Ehmet decides to escape the refugee camp to travel there with the little money he has left. The children's village provides the setting for a relatively happy ending of the novel. Ehmet meets his teacher and several other children from Sarajevo at the shelter, among them also the girl he secretly fancies, Mira, and his former tormentor Darko. He overcomes his differences with Darko while forming a close bond with Mira. Eventually, his father, by now himself already worn out by the war, joins him in the village and meets Ehmet's wish to continue living there with him.

6.1.2. Characters

Another important subject of the analysis of any novel are the characters and all the aspects that define them, the so-called *character perspective*, which includes factors like their names, their physical and psychological predispositions, their knowledge as well as their values and norms. Margolin has aptly said how “character is no different from any other means of achieving esthetic effects, such as stylistic figures, plot patterns, symbols, or narrative ordering, and should be studied together with them” (3). Equally, the array of characters presented in a novel and their mutual relations carry meaning that needs to be deconstructed in a literary analysis. This so-called *perspective structure* is best analyzed by looking not only at quantitative factors of character presentation, i.e. when and how often a character is mentioned, but also by considering qualitative factors, i.e. the sociocultural range of the characters’ portrayal (Nünning & Nünning 51). This plays a particularly important role in YAL, which ideally “provides occasions to recognize positive attributes and contributions of characters that represent people across the spectrum of diverse backgrounds and abilities”, which is certainly the case in *Under the Sun* (Carter & Pickett, 49).

6.1.2.1. Ehmet

The novel’s protagonist is thirteen-year-old Ehmet, who lives in Sarajevo with his parents. His parents are of mixed ethnic backgrounds, Bosniak/Muslim and Croat, and his best friend, Milan, is an ethnic Serb. Being from a multi-ethnic family and having a best friend of a different ethnic background already suggests that Ehmet is not involved in the ethnic strife that is fueling the war. A central element of his character perspective is rejection of any categorization based on ethnicity or religion, which sometimes clearly distinguishes him from his fellows, especially Darko, a schoolmate who picks on children of other ethnicities, and Ali, a Bosniak boy who holds all Serbs in contempt after his family is attacked by the Serbian army. This distinction seems to be represented in Ehmet’s name, too. While his name is ethnically marked as Bosniak, it is also a very unusual name in the Balkans, as explained by the narrator: “There were names only a Croat was likely to have, other names Serbs used, likewise there were

distinctive Muslim names. Ehmet sounded like, but was not a stereotypical, Muslim name" (102). This character trait is continuously developed throughout the novel. During his stay with his relatives in the village, for example, Ehmet is clearly taken aback by the ethnic strife that has already manifested itself deep inside the villagers' everyday lives, something he has not experienced in his visits before the war. When he tries to ask Zoran, one of the Serb village boys, to join their usual football game, Zoran's mother waves him away, which leaves Ehmet shocked and bewildered.

Furthermore, Ehmet and his parents are characterized as secular, urban counterparts to the devoutly Muslim population of rural Bosnia, especially after Ali crosses Ehmet's path: "Ali had been praying. Devout Muslims prayed five times a day, bowing heads toward Mecca. Though Ehmet had visited a mosque on occasion, this prayer ritual was not the tradition of his family" (Dorros 95). During a confrontation with Bosniak militiamen, who start to joke about Bosniaks from Sarajevo and their liberal religious beliefs, the narrator again touches upon Ehmet's secularism, positioning him as above any religion:

"I know the Quran," Ehmet added. He'd read it. He'd read several religious texts, including the Old and New Testaments, at the urging of his father who said he wanted Ehmet to know about the range of beliefs. Ehmet had found more similarities than differences in the various basic teachings and preachings, though he decided not to start that discussion with Gravel and his crew. (103)

Throughout the novel, opposition to the war is linked to secularism, higher education and support for a unified, multi-ethnic country. As the protagonist, Ehmet embodies all of this, being a secular teenager from the country's urban center who wants to become a doctor and does not understand the ethnic division among the ex-Yugoslav society. He manages to uphold this view throughout the novel. Even after the attack on him and his family, he continues to be pragmatic and peaceable. Rather than venting his frustration on all Serbs, he appears to be rationally processing his emotions and traumatic experiences, partly with the help of a role model like Jakob, who himself has experienced persecution. By being an ethnically mixed teenage boy who is solely focused on surviving the mayhem around him, Ehmet often assumes the role of a neutral outsider when talking or thinking about the war. His comments show a radical rejection of any attempt to ideologically justify the war which, in his view, cannot be

reasoned. To him, engaging in these ideological battles and racial segregations is just as despicable as taking up arms. Interestingly, even when confronted with the most heinous war crimes, like when finding Ali hiding from soldiers who have just ransacked his house and abducted his parents, Ehmet upholds this radically rational stance, however, not without feeling the need to justify himself:

“My family got chased out of my aunt and uncle’s house by Serbs,” Ehmet said. Yet it did not give him the particular sense of anger and satisfaction that the boy seemed to get from pinning it on the Serbs. Whoever could have done such things, some of which Ehmet did not want to imagine, had been violent and horrendous. On the streets of Sarajevo and in his journey since, Ehmet had seen that people with any name, of any group, could be smugglers, gang members, militia, thugs, preachers, or peacemakers. No group seemed to have a monopoly on doing harm or helping (76).

Later, after reaching Croatia and witnessing some of the fighting there, Ehmet recalls his traumatic experiences in Sarajevo, particularly the snipers who would deliberately target civilians:

How could you fire at someone walking to the market to try and buy milk? That took a kind of blindness, anger, or hatred that Ehmet could not grasp. Ehmet was angry, particularly when his thoughts drifted to those who might have attacked his mother. Yet it was not a blind anger that would enable him to strike at just anyone available. (126-127)

This passage, perhaps more than any other, gives proof of Ehmet’s mature way of reconciling with everything he had to endure. Unlike many of the traumatized fighters or victims, he manages to still differentiate between good and bad people irrespective of their ethnicity. He limits his anger to those who are directly responsible for everything that happened to his family instead of giving in to generalizations and blind hatred.

While it is revealed that Ehmet is haunted by nightmares because of his traumatic experiences, Ehmet is not shown coping with them openly, partly because he is forced to shoulder an enormous responsibility after his mother is raped and severely traumatized. Even after her death he continues to function without breaking down mentally as he is able to help build a coffin for her burial. Nevertheless, this pattern of

behavior should not be misread as stoic endurance, but rather as a result of traumatization. The silent suppression and forced coping with loss, be it the loss of a home or the loss of a parent, thus not only initiates the protagonist's process of maturation in the novel, it also positions *Under the Sun* in the tradition of the trauma novel that has experienced a rise in 20th century American literature (Tribunella xi). This process of Ehmet's maturing constitutes a central element of his development throughout the plot. It begins after Ehmet leaves Sarajevo, the city of his playful childhood, where he defied the havoc of war around him. It is during his escape with his mother that the war starts to eclipse his childhood. The narrator comments on how his reactions to situations that would usually bother a boy at his age have changed in light of the grave circumstances: "Normally Ehmet would have been offended that she had gone through his backpack. She usually left his belongings alone. But it was no longer his pack anyway. They were sharing it, and what little it contained" (58). Details like these not only outline the development of the protagonist in his forced coming of age, they also serve to provide younger readers an additional possibility to identify with Ehmet. Another aspect that portrays the protagonist as a teenager who has to struggle with both the war and his own emotional chaos is the resentment he harbors towards his father who has chosen to stay back in Sarajevo to continue his journalistic work. After initially being angry at him, he starts to understand the importance of his father's work as the plot develops and he eventually copes with his father's decision to stay back. At the same time, he starts to feel guilt for leaving his best friend, Milan, alone in Sarajevo, which not only adds to the complex profile of this character but also mirrors something many refugees feel after having to leave behind friends and relatives.

6.1.2.2. Ehmet's parents

Ehmet's parents play a central role throughout the entire plot. Already in the first chapter of the novel they are explicitly characterized as liberal, educated people who are opposing the war. Apart from having different backgrounds, the mother being a Croat and the father being a Bosniak, their anti-war stance is also elaborated in an early conversation, in which Ehmet's mother questions the recent ethnic divisions in

the Bosnian society. "Croat, Muslim, Jew, Serb. Suddenly we're so different from each other? Before we were all just Bosnians, together" (9). They are also shown as helping their Serb neighbors, particularly the parents of their son's best friend, Milan. Despite all the dangers of the war in besieged Sarajevo, they still let Ehmet play outside, instead of locking him away for his own safety, which implicitly characterizes them as lenient towards their son, as opposed to stricter parents from the countryside portrayed later in the novel, which only adds to the implicit juxtaposition of urban and rural Bosnia. After their apartment gets shelled, however, they agree to bring Ehmet to safety by moving to the mother's relatives who live on the countryside.

Mirso, Ehmet's father, is working as a journalist in Sarajevo, even though the siege has made regular newspaper publishing almost impossible. Because he feels that his investigative reporting is very much needed to end the war, he declines to accompany Ehmet and his mother to the countryside, which leaves his son torn between his admiration for his father's job and his personal feelings of anger towards him for abandoning him. Ehmet and his father are only reunited in the end of the novel, when Ehmet has already taken refuge at the children's village of his teacher, Mrs. Barisic. It is there that his father again shows a certain lenience towards his son, fulfilling his wish for them to stay living in the village.

Interestingly, Ehmet's mother, although a much more important character to the plot, remains unnamed throughout the novel. She, too, appears to be a liberal parent, although later her worries lead the family to partly move to the countryside. It is there that his mother is raped when Serb militiamen ambush their hiding place. While this scene is only implicitly hinted at, it constitutes a turning point in her characterization. After the rape, she is evidently injured and traumatized, which leaves her son in charge of their further escape. This being the case, the character of Ehmet's mother can be read as a representation of the thousands of victims of sexual violence during the war. Apart from being left traumatized and hardly willing to eat or speak, she also contracts a serious infection during their arduous journey, which eventually leads to her untimely death. Thus, she also becomes an embodiment of the fatalities of the conflict.

6.1.2.3. Milan

The character of Milan is presented as Ehmet's best friend from Sarajevo and, being an ethnic Serb, can be understood as a sidekick character who serves to portray Ehmet as an open-minded boy who does not let the war interfere in his choice of friends. Having the protagonist's best friend be an ethnic Serb could also dash some readers' expectations about an ethnically divisive war like the Bosnian War.

Milan's role in the plot is mostly limited to interactions with Ehmet, which are mostly carried by a lighthearted and jovial mood, especially during their days in Sarajevo, where they find enough things to joke about despite the havoc around them. Milan is also portrayed as an avid reader. He gives Ehmet a book upon his departure from Sarajevo, which the two of them discuss after their reunion in a refugee camp. This does not only carry implicit characterizations of him as well-read and educated for his age, notions that are linked with anti-war sentiments throughout the novel, but it also serves as a possibility for readers, who are likely to share his interest in books, to sympathize or maybe even identify with him. Lastly, having Milan as a friendly character of Serb ethnicity might be a useful factor in keeping a balance regarding the ethnicity of likable and unlikable characters. It helps to break up prejudices by not adhering to overly simplistic black and white thinking, rightfully expressing that opposition to the war did not depend on a person's ethnicity.

6.1.2.4. Darko

Darko is portrayed as the school bully of Ehmet's and Milan's class and, as such, functions as an antagonist in parts of the plot. The first chapter already exposes Ehmet's negative experiences with Darko, who appears to bully people because of their ethnicity.

