

Student Name

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ENGL 272-01

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Outline: Loss of Innocence Despite Age and Social Standing

## I. Introduction

- a. Intro statement
  - i. While looking at *Europa* (1991) and *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988) on a surface level, it may seem the only comparison is World War II, being told from two very different points of view.
- b. Thesis
  - i. Although *Europa*'s main character is a middle-aged American man and *Grave of the Fireflies* centers two children, these characters are shown losing their innocence through being shown the horrors of war.
- c. Other path one film
  - i. Movies such as *Babyface* (1933) deal with the loss of innocence, however this example was off screen mostly and was due to prostitution of the main character from a young age.

## II. *Europa* (1991)

- a. At the beginning of the film, Leopold is hoping to do some good for the German economy after WWII
  - i. He finds throughout the film that Germany is still overtaken with Nazis
    1. When the werewolves are hung outside the windows of the train, we can **tell Leopold feels some sort of sympathy for those people who he deems as human even though he knows that they are not innocent.**
  - ii. Marries Kat who he tries to see the good in but is a werewolf
    1. Being used by Colonel Harris due to his genuine (possibly one-sided) love for Kat.

## III. *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988)

- a. **Children are generally a symbol of innocence in media** because they have not had (or are not supposed to have) the life experience of hardships
  - i. In *Metropolis* (1927), the kids are shown as very vulnerable and when left behind need to be saved by the main characters while they cry out.
  - ii. In *Grave of the Fireflies*, it is clear that before the movie begins, they have lost some sort of innocence, as Setsuko complains about going to the shelter rather than urging Seita to hurry like she would if it had been their first or second time through an attack.
- b. While Seita and Setsuko maintain a childlike composition, they do not maintain their innocence.
  - i. They are enamored by the fireflies around them and continue to play games around their hut, but they are faced with the reality of death and sickness.

Commented [PM1]: Ties to thesis about innocence

1. When Setsuko dies, we see the montage of her playing around the hut, however she also finds the dead man on the beach and builds the grave for the fireflies without a second thought
2. While Seita is older, he goes through a loss of innocence with the way he begins to steal from farmers to help Setsuko and then at the end gives up on life even though he had the means to survive.

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#### IV. Direct Comparison

- a. Both movies show the Americans not being the 'saviors' in the way they are taught in the USA.
  - i. Both Seita and Setsuko are innocent children, and they are being 'punished' by the air raids that Americans are carrying out.
  - ii. Leopold sees firsthand how innocent families, such as the family he is asked to lie to on the train, are affected by the American bombing that had been carried out.
- b. Gaining sympathy from the audience
  - i. While the main characters die at the end of the films, there are different reasonings as to why these choices were made
    1. Leopold died due to the consequences of his own actions that were intended to hurt others. While his intention was to rectify his mistake, he unfortunately does not do it in the right way, nor does he make it in time
    2. Seita and Setsuko both die due to circumstances that could have been prevented by Seita but should not have been brought onto a fourteen-year-old in the first place, such as sickness and starvation.

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#### V. Conclusion

- a. While both movies have the obvious comparison of a non-American point of view, they show two vastly different sides of the war from the perspective of not only children but also adults losing their innocence.
  - i. *Grave of the Fireflies* uses children to show loss of innocence, a technique that has been used to gain sympathy from the audience for the group they represent.
  - ii. *Europa* uses a middle-aged man who goes on a somewhat backwards journey of losing hope and innocence as he tries to fight against what some may say was destiny.

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