

Student Name

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1. Introduction

- a. Working Thesis: Within both Isao Takahata's *Grave of the Fireflies* and Lars von Trier's *Europa*, the ideology of militarism is directly impugned for the suffering that it causes to the population, especially for the young generation who is raised under these beliefs.

2. *Europa* (1992)

- a. Nazism is bad (duh)
 - i. Nazism was a hyper-nationalist and militarist ideology, with many parts that made it an abhorrent ideology. Part of the goal of Nazism was the indoctrination of the youth.
- b. Assassination of the Frankfurt Mayor
 - i. Scene: Two young boys, likely brothers, work together to assassinate the new mayor of Frankfurt for the Werwolves, a Nazi paramilitary fighting for Germany following the end of the war despite Germany losing. (00:39:45-00:40:40)
 - ii. These boys were born and raised in Nazi Germany, not only being part of the youth groups, but watching as Germany collapsed in the war to the Allies and Soviets, occupying their home. That has been used by the Werwolves to get these boys involved in their plots, where they managed to get onto the train and assassinate the mayor. Both boys, despite being so young, were killed by Allied troops in response. They should've been in school or playing but were instead part of an insurgency.
 - iii. Sub-scene discussion to bolster (may become a full portion): Katharina discusses that all Germans have been through the war, killing and betraying, leading to a lack of being human, as she says, "what people?" in response to Leo not wanting to blow up the train. (1:35:30-1:36:07)

3. *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988)

- a. The Japanese Empire's political system before and during the war, as context.
 - i. The Japanese Empire, ostensibly a democracy, had been overrun by military influence since the late 1920s. The military had been able to act independently from the central government, partially due to implicate consent of the emperor, leading Japan into war with China and later the Western Allies.
 - ii. The original successes gave more and more influence to the military, which only led to the population of Japan becoming more supportive of the military, especially youth who wanted to join the military and fantasized about the men in it. However, direct brainwashing into the ideology was less common.
- b. Pride of Seita

- i. Scene: Talking to the Farmer, who doesn't have food for Seita or Setsuko. Farmer recommends Seita swallow his pride and return to his aunt, as that is at least better than being homeless. (Same problem as above)
 1. Seita, who wants to be just like the men fighting abroad for Japan, who he believes are winning, cannot stand being seen by his aunt as a do nothing. While his aunt is quite mean towards him as he would prefer to be always with Setsuko rather than go to get a job or help with fires following bombing raids, she would be a safer option to live with than being homeless in the shelter.
 - c. Idolization of the Soldier
 - i. Scene: When sleeping in the bomb shelter with Setsuko, starts imagining being in the war (I cannot find a source for the movie, so I haven't been able to rewatch it yet to get the time code)
 1. The soldiers of the Japanese Army and Navy are men he believes are fighting the good fight. He is pretending to shoot at people and planes, being enamored by those fighting abroad. He wants to be just like them.
 2. He wants to also be like his father, seen in various scenes. Seita's father is resolute in every scene he is in, including in a memory of a naval review where his father can be seen on the ship he commands. These scenes and his love of his father reinforces this "be a strong man" ideal Seita follows.
 3. He can't feed Setsuko well due to this ideal, which makes him prideful, leading to her degraded health and eventual death, because he is insulted by his aunt's insults. He wants to "win", just like his idols and his father.
4. Comparisons between both films
 - a. War generally causes suffering.
 - i. Japan in *Grave of the Fireflies* is suffering from constant bombing raids, which is destroying homes and cities. The populace is slowly starving as less and less food is being farmed. In *Europa*, while the war has ended the population now needs to deal with the problems of occupation, as their industry is taken down while they live in bombed out ruins.
 1. One of the scenes includes the Hartmanns, the priest, and Leo watching as a shipyard's cranes are taken down.
 - b. Seita and the Werwolves
 - i. Both Seita and the boys grew up in their respective systems of militarization. While for the boys this led to supporting the Werwolves and assassinating the mayor, it led Seita into trying to model himself as an IJA soldier and becoming more prideful as a result, leading to the death of his sister.
5. Conclusion