Ehmet remembered the many times Darko had stopped him in the school hallways, saying "What have you got there?" and trying to go through his backpack. When he didn't find anything he liked, insults followed – "Stupid," "Blockhead", "Tailydragger," and then, last year, "Muslim" and "Turk". Darko would brag that his family was "pure Croat." (2)

As a racist bully, Darko comes to represent the ethnic strife and nationalist hatred of the Yugoslav Wars, which early on puts him in stark contrast to Ehmet. At some point, when the narrator recounts one of Ehmet's experiences in class, it is revealed that Darko also picked on Mira, a schoolmate who was maimed by a shell. Ehmet's and Darko's paths only cross again at the end of the novel, when Ehmet reaches Mrs. Barisic's refugee camp for children. Darko is then portrayed as a deeply traumatized person, far from being the malicious braggard he was before. It is revealed that he signed up to fight for a Croat militia alongside his father, who was shot, while Darko ended up in a Serb prison camp. Despite the fact that both boys have changed, they still get into a physical fight when assigned to the same project group, which gives one of their camp advisors an opportunity to comment on fighting in general, a moral side note that can clearly be applied to both wars in general as well as interpersonal conflicts in the classroom, something that proves the novel's potential for a peace education approach.

"That's it, you two. No physical fights. Darko, you know that. You too, Ehmet," Edin said. "They have a history," said Neda. "I know," said Edin. "Everyone here has a history. If everyone with a history fights, we're in big trouble. Darko, you know how this goes. Find a spot to sit and think for a while, until you and Ehmet can talk. You will have to work things out." (214)

In the end, Darko and Ehmet manage to overcome their differences and start to bond when they reveal their horrid experiences during the war to each other, emphasizing that they have both lost a parent. Thus, the antagonist character of Darko is reformed in the end of the novel, realizing how destructive and fatal his ethnic hatred turned out to be, which can, again, be read as a reference to the war in general.

6.1.2.5. Mira

Although Mira is one of Ehmet's schoolmates in Sarajevo, she is only introduced in one of his memories while playing football in the village of his mother's relatives. It is recounted how Mira was an ardent football fan, even after she lost a leg in a shelling. Ehmet remembers how she managed to stand up to Darko, the school bully, even

hitting him with one of her crutches after he insulted her in class. The short flashback ends on a romantic note, with Ehmet's memory of a school dance, where Mira was bold enough to ask him for a dance. Mira is mentioned again when Ehmet and Milan are reunited in the refugee camp. Milan tells Ehmet about Mrs. Barisic's refuge and reveals that Mira went there too with a group of orphans from Sarajevo. Ehmet then sets out to reach that resort and gets to meet Mira again. The two of them reconnect during a long walk together, where they end up holding hands and telling each other about their plans for their future careers. Thus, Mira is portrayed as a strong female character who, despite her serious injuries and the resulting physical disability, manages to survive the war.

6.1.2.6. Ali

The character of Ali is introduced during Ehmet's march through the countryside. Rummaging a seemingly abandoned house in search of food for his weakened mother, Ehmet finds a frightened Ali cowering below the kitchen sink. It is revealed that while Ali was able to hide in a cupboard, his parents were also kidnapped by Serb militiamen, just like Ehmet's relatives. Ehmet manages to win Ali's trust and they continue their perilous journey together, hoping to reach the house of some of Ali's relatives. As a temporary companion, the character of Ali primarily functions as a foil character to Ehmet. Their interactions mostly emphasize the differences between the two boys. Already during their first encounter, Ali cries after explaining to Ehmet what happened, something Ehmet does not do throughout the novel. Ali's background is inherently different too. Unlike Ehmet, he lives in a small village and regularly practices Islam. He is also quick to identify who was to blame for everything that happened to him and his family, which Ehmet continuously avoids. In addition, Ali is seen using derogatory names when talking about Serb soldiers, for example calling them "Chetniks", a term pertaining to Serb nationalist troops in World War II. His harsh anti-Serb stance is often met by lack of understanding from Ehmet, who is adamant about the fact that all sides are to be blamed for the war. When the two come across remnants of mine explosions in a forest, they get into a discussion about who could have laid them there.

"Who do you think put them there?"

"I think Serbs ... Chetniks. Some people in the village said it was Muslim fighters, to protect the village from Chetniks who might be coming. I think it was the Chetniks. Muslim fighters would have told us, don't you think?"

Ehmet was not sure what to think, who might have placed the mines, or why. And the mines themselves had no minds: they would not consider who placed them there, or who stepped on them, or why. (91)

Despite their different views on the war, Ali and Ehmet continue to work together to survive their journey. When they meet Bosniak militiamen who demand to know their names and ethnicity, Ali rescues Ehmet by withholding the fact that he is only half-Bosniak. As a result, they both arrive at his relatives' house safely.

6.1.2.7. Jakob and Danica

Jakob and Danica are an elderly couple living in Croatia. After Ehmet leaves the home of Ali's family to continue his journey to his own relatives, he meets Jakob, who is seen fishing in a creek and releasing a fish off the hook. He invites Ehmet to his home, where he introduces his wife Danica to him. Jakob reveals to Ehmet that he is a Jewish Croat from Zagreb, whereas Danica is from a local Catholic family. They begin to talk to Ehmet about their experiences in World War II and how they managed to survive as a mixed couple, relating their own past to Ehmet's present situation, as well as illustrating the similarities between World War II and the Yugoslav Wars, both having been fought along ethnic lines. Especially Jakob seems to serve as a moral commentator who reinforces Ehmet's pacifist views on the war and provides him with a potential role model. It is not by chance that Jakob and Danica mention how they met each other while studying at university, adhering to the novel's link between pacifism and higher education. His remarks provide readers with a short overview of the war-torn 20th century history of the region, especially the persecution of Serbs, Jews and Roma people by the Ustaše, the fascist forces of the Croatian Nazi vassal state.

"I'm Jewish," said Jakob. 'Though I consider that a private matter. The Nazis and the Ustashe didn't. Somehow it was their business. Twenty-three people, members of my family, were killed with the excuse they were Jewish. That is the foolishness I refuse to accept. One is Jewish, one is Serb, one is Croat, one is Bosnian, one is Christian, one is Muslim, one is Gypsy, one is maybe from the

moon, to try to make the other guy the bad guy. Serbs, Gypsies – you know the Gypsies call themselves Romany – the Ustashe killed them also.” (138)

The character of Jakob can be interpreted in different ways. He can be read as the voice of the generation of World War II survivors in Yugoslavia, for whom the Yugoslav Wars represented yet another episode of grueling ethnic struggles. He can also be viewed as a voice of reason who provides moral support to Ehmet, backing his pacifism with his own convincing experiences of ethnic persecution. Like Ehmet, Jakob is refusing to take part in any ideological debates pertaining to the legitimacy of both wars. By recounting his own past as a Jew hiding from fascists and how some Croats helped him while others wanted to kill him, he adopts the distinction between good and bad as his only maxim in war, something that Ehmet can identify with easily. Another similarity between the two lies in their names. Jakob, too, is a distinctive name untypical for the Balkans. While most of the other characters have either simple or, as is the case with most of the soldiers in the novel, no real names at all, Ehmet and his older role model bear names that stand out, which can pose a threat in certain situations of war, something that Jakob comments on explicitly:

“During the war I had to use a Croat name. Jakob was right away Jewish. Even if you don’t tell them your Muslim-sounding name, your accent can give you away. You could be Croat, Muslim, or Serb – doesn’t matter much to me. But it will to some people. Who you are is your business, not everyone else’s. I just want you to be careful. It appears you have been so far, to get here on your own.” (139)

Jakob’s wife Danica, too, implicitly provides Ehmet with some moral advice about inter-ethnic societies, albeit to a lesser extent. Referring to their long-lasting inter-ethnic marriage she says: ‘We work things out. That’s a relationship. Loving someone, knowing that they don’t have to be just like you, behave just like you. It’s easier said than done, but we’ve both been willing. More than willing.’ (141) This, again, can be read as an implicit reference to the war and inter-ethnic societies in general.

6.1.2.8. Zoran

Zoran is a minor character from the village of Ehmet's relatives. Ehmet, in search of friendly village kids who would like to join a football game, knocks at Zoran's door just to be rebuked by Zoran's mother, who does not allow him to play with other village kids anymore. Nonetheless, Zoran is later seen joining the kids on the football court, indicating that he snuck out of the house. By defying his mother and her fear and ethnic hatred, Zoran can be understood as an embodiment of the intergenerational disputes that are characteristic of many post-conflict societies. He comes to represent a new generation of young people who put friendship and fun over the ethnic or ideological differences that seem to preoccupy their parents' generation.

6.1.2.9. Mrs. Barisic

Mrs. Barisic was Ehmet's teacher before war disrupted all public services in Sarajevo. She is portrayed only in flashbacks of Ehmet's memory and accounts of useful lessons she taught him. Only later, in a refugee camp in Croatia, Ehmet finds out that Mrs. Barisic has founded a refuge for children from Sarajevo. Ehmet discards his initial idea of fleeing to his grandparents and he sets out to reach Mrs. Barisic's camp instead, which implicitly demonstrates his sympathies for her. At the children's village, she also helps Ehmet overcome his differences with Darko, assuming a more active role in the novel.

6.1.2.10. Soldiers

Although the violence of the war is constantly present throughout the plot, especially during Ehmet's stay in Sarajevo and his escape through the countryside, the number of individual soldiers portrayed in the novel is relatively low. Even in the most frightful scenes, like when paramilitaries break into the house of Ehmet's relatives in the middle of the night, the perpetrators remain mostly silent and anonymous. There are two instances, however, where soldiers are portrayed as acting individuals rather than an anonymous squad. In the first case, Ehmet and his mother hear Ali talking to an

unknown man outside the barn where they are hiding in an old cart. After coming back to them, Ali reports that the man was a Serb soldier from his village who told him to run away as quickly as possible. He also reveals how the man inspected the barn before walking away, which implies that he spared Ehmet and his mother, in addition to letting Ali run away. Both actions inevitably portray him in a benevolent light, despite him being a soldier.

The other explicit mentioning of soldiers occurs while the three are hiding in a cave. They are found by three men, later revealed to be Bosniak fighters, while preparing food over a fire. The novel only reveals the name of one of them, Rachman, as Ali recognizes him from his village. The other two are only nicknamed by the narrator as Gravel (due to his gravelly voice) and Leering One (due to his odd facial expressions). Because Ali manages to make the men believe that Ehmet and his mother are Muslims too, the three soldiers remain peaceful and eventually even help the fleeing trio to reach their destination by carrying Ehmet's already weakened mother on a litter. Nonetheless, the sole fact that they are carrying machine guns is enough for Ehmet to be suspicious and somewhat scared of them. As a result, even though they are portrayed as antagonists, they still assist Ehmet and his companions, which potentially creates a moral dilemma for the readers in which they must balance the men's act of compassion against their frightening demeanor.

6.1.3. Narrative analysis

In addition to plot and characters, analyzing the form of the narrative transmission in a narrated text, something Stanzel has defined as "Erzählsituationen" (68) is a crucial step in the analysis of a narrated text. This usually entails defining the particular narrative situation of the novel, analyzing the characteristics of the narrator as well as determining from whose perspective the novel is narrated, or in Genette's terms, from whose *point of view* the *focalization* is taking place (Genette 189).

