

Independence day and before the rain

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



Before the Rain, and Independence Day are two films that greatly differ in an overall sense. Through direction, acting, plot of story, symbolism, and heart of story, I can clearly see the many differences, subtle similarities, and details to each film that exist. However, to delve into each film and study the differences, and measure the two as a whole, it becomes obvious to me that the contrast between Hollywood and Independent Cinema is a huge one.

Before the Rain is a European film that explores the tragic violence and unrest in the Balkans.

The main theme of the piece is that the violence and restlessness in this part of the World is a revolving vicious circle. In the very beginning we hear the quote that is repeated and constantly symbolized throughout the movie: "Time never dies. The circle is not round." The structure of the film is original, and different from most motion pictures' narrative. Divided into three parts, the movie does not follow in chronological order. We see the film open and close in Macedonia, and the beginning is actually the end. The middle section is in London, England, and this part of the film enables us to see the chaos of the theme.

That being the way violence will follow anywhere if the origins are present. With the theme of a "circle not round" apparent, I can sense that the order of the film represents the confusion and the spontaneous violence in Macedonia and Eastern Europe's problems. The first section of the film is Words, and this beginning is what will be evident later as the end of the film. We first see youngsters crowded around a circle, that is made up of stones, and other pieces of wood that is lit up to fire, burning what appears to be turtles.

This establishes early the circle of destruction that the movie represents. We move onto the Church of prayers and hymns that the Priest and worshippers are present. We see Kiril as one of the young Christian monks and as a main character. His innocence is clear through the eyes and consistent confusion and heartache he shows through his eyes. He has taken a vow of silence. A heart of the film is then introduced to us when we see Kiril's surprise, care, and warmth for the young girl who surprises him in his room.

After blessing himself for seeing female flesh, we see his worry and anxiety for the girl's needs. I see this as central to the film's theme. The love for another person, but the confusion and heartache of hiding, worrying, and anxiety of what bad will occur to the love, due to the region's strict violence and laws. We are shown the volatile hunters of Zamira the young woman, searching for her, and Kiril's despair and hope she is not found. It is here that I can see the Director's thoughtful choice of direction. He does not need to show constant dialogue, effects, or drama to create meaning.

The silence between young Kiril and Zamira's interaction and the worry of their needed deceit and cover-up used to hide from the violence of the nation's hate-filled vendettas of Zamira's hunters says enough of love, connection, and feeling. Roland Emmerich's Independence Day contrasts Before the Rain in the sense that special effects, and constant dialogue- that is consistently shallow and stereotypical- is a mainstay throughout the film's narrative. Emmerich shows us early the digitized effect of alien spaceship arriving upon earth.

As *Before the Rain* shows us that the circle of violence and despair is confusion and ridiculous, due to a Country's history of bad blood and fighting between religion and regions, *Independence Day's* symbolism is that the alien invasion of earth will destroy the world. Although both films' messages relate to impending doom, both are clearly different in meaning and thought. *Before the Rain's* funeral scene of mourners in the Words section shows us masses crying. As we see the funeral from an overhead shot the camera pans down, and we see a depth-of-field shot of the landscape amongst Macedonia's cultural setting.

Mountains and sparse wild land are in the background, and the director shows us this through the long-take to illustrate the beauty. However, I see the beauty contradicted with the funeral in the middle of the scene, symbolizing the center of the film's meaning: amongst the good of life, and a country's brilliant cultural nature, there is despair and death at the heart. All due to the guns, and fighting that we see throughout the Macedonia scenes. At the heart of *Independence Day* there are visual effects and stereotypes in society. We see a President make rallying cries of corny speeches, and father-daughter love, or should I say fakeness?

There is no real heart to this film, as opposed to Manchevski's direction. Though we do see one establishing shot of cultural landscape in *Independence*, similar to *Rain*. As Jeff Goldblum's character is sitting in the park playing chess, the camera pans down from afar to show the Manhattan skyline. The difference being the natural and wild of Balkan mountains in *Rain's* landscape contrasting with the manufactured and city life of a huge

Manhattan, with sky-rise buildings being the norm. The modernity and Hollywood flavor to Independence is evident from beginning to end.