Under the Sun is characterized by the prevalence of a figural narrative situation, which is defined by a covert, anonymous narrating voice that remains in the background throughout the narration. Furthermore, the narrator in *Under the Sun* can be described

as extradiegetic as he is not an active agent in the world of the characters. The narration instead relies on the actions, thoughts, feelings, and impressions of one or several characters, usually called the focalizers, from whose perspective the story is narrated. In *Under the Sun*, the narrator employs Ehmet as the sole focalizer throughout the novel, which is typical for a narration rendered in the figural narrative situation. Tragic events like his mother's death or his family's abduction are thus presented by focusing on Ehmet's impressions of it only: "Her eyes, glazed and dull, showed none of their usual sparkle. Ehmet could smell sour sweat and alcohol, smells that he did not recognize as hers. He noticed scratches on her face and a bruise around one eye. There was a patch of dried blood by her nose" (36).

Although the reader is not given any explicit information about the narrating voice in *Under the Sun*, there are a few instances where the narrator appears to be casting off the confines of the figural narrative situation in order to provide a more personal commentary on the action, especially when it comes to statements about the war that could exceed the scope of the 13-year-old protagonist. One example of this can be found relatively early:

Ehmet looked at the hills around Sarajevo that he has once seen as comforting blankets of green in summer or white in winter, but that now seemed to hold the city in a dangerous grip. Since the war had started last year, the Yugoslav army – now mostly Serb – and snipers had been firing down on the city from the hills. Other snipers – Muslim and Croat – had started firing into neighborhoods where they thought Serbs might live. No one knew exactly who was firing at any given moment. Whoever fired, it was nightmarish to walk anywhere these days. (3)

Here, the narrator seems to fuse Ehmet's impressions with his own comments on the course of the war, thus blurring the lines between Ehmet's and his/her own stance. It remains unclear whether the assessment that the Yugoslav army is now mostly composed of Serbs is Ehmet's thought or the narrator's comment. Likewise, it is not revealed who is making the statement that Muslim and Croat snipers have started firing into Serb neighborhoods too – Ehmet, the narrator, or possibly both? Although neither of the two statements would be considered historically controversial, mentioning snipers on both sides does not represent the common narrative of the Siege of Sarajevo which traditionally emphasizes the crimes of the Serb beleaguers

rather than those of the defending forces. This can be understood as an attempt to introduce and maintain a neutral approach to the war that acknowledges the atrocities on all sides. This neutralizing tone continues to appear whenever the narrator steps out of the impersonal mode of narrating:

Cars were scarce, gasoline scarcer. Like almost everything else, gasoline was hard to come by and cost many times what it had before. The same men who were doing the shooting controlled the buying and selling and movement of what was for sale – gasoline, food, clothes. People said that was one of the main reasons the shooting kept on like it did, because it was profitable. (17)

The narrating voice is giving information about some of the abominable outgrowths of the siege, for example the shameless profiteering. In this particular instance, the comments are given in the form of general hearsay. Again, the narrator is presenting a carefully neutral stance without any explicit assignments of guilt, criticizing the profiteering, that indeed existed and even included UN personnel (Andreas 42). Highlighting these social injustices that accompanied the war is a didactically valuable element of the narration. Nonetheless, from a didactic point of view, it would also be necessary to elucidate the origins and the emergence of the violence in general, which the narrator does not even attempt to do.

Another political judgement linked to the overly neutral tone of the narrator deserves to be scrutinized in more detail. When Ehmet crosses the Bosnian-Croatian border, the narrator again discreetly switches from psycho-narrating Ehmet's thoughts to commenting on the war in general: "In the past year or so, some people from each region had tried to separate parts of Yugoslavia and the population into distinct countries – Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia. They fought to create new borders, and to move people" (127). This relatively vague comment implies that all three mentioned countries have pushed for territorial gains, which is historically inaccurate. While it is correct that there have been strong political currents in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina that advocated independence from Belgrade, it would be inaccurate and oversimplifying to claim that all three countries "fought to create new borders, and to move people". Given that Yugoslavia was a federation of countries rather than one unitary country, much like the United Kingdom still is, statements like these create the false impression that the newly independent countries first had to fight for their

territories and borders. In reality, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have been constituent republics of Yugoslavia with defined borders, something that ensured their relatively quick international recognition (Sundhaussen 337-40). Portrayals like these, which ignore the element of military aggression exerted by the Milošević regime on the newly independent countries, have been criticized by Jane Gangi in her summary of common misrepresentations of the Yugoslav Wars in YA novels (65).

The narrator's comment on ethnic cleansing and the displacement of people is likewise problematic. Again, the comment's vagueness leads to historical inaccuracy. While it is true that the Serbian and Croatian governments have both adopted territorial expansion and the unification of their respective ethnic group in one country, it would be a historical misrepresentation to claim that the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina pushed for the same (Burg & Shoup 198, Rathfelder 354-6).

Another interesting political remark coming from the narrator pertains to the involvement of the international community in the Yugoslav Wars, especially the role of the NATO forces:

Many people – primarily Muslims or Croats – had been hoping for other countries, perhaps the European and North American NATO members, to send planes to help against attacks such as the firing from the ridge that Ehmet had just seen. They had waited and waited. Maybe it was a NATO plane. It was likely someone else's. The Serbs had the warplanes that had been Yugoslavia's air force before the breakup, and the Croats had a few. Bosnia had none. (127)

Apart from the assessment of the military strength of the three forces, something a 13-year-old boy is very unlikely to know, the comments about the hopes for a NATO intervention ("it was likely someone else's") could be read as the narrator's implicit criticism of the international community for not intervening soon enough to prevent any bloodshed. From a didactic point of view, it would be wise to clarify that NATO did intervene in the war in 1995 (Burg & Shoup, 353-5). The passage above might falsely suggest that NATO and the international community have ignored the conflict completely.

6.1.4. Space

A final element of the novel that will be analyzed in relation to its didactic use is the narrative transmission of space within the text. Following the narratological idea that the literary space portrayed in a narrative text also functions as a carrier of meaning, it has to be noted that *Under the Sun* employs a series of dichotomies throughout its spatial representations, especially so when it comes to what Hoffmann has called "*gestimmter Raum*"; space serving to establish a particular mood or express certain features of a character or a scene (55). One of these dichotomies can be distinguished when looking at the different depictions of Sarajevo and the Bosnian countryside. The first, mainly expository chapter portrays Sarajevo as a besieged city that is witnessing chaos and violence. The narrator gives vivid accounts of the destruction that has befallen the city, of "lots filled with the rubble of what had been buildings" (1) and "a street lined with what Ehmet thought looked like dark carcasses of giant, metal beetles whose ribbed underbellies were turned to the sky" (4). By warning how "abandoned buildings might be dangerous, with their crumbling walls, unexpected company, or ammunition that had not exploded on impact" (4), the narrator recreates the perilous and desolate mood of a war-torn city. Readers are also confronted with the fact that not even people's homes were spared from the destruction: "[t]he apartment three doors down from Ehmet's family's had a huge, ragged hole where the front window had been, and large chunks of the walls in what had been the living room were gouged out from an explosion" (9). Nevertheless, despite all the havoc, the narrator still finds opportunities to point out some of Sarajevo's urban and modern features, for example by mentioning "a large block of concrete that people called 'Pink Floyd' because of the band's name that someone had painted on it" (3). This not only contrasts the city with the portrayal of the countryside later on in the novel, it also positions Sarajevo as a western city that apparently was not much different to any other European or American metropolis before the war, which, in turn, makes it easier for most readers to draw comparisons between Sarajevo and their own home town. Places like an abandoned café not only leave Ehmet and Milan to reminisce about more carefree times of abundance, they also give proof of a normal city once bustling with life. One particular object, the tree Ehmet and Milan used to climb, called "the Giant", is symbolically

logged and hacked by people desperately looking for firewood, which provides a symbolic end to their peaceful childhoods. It does, however, also highlight the solidarity among the regular inhabitants of the city, who are shown helping each other out whenever possible, from bus drivers who do not ask for fares anymore to neighbors willing to assist in the search for food and water, in stark contrast to the portrayal of the distrustful country folks.

Immediately upon Ehmet's arrival, the countryside is depicted in stark contrast to chaotic Sarajevo, as "the quiet countryside without the sounds of shells, rockets, and bullets" (18). Ehmet and his mother are served fresh fruit, bread, and cheese by their relatives, something that would be unthinkable in besieged Sarajevo. Nonetheless, it is not long before the dark sides of the war-time village life are exposed. For example, Ehmet notices the lingering eeriness that accompanies the village's silence. Signs of neglect are revealed when he stumbles upon "ragged tufts of plants going to seed and a few silvery wildflowers [that] made a shaggy carpet" (20). He finds empty farmhouses, where "a few old tools were strewn on the floor where the tractor should have been" (20) that hint at farmers disappearing without any warning. Unlike the people of Sarajevo, the adult villagers are portrayed as distrustful of everyone, which only exacerbates the village's already sinister atmosphere. When the house of Ehmet's relatives comes under attack, it becomes painfully apparent that the countryside, despite all its differences to the city, is not exempt of the threats of war.

A similar dichotomy based on narrated space is constructed between the refugee camps in the Bosnian-Croatian borderland and the children's village Ehmet seeks refuge in at the end of the novel. While the former hosts masses of refugees from all over the Balkans, the latter is a personal project by Ehmet's teacher, located in one of the few regions not affected by the fighting. The refugee camp is depicted as a strictly organized camp where the lines between help and confinement are blurred, where people are ethnically segregated, and guards cooperate with armed soldiers. Mrs. Barisic's village, on the contrary, is portrayed as a serene refuge in a calm and almost uninhabited stretch of land, where the children have plenty of space to recuperate from the war. It is particularly striking that while the narrator mentions no exact location names of the countryside places, the location of the children's village is described in detail. The village is located in Istria, a small peninsula in the northeast

of Croatia that has strong cultural ties to Italy due to its history and its Italian minority. Upon arrival, Mrs. Barisic explains how there are mostly elderlies living in the neighborhood, that they mostly speak Italian, and how this part of the region used to belong to Italy before the Second World War. While this might have been intended as a neutral reference to the ethnic diversity of the Balkans, it could be perceived as an instance of what the historian Maria Todorova has described as Balkanism, which is the prejudice shown towards the Balkans in political, scientific and literary discourses (192). Instead of dissecting the complex factors that led to the high number of violent conflicts in the course of its history, Balkanist discourses generalize the Balkans and its inhabitants as inherently chaotic and destructive, and the Yugoslav Wars, consequently, as an inevitable outbreak of violence in a region predestined for bloodshed. Hence, juxtaposing the warring ex-Yugoslavs with peaceful Italian elderlies who live in a region on the Yugoslav periphery could be interpreted as Balkanist and thus lead to a lopsided perception of the Yugoslav Wars and the Balkans in general.

6.1.5. Didactic potential

After this detailed analysis of the text's main literary features, it is now time to assess the novel from a didactic point of view. This will be done by presenting the challenges of both peace education in general and teaching about the Yugoslav Wars in particular. Carter and Pickett have compiled sets of useful questions that can be consulted to determine the usefulness of YAL for peace education. Gangi, in turn, has raised some important issues that deserve to be considered when dealing with YAL on the Yugoslav Wars in particular (65).

One of the more persuasive elements of the novel is the broad spectrum of characters presented, which includes representatives of almost all ethnic groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina without, however, resorting to simplistic categorizations along ethnic lines. With the protagonist himself being ethnically mixed, his neutrality remains believable throughout the novel. Members of the different ethnic groups are portrayed without the use of any stereotypes. There are Bosniaks that are both devoutly Muslim and secular, Croats who are both in favor and against the war as well as Serbs who are both killing and saving lives. Apart from the lack of ethnic categorizations, the

novel also can also contribute to the deconstruction of gender stereotypes, as readers are, for example, introduced to both football-playing girls and crying boys. The positive portrayal of people with disabilities also adds to the didactic value of the novel.

A minor drawback seems to be the continuous use of the term "Muslim" in its ethnic sense, which has come to be seen as outdated since the 1990s and the introduction of the term "Bosniak" for denoting ethnicity. Equally, one of the characters persistently refers to Roma people as "gypsies", which is usually considered pejorative when used as an exonym. Another disadvantage lies in the novel's marginal portrayal of religious teenagers and the potential lack of appreciation for their ways of living. Ali, for example, serves as a foil character exclusively and his ardent faith is portrayed as more of a hindrance than a help for bringing about peace, which constitutes a problematic discrimination against religious people.

In terms of plot, the novel lends itself to useful lessons on conflicts and their resolution, another feature of valuable YAL. One of the criteria Carter and Pickett have formulated for this purpose deals with the "presentation of skills and tools for transforming conflict without the use of violence" (121). By having the feud between Ehmet and Darko, which spans from the beginning to the end of the novel, ultimately resolved peacefully with the guidance of their teacher, the novel not only alludes to a nonviolent settlement of the war, it also sets an appropriate example of how to resolve interpersonal conflicts by emphasizing the importance of dialogue. Minor characters, like Mrs. Barisic and Ehmet's father, who also embody nonviolent ways of resisting the war, likewise offer opportunities to reflect on the importance of nonviolence.

When it comes to lessons about the Yugoslav Wars in particular, it is again the perspective structure of the characters that has the potential to raise awareness about the peaceful coexistence in multi-ethnic societies. The novel achieves this by presenting a set of essential differences among the characters, something that is contrasted throughout the narrative. The most significant difference among the characters seems to be their political stance concerning peaceful coexistence in a multi-ethnic country, with a more prominent group of characters believing in such a concept and a minor group of characters openly or tacitly opposing it. The text tries to steer the readers' sympathies towards those characters that believe in a unified, multi-ethnic country, be it in the form of Yugoslavia or Bosnia-Herzegovina. The protagonist himself

is established as an antithesis to the war with character traits that supposedly support this: a secular, inclusive worldview, mixed heritage, ambition and good education. This is reinforced by minor characters who either share these features, like Milan or Jacob, or who develop them during the plot, as is the case with Darko. A minor setback of the novel could be related to the believability of the characters in connection to their political stance. The fact that Ehmet does not feel any contempt or anger towards Serbs could come across unconvincing.

A positive aspect in terms of teaching about the Yugoslav Wars is the fact that the plot includes several sensitive issues, like genocide, rape, abduction, ethnic cleansing, and looting. Since the plot follows the protagonist's flight, the novel is also useful for illustrating hardships that are often experienced by refugees in general, like the loss of family members and friends, malnutrition, lack of medical care, the maltreatment and interment in refugee camps, or the challenges of surviving in the open. Likewise, the narrative representation of space creates a very accurate reflection of the war by recreating the dire war atmosphere. By including numerous horrific details like mines, shelling, bombing, and snipers, the text ensures that the setting is illustrated in a convincing and detailed way that enables further thoughts and discussions.

The narrator, however, must be regarded as a more problematic feature of the novel. In general, he/she seems to function as a mediator and commentator, providing the young readers with judgements and simple analyses that are supposed to illustrate the causes of the war. He/she also serves as a neutralizing instance that is eager to create a balance among the belligerent sides and an emphasis on the fact that horrific atrocities have been committed on either side, which seems understandable given the fact that the plot itself only features atrocities committed by Serbs. While this neutralizing narration can be viewed as an effort not to antagonize young readers with very strong or biased political views on the topic, especially those with favorable views of the Serbian role in it, it also at times risks creating historical misrepresentations, as has been outlined above. Another difficult aspect about the narrator is his/her failure to name any causes for the ethnic hatred that is presented as the main motive of the wars. The text therefore fails to illuminate the very origins of said hatred. In doing so, ethnic strife and chauvinism are portrayed as constant, century-long categories rather than recent products of sociopolitical processes. This disregards the fact that the

Balkans, and Bosnia-Herzegovina in particular, have experienced centuries of peaceful coexistence of many different ethnicities and religions throughout its past. Moreover, it risks labeling the conflict as something that is inherently limited to the Balkans, which ignores the fact that no society is immune to the kind of ethnic or religious hatred that can easily lead to violence. The text fails to sensitize readers to the human-caused climate of hatred and a society's collective agency and responsibility in it. The narrator instead exclusively relies on the actions of individuals to explain the motives behind the war. This line of argumentation cannot provide sufficient explanation for the development and the continuance of the war, as it denies any collective responsibility in the creation of circumstances favorable to violence and war. This, however, should be one of the main insights provided by any lesson on the Yugoslav Wars.

Despite these flaws, *Under the Sun* can be a useful literary resource for addressing the Yugoslav Wars in the EFL classroom. It offers opportunities for educators to incorporate the aims of peace education in their teaching. Depending on how much importance teachers want to give to facts and details about the Yugoslav Wars, some additional discussion of the conflict might be necessary; but even without any supplementary information or discussions, students would read a lot about the conflict and, ideally, recognize the patterns behind it and how this could be of relevance to them.

6.2. Els de Groen's *No Roof in Bosnia*

Els de Groen is a Dutch politician and author of children's and YA literature. She has written several YA novels that are set in the Balkans. *No Roof in Bosnia* was first published in Dutch in 1996 under the title *Tuig*. It was translated into English by Patricia Crampton. The English translation was first published in 1997 by Spindlewood and republished in paperback in 2001. The English translation was included in the 1998 honor list of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY).

6.2.1. Plot

No Roof in Bosnia has an beginning in medias res in which a young girl named Aida is fleeing the war in Bosnia. Driven by her thirst and hunger, she approaches a house in a village called Brodište to steal apples from an orchard. The house owner, a middle-aged woman named Antonia, invites her in and offers her food and water, and Aida agrees to take refuge with her temporarily. Antonia lives alone, but she is frequently visited by her nephew from Sarajevo, Josip, who is hiding in a makeshift camp on a nearby hill. He moved to the campsite with a friend, Haris, because staying in Antonia's house became too dangerous ever since Serb paramilitaries regularly come by to collect food and drinks from Antonia. Later, they were joined by Mila and Ramiz, a fleeing couple. Antonia, who is of Croat ethnicity, uses a false name whenever the men visit. She stays safe by giving them liquor and keeping them company. A Spanish UN peacekeeper called Pedro also checks in on her sporadically, bringing her tinned food and other supplies whenever he visits. On one of his occasional visits, Pedro promises to evacuate Aida in one of the UN refugee convoys to the Adriatic coast. When days pass without any sign of Pedro, Aida runs away. Haris sets out to look for her, and after he finds her in the nearby woods, she agrees to join the other teenagers in the camp. Her arrival only exacerbates the already ongoing quarrels between the stubborn teens. Both Haris and Josip develop a romantic interest for Aida, although Haris gets to spend more time with her as he takes her to see the medieval Bosnian gravestones, the so-called *stećci*, the group has discovered near the camp. The teenagers get into

all sorts of debates, be it personal, political, or philosophical. Nonetheless, the general atmosphere remains peaceful. On one of his visits to the village, Josip discovers that Antonia has fallen ill, and she dies before he can organize her relocation to the camp. The teenagers debate where to bury her before permanently leaving the camp and fleeing to Croatia, with Haris arguing for a burial among the *stećci* in the hills and Mila insisting on burying her next to her late husband in the village graveyard. They eventually agree on the latter. After the burial, Josip decides to fetch some of his aunt's personal belongings from her house and Haris accompanies him. The other teenagers, who stayed behind, notice a military jeep entering the village. Ramiz immediately sets out to warn Josip and Haris, but he cannot reach them in time and the three boys are taken captive by Serb soldiers. Aida and Mila, who have watched the scene from a safe distance, stay back in shock. Back in the camp they come into a big fight after Aida blames Mila for the tragedy since it was her idea to bury Antonia in the village. The girls, however, soon realize how futile their fighting is and they decide to flee to the Adriatic coast on foot. They leave a couple of letters at the camp in case of the boys' return, in which they explain that they have left for Split and that they will be checking for a sign of them daily at the city's main market. The girls begin to bond on their journey as they open up about their troubled pasts. In a flashforward it is revealed that they have reached Split safely, where they are staying at a private refuge because the ethnically segregated government camps would have separated them. By chance, they are informed that two boys have inquired after them at the designated place, the city market. In the meantime, it is revealed that Josip and Haris have also arrived at Split safely. They tell the girls how they only survived by disguising themselves as young Serbs who are willing to join the unit that took them captive. They also explain how Ramiz has developed a severe depression during their captivity and that he was shot while helping them to escape. Reunited again, the four teenagers decide to stay together and live in Croatia. The two girls have a private conversation in which it is revealed that Aida is actually in love with Josip, while Mila is developing romantic feelings for Haris.

The plot of *No Roof in Bosnia* follows the structure of a refugee novel, providing an insight into the chaos and destruction of war and the effects on the people fleeing from it, although it is also blended with elements of other genres, especially that of

romance fiction. The plot relies heavily on the development of the group dynamics and love relationships between the five teenagers, with the tragic war functioning as a setting. There are instances where the two themes, love and war, are fully intertwined in the narration: "Haris thought the girl was cool. He had seen her only briefly, but had observed her attentively. He was thinking of her and of the mines when he climbed the Gora. Most of the mines had been buried in the maize fields and orchards to prevent the farmers from harvesting food" (67). This scene, perhaps more than any other, exemplifies the interplay between love and war as the two major themes of the novel.

In addition, the plot shows features of what Ramsdell has called "ethnic romance" (289), a genre in which ethnic differences play a significant role in the romantic relationships of the protagonists. In case of Mila and Ramiz, for example, their different ethnic backgrounds and their parents' disapproval of their love made them flee the war on their own. This interplay of romance and war on the plot level has certain effects on the novel's portrayal of the war. It primarily places love in opposition to the war and its ethnic strife; it positions love as more powerful than (ethnic) hatred. The losses and hardships of war are presented as something universal, experienced irrespective of ethnicity; they are shared by each group member. The war, together with its adult participants, serves to bind together both the adolescent couples as well as the group in general. The war's most tragic effect on the plot is certainly the death of one of the teenagers. But despite this tragedy, the reunion of the four remaining group members and the realignment of romantic relationships implies a somewhat happy ending, with both the political tensions in the outside world and the romantic tensions between the teenagers apparently resolved.

6.2.2. Characters

The most prominent feature of the perspective structure in *No Roof in Bosnia* is the considerable diversity among the characters. Although it risks appearing a little far-fetched, the five main characters in the plot represent almost all ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The novel thus manages to maintain impartiality and to

depict ethnic difference as something beneficial and positive. By having all five teenage characters develop throughout the plot, there is no steering of emotions towards one group only. As will be outlined later, the same can be said about the process of focalization, which is also shared among the characters. Most of the main characters are described in detail, mostly with a special emphasis on their lives before the war and their view on the political turmoil. They are all portrayed as likable individuals, which makes it difficult to pick sides. Even though the teenagers do quarrel about many things, their different ethnic backgrounds never play a role in their arguments. This does not mean, however, that the teenagers are not aware of these differences. Each of them presents his or her opinion on contentious issues like religion or the war, but in the end the group always reaches a consensus. This gives evidence of the evenly distributed balance of power among the main characters. It can also be understood as a symbolic alternative to the ethnic strife of the war. By managing to overcome their differences peacefully, the teenagers set an example for the warring adult generation; they serve as proof that people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds can live together, even if they did not come together by choice, which can be read as another trenchant reference to multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina.

6.2.2.1. Aida

Although there is no clear protagonist in the novel, Aida is the first of the main characters that is presented in the novel. She is a fifteen-year-old girl who was fleeing the war on her own before she found shelter at Antonia's home. Her character is defined by a number of aspects that are addressed and developed throughout the plot: her traumas, her identity struggles, her pessimism, and her gender.

Her most prominent character trait can be understood as a result of the traumatization that she has evidently undergone. When she arrives at Antonia's house, she is deeply distrustful of everyone around her and she barely speaks to anyone. She is scared of the men who frequently visit Antonia and her terrified reactions expose traces of serious traumas. A brief dream sequence reveals that she was separated from her mother during an attempt to flee the country. Only later in the plot, she opens up and

confides in Haris, whom she tells that she and her mother were on a refugee convoy that was stopped by Serb forces. Aida and another young girl were taken off the bus, while the rest of the refugees were apparently sent to a death camp. The two girls were intended to be held as sex slaves for a Serb commander, but a former schoolmate of hers recognized her and saved her by letting her run away. She confesses that she feels terribly guilty for running away instead of attempting to rescue her mother:

Her mother was going to a prison camp, the other girl would be abused, and she had been saved by a schoolfellow, who had his eye on her. 'Forgive me!' he shouted before he drove away. She could not do that, not ever. But she could not forgive herself either. From the place where she had been taken off the bus by a trick, it was no more than ten kilometres to Banjsko prison camp, but she had been so frightened of the Chetniks that instead of running back to her mother, she had run further away from her. (62-3)

Even though she is saved by her schoolmate, Aida's traumatic past comes to represent the sexual violence that was characteristic of many of the paramilitary units fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Allen 1996). It is not revealed whether her mother survived; hence, Aida's storyline also comes to represent the death camps in the war. Furthermore, her feelings are a depiction of survivor guilt, a typical feature of post-traumatic stress disorder among survivors of tragic events that is thematized in many YA war novels (Fry 2009). Haris can eventually alleviate some of this by showing empathy for her decision, and her signs of traumatization become less throughout the plot.

The second feature defining Aida's character pertains to her identity in terms of religion, ethnicity, and nationality. While, in the beginning, she does not disclose anything about her traumatic experiences mentioned above, she is quick to describe herself as an atheist in front of Antonia. She is depicted drinking alcohol in Antonia's house, which clearly breaks up religious and gender stereotypes associated with patriarchal Balkan societies. She is annoyed by the fact that most people assume she is Muslim because her name is ethno-religiously marked, which forces her to explain her already unstable identity again and again. As will be illustrated later, this identity struggle as a result of the dissolution of Yugoslavia is taken up again in one of her numerous quarrels with Haris, who, due to his age and his fascination for certain

aspects of Bosnian history, feels much more secure about his identity as a Bosnian. They also debate religion from a highly philosophical perspective when Aida refers to her tragic war experiences and asks, "how can I believe in a god who lets my mother be put in prison" (98). She expresses her concern towards any religious group once more when the narrating voice psycho-narrates her memories of how her hometown changed due to the influx of Muslim refugees from the countryside, one of the many interludes in the novel in which the characters' past is used to present aspects of the Bosnian War. The following passage, for example, not only characterizes Aida as an atheist, it also outlines how parts of the Bosnian Muslims were radicalized after an influx of Islamist fighters who joined the Bosnian army during the war:

[A]ll the minarets had been snapped off like flowers and all the mosques blown up, and not so very long ago. Before that, Tuz had been flooded with thousands of refugees from the surrounding villages. Being believers, they visited mosques and converted Tuz into a pious town again overnight. After that, Mujaheddin, Iranians and Pakistanis camped in the barracks. No one was interested in their holy war, and yet the atmosphere changed [...] Were they called Muslims? Good, they would be Muslims! That was the strange thing about this war. It radicalized people. (45-6)

But despite her anti-religious stance, her conversations with Haris seem to influence her. Like with her other struggles, she eventually overcomes her anti-religious views in favor of a more balanced approach towards religion. When Haris leaves the camp to help Josip, she even says a little prayer for him. This serves to indicate not only her sympathies for Haris, but also her development throughout the plot. Although she changes her approach towards religion, she does not alter her stance on her nationality; she remains to see herself as an Bosnian, which she verbalizes in a confrontation with Greta, a Croat woman that invites Mila and her into her home after they set out for Split: "'Are you a Muslim?' she asked. Aida wanted to say no, but then, what was she? [...] Why did she have a name that indicated a religion she had never believed in? Aida shook back her wet hair and said, 'I'm a Bosnian!'" (151). On the one hand, Aida's identity struggle represents the relatively recent process of ethnogenesis that the Muslim population of Yugoslavia underwent and the overall reshuffling of national identities after the dissolution of the country, on the other it can be regarded as a reference to the identity struggles that are typical of adolescence in general. It

also illustrates the multiple layers of identity people can assume, especially so in a multi-ethnic country like Bosnia-Herzegovina, as Aida chooses to rely solely on her national identity as a Bosnian instead of an ethno-religious approach that would emphasize her Bosniak/Muslim heritage.

Another distinctive aspect of her character seems to lie in her pessimism and disillusion with the war. This, again, becomes especially evident in her interactions with Haris. When Haris tries to share with her his passion for the medieval Bosnian gravestones near the camp, Aida rebuffs him by questioning the value of dealing with history. The ensuing discussion not only offers a short, albeit subjective, overview of Bosnian history, it also positions her as someone who is weary of the war and its nationalist agenda:

'Aida,' he offered, 'it's always easier to understand if you know the history.'
'Oh yes, I've heard that often enough – but what history? The history of the Serbs who were beaten by the Turks five hundred years ago, and that's why they're killing Muslims today? Or the history of the Bosnians who became Muslims under five hundred years of Turkish rule? Or the history of the Croats and their Austrian friends, who also had trouble with the Turks? History is nonsense, just like religion. It's always about the wrong things!' (86)

Her disappointment and war fatigue characterize her as a realist, in stark contrast to Haris, who copes with the war by drawing on his idealistic views. Her fights with Haris not only serve to address many war-relevant topics, it is also an instrument for incorporating genre-specific elements of romance and sexual tension. Aida is one of two female protagonists, and as such she fulfills some of the stereotypically female roles that the teenage romance novel usually entails. Certain scenes clearly emphasize the typical teenage girl in her, which helps make her more accessible to a teenage audience that might feel out of touch with her if only presented with her war experience. There are thus times when she is stressed out by how miserable her hair and nails look or instances where she bonds with Mila over intimate topics like how to deal with her monthly period under such paltry circumstances. Adding to the image of a typical teenager, she starts to develop romantic feelings for some of the boys in the camp. During her quarrels with Haris, for example, she does not fail to notice his curly hair and his eye color, which implies some sort of physical attraction. The quarreling itself can be read as a sign of the sexual tension between the two, while the laughter

and teasing that always follow their debates can be understood as an expression of mutual sympathies. Although developing emotions between the two are a main theme of their relationship in the novel, in the end, surprisingly, it is revealed that Aida has romantic feelings for Josip instead of Haris. While some readers might find this unrealistic, plot twists like these are a common literary device in the contemporary romance genre (Ramsdell 54). The disappointment of some readers notwithstanding, this may be especially true with YA novels, as a certain degree of romantic flightiness might be expected from teenage characters. I shall later bring forth another possible interpretation of this plot twist.

6.2.2.2. Haris

Haris is the most prominent male group member as he is given the most amount of dialogue and explicit characterization. He comes to Brodište with Josip, and the two are portrayed as close friends throughout the novel. Although they obviously care a lot about each other, their friendship seems to be characterized by competition and contrasts, however, without casting one of them in a negative light: "In all the world there wasn't a boy more honest than Haris. Nor more eccentric, for that matter" (25). In contrast to Josip, he comes from a well-off family, as his father is a famous historian and his mother is an actress. Haris shares his father's fascination for Bosnian history; he is obsessed with the samples of medieval Bosnian gravestones, so-called *stećci*, the group has recently discovered near the camp. Much to the annoyance of his fellow group members, Haris loves to lecture everyone, and especially newcomer Aida, about the history of the relicts, which served as gravestones for medieval heretics, the Bogomils, who dissociated themselves from the Catholics and the Orthodox Churches and established an independent Bosnian religion. For Haris, these medieval gravestones serve as an important source of his new Bosnian identity and when Aida asks him about the people who made the *stećci*, he replies, „[j]ust Bosnians like you and me" (97). This is a reference to the role the *stećci* and the Bogomil cult played in the modern identity formation of many Bosniaks, who regard the Bogomils as their direct ancestors, which would deny any ancestral links shared with their Catholic and Orthodox co-citizens before the arrival of the Ottomans (Bijedić 2011). In contrast to

the realists in the camp, Haris starts to view the stones as a symbol of the newly independent country that needs to be protected. When Josip asks why one of the gravestones needs to be in a museum, Haris is quick to reply: „To save it. If it stays here [...] another madman will come, a bridge or road-builder who wants convenient, ready-cut blocks which only need the sculpture planed off. Do you know how many *stećci* the Austrians took last century“ (54). Quotes like these not only demonstrate Austria’s still prominent role in the Bosnian collective memory, they also position Haris as the more conservative counterpart in many of the debates with his friends, without, however, portraying him as a chauvinist; on the contrary, he proclaims his support for his pacifist father whose work as a museum historian he views as peaceful resistance to the war.

In accordance with his image as a history nerd, the character of Haris also provides readers with a satirical recapitulation of the war after Josip and he manage to escape to the Adriatic coast:

Once upon a time there was a beautiful country where different kinds of people lived. Sometimes things went well, sometimes badly. That’s human beings for you. But even if they sometimes quarreled, they always made it up again, to enjoy the countryside, drink a glass of slivovitz or eat a plate of djuveć. One day a bunch of madmen arrived who wanted to have all the slivovitz, all the djuveć and all the countryside. They knew it would not be easy and so they became soldiers. They became sergeants, lieutenants, captains, colonels, very powerful! And after that they took over the army, with everything that could ride, fly or fire! The people were scared to death, and yet, when they were shot at, instead of blaming the madmen they blamed their neighbours. They didn’t understand the madmen, but their neighbours were familiar, they had often quarrelled with them – and after all, you have to blame someone when the bullets are flying round your ears. In the row that broke out then wise men came from the east and west. They took a quick look around and said, “Everyone here is mad, this a country of madmen! We must separate them!” And they altered the frontiers, and did it again, and again, and again, until no one dared to draw a map of Yugoslavia. (163-4)

Haris gives his snappish monologue on the war and its participants, both foreign and domestic, in the form of a fairy tale, which indicates that the comments are subjective and not necessarily true. This, in turn, makes the historical accuracy of the comments less delicate from a didactic point of view in comparison to those given by nobody less

than the narrator in *Under the Sun*. As a matter of fact, Haris' views on the war reflect the persistent lack of consensus on the reasons why Yugoslavia disintegrated that continues to prevail both among scholars and the Balkan public in general (Dragović-Soso 2007).

Apart from his image as an amateur historian, Haris is also characterized as a romantic idealist. His early sympathies for Aida are strong enough to divert his attention from the Bogomils to her presence; he is willing to stop talking about history when presented with the chance of holding her hand. When asked by Aida what he would like to do now if there was no war, he makes a poignant case for romance:

[...] I would go to the Miljacka café and eat an ice on the boulevard. And then I would go to the park in Kovači, one of the other districts of the town. It's not there any more, the trees have been felled and vanished into multi-fuel stoves. Sarajevo is being burned up. All the cosy spots are disappearing. There's nowhere to go when you're in love. (89-90)

This characterization of Haris as a hopeless romantic fits perfectly into the clichés of the novel's underlying genre. Conflating the tragic reality of war with romance and love aims to affect readers who are susceptible to romance tales. Haris' emotional flightiness, which he demonstrates at the end of the novel by shifting his romantic interest from Aida to Mila, only supports this idea of using the war as a catalyst in a romance plot. The destructiveness and turmoil of the war leave nothing untouched, not even the group's romantic constellations apparently.

6.2.2.3. Josip

As mentioned before, Josip came to the village from Sarajevo with his best friend Haris. He fled the siege in his hometown and came to live with his aunt, Antonia. Josip is introduced as a rather mysterious character; he is the first to see the new girl in Antonia's house, but instead of asking who she is he turns around and leaves again. He is portrayed in contrast to his friend Haris, often serving as his more pragmatic foil character. Although their friendship seems to be strong, Josip sometimes suffers from feelings of inferiority:

In their friendship they were like sun and moon, complementing each other wonderfully, but never able to agree, always arguing about time and place. Josip felt that he was the moon, the one who reflected the other's light, sometimes quite literally. For as long as they could remember they had lived next door to each other in the centre of Sarajevo. But Josip had always had been just a little bit less skilful, quick and intelligent than his neighbour. [...] Whether it was a matter of 'grown-up' teeth, chest hair or exams, Haris was ahead of him in everything. He had extraordinary parents, too. (37)

Descriptions like these serve to address typical difficulties of puberty and to combine them with the war. The contrast between Josip and Haris is taken up regularly throughout the novel, with the war-related complications around them only adding to the contrast. This is best exemplified by their interactions with Aida, for whom both boys seem to have developed sympathies. In contrast to Haris' historical debates, Josip is much more concerned with the present. He is worried about his aunt's wellbeing and about the group's uncertain future, which also prevents him from wooing Aida. When Haris takes her to the *stećci* to spend some time alone with her, Josip becomes infuriated:

Josip was jealous. He had been the first to see Aida, but Haris, the Sun King, had monopolised her before he could exchange so much as a word with her. The first time he returned exhausted from Brodište he had stolen off to the *stećci*. He felt thoroughly mean, spying on his best friend, but was he only good enough to act as a pack mule for the supplies, or as a confidant for Mila when Ramiz was not around? Then at the graveyard his self-pity was so great that he wanted to swear at Haris and punch him on the nose (95).

Despite his jealousy and anger, Josip never lets his negative feelings show in front of his friends and he never gets into any debates or physical fights. His behavior is marked by reticence and pragmatism. Much like Aida, Josip is demoralized by the war. Unsurprisingly, Haris' lectures and philosophical debates do not resonate with him at all. However, Haris' accounts of their past in Sarajevo indicate that he used to be much more impulsive and strong-minded: "In town I've seen him hanging, swearing, out of the tram while it was being shot up by snipers" (72). This characterization deliberately puts a different complexion on his rather passive behavior in the present, which is now presented as a result of the grueling war, which only gets worse after his aunt dies

and he is taken captive. Considering these dire circumstances, Aida's falling in love with him instead of Haris could be understood as an expression of poetic justice that favors Josip over his more glamorous and fortunate friend.

6.2.2.4. Mila

As the second female group member, Mila can be viewed as a foil character to Aida. The differences between the two, both physical and mental, are emphasized throughout the novel, especially upon their first meeting. It is also implied that they dislike each other, mainly because Mila has the false impression that Aida disapproves of her inter-ethnic relationship with Ramiz, a Romany. From her very first appearance on, she is portrayed as a skillful hunter, an excellent cook, and a wayward hothead who frequently gets into debates. Although these arguments are not explicitly fueled by ethnic differences, it does appear striking that Mila, who is the only Serb in the group, refuses to go near the *stećci* because she believes they are haunted. On a symbolic level, this creates an antagonism between her and Haris, for whom the *stećci* embody his Bosnian identity. This antagonism is taken up again after Antonia's death, when the two have a fight over the ideal burial place for her. In the end, when it is revealed that she is harboring sympathies for Haris, the novel ends with her words: "There are more gruesome things than stones, aren't there? And what I've heard about the Bogomils fascinates me. I must know where the evil comes from, if I'm to believe in something good again" (191). In this very symbolic ending, her love for Haris makes Mila overcome her negative stance and accept the pro-Bosnian identity proposed by Haris and his appreciation of the gravestones, which can be read as an implicit reference to the political situation of post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina and its high number of inhabitants who do not identify with the country (Touquet & Vermeersch 2008).

Another characteristic feature that distinguishes her from Aida is her talkativeness. In her numerous stories about her life before war, Mila reveals how she had to run away from home with Ramiz because her parents disapproved of her relationship with a Romany, even though Ramiz's father, a musician, used to play in the restaurant of

Mila's family. One of her accounts addresses the rising ethnical tensions ahead of the Yugoslav Wars that mixed with the long-lasting antigypsyism¹⁰ in the region:

His parents knew, and said nothing, because they knew that my parents, however much they valued the group, really despised gypsies. You feel those things. Apart from that, the war had begun and the request songs were different. The customers wanted to hear nationalist songs which had been forbidden before, but were soon being sung everywhere. (124)

By presenting issues like racism and ethnic strife as an obstacle to the young love of Mila and Ramiz, the novel once again uses the war as a significant element in its romance plot. Mila and Ramiz are thus turned into a modern Romeo and Juliet who are fleeing both the war and their nationalist parents. Later, after she begins to bond with Aida, Mila reveals that her older brothers chose to join the paramilitaries, which only added to her estrangement from her family: "They watched television a lot, the Belgrade channel, where they went on every day about fame and blood brotherhood. Serbs were said to be indifferent citizens, but good, brave soldiers. That attracted my brothers. They used to show the corpses of murdered civilians, always Serb corpses" (127). Mila's complicated relationship with her family not only reflects the intergenerational struggles that are usually associated with adolescence, it is also emblematic of the many families that were separated by ideological differences in the Yugoslav Wars. She therefore stands for the new generation of Bosnians that have to come to terms with their family's dubious role in the war. A common trope of the romance novel is taken up when Mila's love for Ramiz empowers her to break away from her parents and to choose love over family and tradition. Another important detail of the abovementioned quote is the influence of political propaganda in the development of the Yugoslav Wars. As the only Serb protagonist, Mila criticizes the Yugoslav state media for creating an atmosphere of prejudice and fear among the Serbian public, which can indeed be considered as one of the factors that facilitated the outbreak of the war (Sundhaussen 229-234).

¹⁰ also termed *antiziganism* in some scientific discourses, see End 2015 for further details concerning the terminology

6.2.2.5. Ramiz

Ramiz is by far the most silent of the five teenagers in the group and most of the information about his past is provided by his girlfriend Mila, who is seen binding his wounded hand, which early on indicates that the two were attacked during their escape. It is revealed that Ramiz comes from a family of Roma musicians and that he aspired to become a professional guitarist. This was, however, rendered impossible when Serb paramilitaries attacked him and cut off two of his fingers:

It had happened after Mila and Ramiz ran away from home. They had walked the first twenty kilometres, before being picked up by a refugee convoy. This seemed faster and safer, until a group of 'White Eagles' held up the bus. Shouting men in combat gear, with white band round their heads, climbed into the crowded bus [...] and then they had butts, sticks and bars. [...] 'You Turks stick your bums in the air when you pray to Allah, but our God, the true God, doesn't care for that. Remember that! Real believers cross themselves, with three fingers, as we will show you.' And after that they had cut off the little finger and third finger of three of the boys. (93)

Apart from being one of the most harrowing descriptions of war atrocities in the novel, this passage is also noteworthy for its explicit mentioning of a paramilitary unit, namely the White Eagles (Beli Orlovi). This is especially interesting given the fact that the novel was written only months after the end of the war, at a time when the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) only started to process the war crimes committed in the Yugoslav Wars. The scene quoted above also introduces the readers to the perspective of visible minorities in the war. Unlike his friends, Ramiz is not able to disguise his ethnicity and is therefore at the mercy of the paramilitaries, most of whom already harbored hatred against Roma people before the war. The character of Ramiz thus represents the role of the silenced and disregarded Roma people in the Yugoslav Wars, who, apart from being a visible minority, often came from the poorest parts of the population and as such constituted a particularly easy target (Crowe 231-3).

6.2.2.6. Antonia

Antonia is the most important of the adult characters in the plot since she is personally connected with all the teenagers after giving them shelter. Her function in the text lies mainly in providing narrative exposition by retelling how the conflict came to be. Already in her first accounts of the war she positions herself as a neutral person who is not taking sides, which she underpins by mentioning her own inter-ethnic background:

'The Serbs came first,' she said. 'They searched Brodište for Muslims and set their houses on fire. They took on Croats as well. My husband shot into the house like a rocket, got rid of all traces of Catholicism and hung up an icon. That was how he cheated that trash. He was a Serb, you see. Was that right? Was it wrong?' [...] The Croats called us arselickers, who only wanted to save our house, and the fourteen Serbs, the only ones living here, called us degenerates, because we had a mixed marriage. (14)

This passage also introduces the most prominent element of Antonia's character, namely her way of surviving the war by camouflaging her ethnic identity, a strategy she took over from her late husband. Apart from establishing the historical context of the novel, she evidently also serves as a moral instance who reflects on questions of right or wrong in times of war. Her survival tactics obviously place her in a moral dilemma, and she openly questions whether the decision to choose personal safety over civil courage was right or wrong. The importance of civil courage, if taken up in class, can be applied to many other historical contexts in which minorities were deliberately targeted. The persecution of the Austrian Jews under the Nazis can be adduced as an example in the Austrian context. The fact that Antonia's disguise is never explicitly evaluated by the narrator favors a deeper in-class discussion of her character. There are instances of some implicit evaluation, like when the narrator describes the liquor she stores in the house as "her laughing gas and tear gas in this war of nerves – her weapon, that turned blustering men into mumbling drunks" (38).

The moral quandary is juxtaposed with her portrayal as someone who shelters children irrespective of their ethnic identity, which nonetheless characterizes her as a person of integrity. This only adds to the moral fuzziness of her character, something that

becomes a recurrent pattern in the novel's depiction of the adult characters, who are never portrayed as good or bad only. Likewise, Antonia evokes both positive and negative feelings in the teenage protagonists, especially in her nephew Josip: "Josip was scared of his aunt. At home Antonia had always been spoken of with great respect: a woman with ambition, versatile, educated. Secretly he had revered his aunt, who resembled to a T his own mother, her younger sister" (23). While her benevolence saved the teenagers' lives, her insistence on remaining in her house instead of fleeing the country with them made the group stay in the village, which consequently resulted in the boys' captivity. Antonia's degree of power and personal agency could also be interesting for an in-class discussion: although she successfully manipulates the paramilitaries with false identities and alcohol, she is also highly dependent on Pedro, the UN soldier who provides her with supplies; while she bravely refuses to abandon her house, in the end, she is still a victim of the war, as she dies due to poor health.

6.2.2.7. Pedro

The character of Pedro, a Spanish UN soldier, can be regarded as a personification of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) that operated in Bosnia-Herzegovina during the war. Although several characters repeatedly refer to him throughout the novel, he only appears once, when he delivers food and other vital supplies to Antonia, who seems to hold him in high regard. On his visit, he is accompanied by two nervous colleagues who urge him to hurry up. Pedro reveals that the UN personnel has been under attack recently and that they could be targeted again anytime soon. On explaining how hard it was to get enough food packages through the paramilitary checkpoints, he reveals some of the malpractice that has been plaguing the UN mission: "Every stop means that we lose part of our load to the local fighters! They run around, rosy and well-fed, while the people die in misery. Do you know our latest nickname? SERBOFOR, they call us, as if we were working for Serbia" (49). His short conversation with Antonia touches upon several problems surrounding the UN peace mission in Bosnia: the attacks on neutral peace forces by local fighters, the rampant corruption among the local forces and the misuse of donations, as well as the public resentment of the locals against the UN due to a perceived lack of neutrality. All of

these issues can be addressed in class by analyzing Pedro's conversation with Antonia. Public disapproval of the international missions is again reflected later in the novel, when Aida criticizes how "[t]hey don't do anything about peace enforcement, just hand out food" (99). Aida is especially distraught with the UN, since Pedro promised to drive her to Croatia, but never showed up later. This is again an implicit reference to the work of the UNPROFOR mission, which was often criticized for its inactivity in the war. While Pedro does not show up to escort Aida to safety, it is later revealed that it was he who helped Josip and Haris leave the village after their escape. This mirrors the actual events in the war, since it was the international community that, despite all of its previous flaws, ended the war by intervening militarily, albeit only after the death of thousands of civilians. Evaluating the character of Pedro can therefore serve as a useful instrument for an in-class debate about the ambiguous role of the international community in the Yugoslav Wars.

6.2.2.8. Soldiers

Soldiers are an important set of characters in any war novel, and as such they deserve to be scrutinized more closely. In *No Roof in Bosnia*, the depiction of soldiers is mostly limited to nameless violent men who vandalize, attack, rape and even kill people. It is noteworthy that the novel only includes Serb soldiers as acting characters, while the other belligerents are merely mentioned in passing. Similar to the mixed portrayal of soldiers in *Under the Sun*, this novel also includes positive elements in the depiction of soldiers, i.e. by having one particular soldier save Aida's life. Portrayals like these intend to obscure the negative image of soldiers in the war. By showing the human and benevolent side in individual soldiers, the text challenges too simplistic categorizations of war participants. It provokes readers to form an own opinion about the soldier character, in this case personified by Aida's savior and former schoolmate, by weighing these little acts of humanity against a person's general participation in the war, which is understood to be inherently negative given that the protagonists of the novel all decided against fighting in the war. Having an ethical debate on topics like

subjective guilt of war participants can be an especially challenging yet interesting task in the classroom.

6.2.2.9. War correspondents

There is a brief but telling scene in the novel where Aida and Mila are given a lift on their way to Split by an English war correspondent named Jim and his local interpreter. They are shown verbally harassing the girls after letting them off in a village near the Bosnian-Croatian border: "Mila grasped Aida's hand and pinched it in warning. [...] The interpreter's face darkened. 'Oh no, you're not going to leave Jim and me in the lurch after that long drive?' [...] She could see his angry eyes in the rear mirror" (144). Although the girls quickly manage to get rid of the two bothersome men, the scene nonetheless implies the often-problematic role of reporters in war zones. Just like with Jim, who both helps and harasses the girls, there can be a fine line between helping and exploiting the local population in war reporting. The character of Jim can certainly be viewed as a reference to this issue.

6.2.4. Narrative analysis

The narration in *No Roof in Bosnia* is dominated by a figural narrative situation in which there are none of the subjective comments provided in *Under the Sun*. Instead, commenting the war is left to the characters, who are alternately used as focalizers in a process of "multiple focalization" (Genette 190), which is another striking difference to the first novel, which only employs one focalizer. Interestingly, these so-called character-focalizers (Rimmon-Kenan 76-79) are not identical with the five teenagers, as Ramiz, who remains silent most of the time, is not used as a focalizer in the novel, whereas Antonia, who is given a prominent role in the beginning of the novel, serves as an additional character-focalizer next to the other teenagers. While most scenes rely on only one of the characters for focalization, there are numerous instances where the perspectives of several characters are merged. One example is a critical remark about the UN that is given when Josip and Haris are walking around Split: "[T]hey had

walked straight to the boulevard with the palm trees. A white UN jeep raced by. UN vehicles were always racing through the streets of Split, as if to make up for the sluggish tempo in Bosnia" (167-8). While on first sight this could be read as narratorial judgement, it appears much more plausible that the critical remarks are merely the narrated thought of one or even both of the characters in the scene. The absence of any verbs of perception in the sentence "A white UN jeep raced by" may not disclose who exactly is perceiving the UN jeep racing by, but this does not necessarily mean that the perception and the ensuing comment cannot be ascribed to the characters. Palmer, who has called this kind of narration *free indirect perception*, describes such instances as "parts of the discourse that initially appear to be pure narratorial report but that, on reflection, can be read as descriptions of events or states in the storyworld as experienced by a particular fictional mind" (48-9, quoted in van Krieken et al. 2017). The ambiguity that arises from this indirect perception can serve as an instrument for deliberately merging the viewpoints of the characters. Hence, by not explicitly stating which of the two characters is perceiving, readers can ascribe the comment to both, which they are more likely to do than associating the comment with the narrator (van Krieken 2017). The narrative process in *No Roof in Bosnia* appears to employ such a merger of viewpoints repeatedly. For example, when Aida and Antonia get to know each other after Aida's arrival, they make some forced small talk after which the narrator, who up until then used Aida as a focalizer, concludes: "Intuitively they realized that they need not go on talking. Each had told the other something about herself, and from now on they could simply chat" (28). Likewise, when Josip and Haris sneak up to Antonia's house to catch a glimpse of the new girl, their thoughts are psycho-narrated simultaneously, even though the rest of the chapter uses only Josip as a focalizer: "Both of them were remembering the time when they themselves had lived in the village, but while Haris's clearest memory was of Antonia's quick-wittedness, Josip concentrated on her weakest moments" (38). The merger of multiple perspectives can have several narrative effects. By emphasizing the mutuality in the character's perception and experience in war, the text creates the image of a tight-knit group rather than individuals who are escaping the war on their own. One could argue that the ethnic and religious differences of the characters are thus overcome in the course of the narrative process. This impression is corroborated when observing

how the focalization progresses throughout the narrative. While in the beginning of the novel the focalization seems to be fixed, focusing only on Aida, it gradually opens up to include Antonia's perspective as well, as was shown in the quote above. Later, more and more characters are used for focalization, and in the end of the novel, when the teenagers are reunited in Split, the perspectives of all four characters are merged. For example, when they jump into a fountain out of sheer joy, the narrating voice begins to give a panoramic description of the scene that exceeds the perspective of only one character:

Grinning, Josip sat on the edge and then also climbed into the basin, turned his face to the jets of water and shouted an exaggerated, 'Brrrrrr!' All the children who had stopped, fascinated, began to laugh at the two boys who were pretending to clean their teeth, wash themselves, or chase each other. The adults shook their heads. At first Aida and Mila had looked on, embarrassed, but now they too were sitting on the edge of the basin, egging the boys on. A passer-by got annoyed when he was hit by a stream of water; a mother had problems with her little boy – who also wanted to get in with all his clothes on – and a dog raced round and round, barking and snapping at the flying drops of water. They did not see where the policeman came from." (185)

Although this panoramic mode of narration is reminiscent of an omniscient authorial narrator, in this case it is the result of the multiple focalization employed throughout the novel. Once again, free indirect perception merges the perspective of all four characters, underlining the collective nature of the scene and positioning the group as a joyful, juvenile bunch in contrast to the adult onlookers.

6.2.4. Space

As already mentioned, space can be more than just the array of locations described in a narrated text. It can serve as a carrier of meaning itself, or, as Bal has put it, space "becomes an acting place rather than the place of action" (127). The space in *No Roof in Bosnia* thus has to be analyzed in consideration of its narrative functions. Much like in the previous novel, the text's spatial representation is based on a fundamental dichotomy: the village and the hillside camp. Both spaces not only represent the

characters who inhabit them, along with their traits, actions, and feelings, but they also separate the narrated world along political and philosophical lines.

The village is the first location presented in the novel; when Aida arrives in it, she notices the "black, scorched walls or ruined facades behind which tables and chairs still stood" (7), and that "the village sign was riddled with bullet holes" (7). When she takes refuge in Antonia's ramshackle house, she enters a chaotic and dusty kitchen, finds a cracked roof and has to sleep in a room that could collapse any moment. With all its chaos and destruction, the village is the spatial equivalent of the war that surrounds it. It is fraught with the looming danger of war, be it from the drunk paramilitaries who regularly intrude the last inhabited houses, or from the approaching troops whose distant gunfire augurs ill. The village stands for a country beset by worries, the loss of all norms and customs, the political and social upheaval, and the ethnic strife that has infested the Bosnian war-time society. It is thus a place ruled by chaos, and the village cemetery remains the only place where one can find order: "All the different tombstones were placed next to each other at random, though in orderly rows. The symmetry of the graveyard, with its straight paths and tombstones, contrasted sharply with the chaos of the village below" (26).

If the village is an allegorical representation of the adults and their war, then it is safe to say that the hillside camp is a symbol of its teenage dwellers who have set it up. Located on a relatively safe hilltop, it stands above the war, both spatially and symbolically, as no adult ever sets foot in it throughout the plot. While Antonia has to worry about her food rations not being delivered and the village well being poisoned, the teenagers have plenty of food and fresh water on their hill. While the village inhabitant's only concern is survival, as immoral as it may be, the safe campsite enables the teenagers to debate and philosophize. It thus becomes a *locus amoenus* in times of war; one of the last pleasant places, where teenagers can still be teenagers. Moreover, the medieval gravestones in its vicinity are redolent of more peaceful times; they are remnants of a unified society that sought shelter in the hills, much alike the teenage protagonists who themselves, too, have overcome all their differences in need of a safe haven. The antagonism between the two spaces becomes evident upon Antonia's death, when the teenagers have to decide where to bury her. The ensuing debate and the clash of the values that each space symbolizes force the teenagers to

return to reality. Not only do they decide to bury Antonia in the village cemetery, which ultimately leads to their own separation and imprisonment, they also realize that they have to leave their campsite since Antonia, their guardian, was dead, and winter was approaching.

Apart from this literary approach to the space presented in the novel, it could also be interesting to discuss the novel's use of fictionalized place names. Although being the literary representation of a real war, the novel avoids using real locations, with only two well-known exceptions, namely Sarajevo, the home of Haris and Josip, and Split, the teenagers' destination. Both the village (*Brodište*) and its nearby hill (*Gora*, Serbo-Croatian for 'mountain') bear fictional names. Likewise, Aida comes from the fictional city of *Tuz*, which bears an uncanny resemblance to Tuzla, Bosnia-Herzegovina's third largest city. Her mother was taken to the fictional prison camp *Banjsko*, while Mila and Ramiz come from *Gorsko*, which is said to be in eastern Bosnia. The question why the author opted for fictionalized place names could be an interesting aspect to take up in class. One explanation, at least in the case of the fictionalized prison camp, could lie in the novel's publication relatively soon after the end of the war, where the historiographic and judicial assessment of the war was still underway. With the benefit of historical hindsight and the ample availability of evidence, writers can nowadays easily refer to familiar place names like Srebrenica, Omarska, or Trnopolje as locations of mass murder. One could also argue that fictionalized place names help keep the novel more neutral and bearable for readers located in the region, however, the omission of real places can also be a major disadvantage in young readers' reception of a novel, especially with readers outside the Balkans, who might wish to conduct more research about individual places and events in the Yugoslav Wars, which is being discouraged with the use of fictional locations.

6.2.5. Didactic potential

As with the previous novel, I will now turn to the text's didactic qualities and the benefits and disadvantages of its use in the EFL classroom, taking into consideration both specific subject-didactic and broader peace education criteria. This time, I will

first reflect on the text's more problematic aspects before outlining the benefits of the novel that, in my opinion, compensate for its flaws.

The novel's most debatable element is its forced happy ending and the questions of believability that arise therefrom. From a generic perspective, one can rightly argue that YA fiction, especially the YA romance novel, has a traditional preference for happy endings and that such an ending answers the expectations of its young audience. Stating that hopefulness is a characteristic of children's literature, Nodelman writes that "a happy ending inevitably implies an optimistic view of reality" (216). Certain aspects of the ending still deserve to be evaluated more objectively. One such aspect would be the forced settlement of the outer conflict in the war, as the war comes to a narrative end when the teenagers decide to stay together and live on the Adriatic coast. Although this might evoke idyllic memories in some Austrian readers who spend their summer vacation there, it neglects the fact that parts of the Adriatic coast were still a battlefield in the mid-1990s and that ethnic Serbs and Bosniaks were in serious danger of persecution and violence in Croatia at that time (Nizich et al. 47-57). However, teachers can easily prevent any misconceptions about this by providing additional information about this circumstance. A useful task that combines writing skills and historical competences would be to have students conduct research and write texts that are set in the future from the perspective of one of the protagonists. This would make meaningful didactic use of both the literary and the historical aspects of the novel.

From a more historical perspective, I also have to mention the lopsided presentation of war atrocities in the novel, which are committed by Serb forces exclusively. Other forces are either only implied or omitted altogether, which means that the text fails to present the conflict from multiple perspectives, even though this would be a fairly easy endeavor given its ethnically diverse array of protagonists. Again, seen from a literary point of view, this does not deserve to be criticized, especially since all the portrayals of war crimes are convincing and well-made stylistically. When having the criteria of peace education in mind, however, it becomes evident that the text itself does not "encourage reflection in response to conflict", which is a major requirement for YA war fiction (Pickett & Carter 121). Learners need to have opportunities to gain a more

holistic view of the conflict, which cannot be achieved without including different perspectives in the historical deconstruction of the war.

One important element of the text that I deem positive, despite one minor flaw, lies in the representation of Roma people in the novel. While Roma people were only the subject of conversations in the novel previously analyzed, *No Roof in Bosnia* manages to include Roma people in its character perspective, since one of the teenage protagonists, Ramiz, is an ethnic Roma. In doing so, the novel can help raise awareness about the fate of Roma people in the Yugoslav Wars. Unfortunately, the novel leaves a bad aftertaste by exploiting ethnic stereotypes and portraying Ramiz and his family as a band of musicians. Even though he eventually dies, Ramiz is depicted as a willful character who attempts to break free from traditions and conventions. The novel thus focuses on his attributes as a teenager struggling for an individual identity rather than the stereotypical representative of a minority group. With regard to overly conventional characterizations, Pickett and Carter acknowledge that "characters may be presented in ways that make commonalities apparent and promote positive perceptions, laying the foundations for mutually respectful relationships" (24).

Apart from the inclusion of minorities, the text also fosters a positive reception of ethnic diversity in general. It aptly uses genre-specific themes like love and relationships to characterize ethnic differences as something fruitful and constructive. Inter-ethnic love is thus portrayed as the most effective way of peacefully resisting the war. The covering of a diverse spectrum of ethnic groups from the former Yugoslavia among its well-described and round characters ensures that the readers' emotions are not steered along ethnic lines. Given that the text presents both male and female protagonists, the same can be said about gender equality in the novel.

It also has to be noted that empowerment is a central element in the novel's character perspective. On the one hand, this encompasses the empowerment of girls, mainly represented by Mila's character, who is portrayed as strong-minded enough to break away from her family who has given in to the ethnic rivalries of the war. On the other hand, the group as a whole represents the empowerment of adolescents, as they organize their camp life themselves and manage to survive the war on their own. Even though not every group member feels the need to cut ties with his or her family, the

teenagers nonetheless defy the adults by not participating in the ethnic hatred demonstrated by their parents' generation.

The depiction of the war is based on realistic representations of the most significant aspects of it. The plot thus entails sensitive subjects like murder, rape, prison camps, or mines without ever losing its believability. It is especially laudable that the novel manages to portray the conflict as a sociopolitical phenomenon much rather than a regionally confined outbreak of violence rooted in history and past conflicts. The text attaches great importance to social issues like racism and xenophobia and the role of the media in the creation of an Islamophobic atmosphere in 1980s Yugoslavia. The text also deals with the numerous explanations and interpretations of the breakup of Yugoslavia, which is best exemplified by Haris' satirical monologue. Teachers are well-advised to take up such literary interpretations of historical events and have students deconstruct them in class.

The critical thematization of the international community, represented by the United Nations, and its inability or unwillingness to intervene soon enough is another thought-provoking element in the portrayal of the conflict. It invites educators to address the political and ethical dilemmas governments and international organizations face when confronted with conflicts that involve genocide and other atrocities. One such dilemma that lends itself to in-class debates is the use of force in humanitarian interventions and the area of conflict between the potential breaking of international law in doing so and the ethical responsibility to protect people who are threatened by genocide (Janzekovic 2006). The Yugoslav Wars can serve as a textbook example of how indecisive and inconsistent the approach of the international community can be in such cases.

On the whole, it can be said that *No Roof in Bosnia* provides a valuable opportunity for readers to learn not only about the Yugoslav Wars, but also about universal problems like war, contemporary conflict, and ethnic violence. Despite some minor flaws, teachers wishing to address these topics will likely find the novel to be a useful resource.

7. Conclusion

The analyses of the texts show that both novels use the Yugoslav Wars on several narrative levels in accordance with their genre. Both texts position inter-ethnic relations as something constructive and valuable, either, as in *Under the Sun*, by portraying a child from an ethnically mixed marriage as the protagonist, or, as in *No Roof in Bosnia*, by including characters with different ethnic backgrounds. Ethnocentrism and religious strife are thus implicitly labeled as something negative in both texts. Both novels include references to the history of the Balkans, with *Under the Sun* focusing more on World War II and its implications for the Yugoslav Wars, while *No Roof in Bosnia* puts an emphasis on the time of the Habsburg rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which might be particularly interesting in Austrian classrooms. Both novels do not shy away from literary representations of war atrocities like mines, rape, or murder. Even though soldiers and paramilitaries are clearly portrayed as the perpetrators of these crimes, both texts also add elements of moral fuzziness by breaking with the image of the murderous soldier and portraying soldiers who save some of the characters' lives. This moral challenge to the young readers is a common trope in YA novels. The texts challenge their young readers' perceptions and categorizations by deliberately including humane features in the portrayal of the fighters. By working the wars into the typical conventions of their respective genre, the adventurous quest plot in *Under the Sun* and the ethnic romance plot in *No Roof in Bosnia*, the novels offer teachers the opportunity to address the Yugoslav Wars through literature and narration. Such an approach could be especially advisable with a class in which it would be difficult to address the wars with conventional methods of a history didactics. Using the texts could, however, also be taken as a step to represent the ethnic backgrounds or fields of interest of a class.

There are certain aspects about using them in class that require some additional action on a teacher's part. Apart from providing the already mentioned contextualization of the texts that might be necessary in some classes, teachers should also care to connect the novels with the present political situation. This would help to underline both novels' relevance in the present. One example of this could be to interrelate the Yugoslav

Wars with present conflicts, be it the civil wars in Syria or Yemen, the conflicts in Darfur or Afghanistan, or the ethnical cleansing in Myanmar. Another could be to highlight certain political processes in different societies, such as the influence of social media and the rise of *fake news* as a possibly dangerous factor in the creation of public opinion. Given that war propaganda played an influential role before and during the Yugoslav Wars, albeit in a time well before the invention of social media, these present phenomena could be addressed in reference to the role both texts ascribe to the media. The same can be done with regards to the important role of the civil society in a conflict. In both novels, the parents of the protagonists, being journalists, actors, university professors, etc., can be viewed as stereotypical representations of the Bosnian society's civil sector. Since almost all of them resist the war in one way or the other, they can serve as a good reference when addressing the ways individuals can offer resistance in times of armed conflict. In any case, both novels qualify for the use in the EFL or history classroom. Their minor flaws do not outweigh their peace educational potential for teaching the Yugoslav Wars with young adult novels.

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Abstracts (English/Deutsch)

Led by the assumption that young adult literature can be a useful resource in a peace education-oriented teaching of the Yugoslav Wars, this thesis examines not only English-language young adult literature covering this particular conflict but also the didactic potential of these literary representations, be it in the EFL or the history classroom. By looking more closely into two novels, namely Arthur Dorros' *Under the Sun* and Els de Groen's *No Roof in Bosnia*, this paper analyzes the texts from a literary perspective, examining crucial textual features such as plot, characters, narrative situation, and space. It subsequently brings the findings of the literary analysis into a relation with historical interpretations of the Yugoslav Wars in order to investigate the texts' possible benefits to a peace educational approach in class. The key assumption is confirmed with only minor reservations that are commented on in the thesis.

Beruhend auf der Annahme, dass Jugendromane geeignete Quellen für einen auf der Theorie der Friedenserziehung fußenden Unterricht sein können, untersucht diese Diplomarbeit englischsprachige Jugendliteratur, die sich mit den Jugoslawienkriegen befasst. Zwei Jugendromane werden näher beleuchtet, nämlich *Under the Sun* von Arthur Dorros und *No Roof in Bosnia* von Els de Groen. Dabei werden die Texte aus literaturwissenschaftlicher Sicht analysiert, indem wesentliche Textmerkmale wie Handlung, Charaktere oder Erzählsituation und -raum untersucht werden. Die Ergebnisse dieser Analysen werden jeweils mit geschichtswissenschaftlichen Interpretationen der Jugoslawienkriege in Verbindung gebracht, um so das didaktische Potenzial der Texte für einen von der Friedenserziehung geleiteten Unterricht aufzuzeigen. Die Grundannahme wird bestätigt, wobei die Arbeit zu kleineren Vorbehalten Stellung nimmt.