We see constant cuts and visual images of computers of Government officials to Alien imagery through digital effects. Unlike Rain, that contains more realism through its natural shooting. Camera angles that are well thought-out from angles that enable us to see the culture in the depth of field combined with the real-time acting of characters. Independence does not establish any culture in the frames. Even when in Manhattan, showing thousands running from alien invasion, we do not see any social realities. There are no subsections of an everyday civilian and their daily routine of real life.

All we see is basic images of civilians amassed on screen, cut to White House stereotyped scenarios of President and officials, and hugging daughter. Obviously not as much social and cultural theme depth as presented in Rain. The violence and shooting of the cat on the roof in Words section, exemplifies the ridiculous extremes that the norm of violence erupts to. Independence does show us killing, but in a Hollywood fashion of flying Air Pilots, and explosions of aliens. Independence provides exciting visuals to those not interested in the realities of social life, and problems in culture.

Most of Rain's story however, is centered on the Pulitzer Prize winning photographer Aleksander. His involvement in the Bosnian crisis erupted due to his fall into taking sides. The London setting is the middle structure of the film, and this is when Aleks is introduced, as the female journalist's love interest. The photographs of the war-stricken travesties of the Balkans are

shown in the Anne's studio. The resulting despair of her affair with the Balkan Aleks tragically ends in the section with Anne's struggling marriage becoming killed when her husband is killed.

The eastern European gunman enters the restaurant and the troubles of the Balkans area is brought into another part of the World in London as the fury erupts even there. The vicious cycle again evident of a culture's downfall that spills into another culture illustrated in the restaurant scene.

Independence does not provide as much cultural meaning, but we do see cuts of various walks of American life. We see government officials doing the stereotypical press and media coverage, and then we see the contrast with the American civilians of New Mexico rural culture.

Randy Quaid's former fighter-pilot character shown among regulars in a deserted, quiet of a diner in New Mexico, trying to make sense of the alien chaos. But the sense is not much. We progress to see the ridiculous storyline developed into his fighting the aliens in a comeback to air fighting. Not exactly realism. Visual elements in rain are as real as life, with no special effects used; the only effects are those presented in real life. Seeing the graffiti on the street wall in London establishes the continuous theme. We see the words on the wall that echo the words heard earlier in the first section:

Time never dies; the circle is not round In the dinner scene between Anne and her husband, her explanation of needing a divorce for the Balkan Aleks is interrupted by ending depression as the husband is shot in the face by the crazed Balkan gunman. The close-up of the man's destroyed face is as

disgusting as the cat being blown to pieces in the first section of the film. And I can again relate the circle of never-ending craziness through the film's continued theme, no matter the difference of locations or characters. Independence Day's narrative structure is similar in that there is three sections titled " July 2" to " July 4".

But the structure does not contain the research and apparent deep conscious thought put into Rain's narrative. The Hollywood ideology is consistent of 'ABC'. There is little deep searching of script or direction. We go from the introduction of aliens coming, government scrambling, and sub characters' search to help the President, to the battles of spaceships, pilots, and aliens. The similarities between each film are once again limited, but comparison can be seen with the plot of impending doom arriving with the aliens' arrival.

Like Rain, there is doom derived from the way the skies are overtaken with the darkness of alien invasion. In rain we see the skies overridden with the darkness of the rain epitomizing the arrival of the circle of constant doom that surrounds that culture. The wave of aliens and the spacecraft that overtakes the skies in Independence does coincide with Rain's rain filled skies at the end of the third section in Macedonia. The doom above is embodied as the destruction that can override normal humane life. In Independence the meaning is more Hollywood in its delivery of direction and production as I further elaborate.

But there is no other reading of the film other than its simple dramatization of script and plot. We see the attack in the skies of aliens versus air pilots

and the "hero" Will Smith's, Stephen Hiller. Not much else to say other than Hollywood nonsense compared to Before the Rain's meanings of social dysfunction and the affects it has on life as a whole. Ideally, the main characters in Before the Rain are supposed to be as intricate as the story and the direction, but I see the few weaknesses in the film as character problems. The structure of the film's weird non-chronological narrative could be the main problem.

But the deep theme of the film's message of cultural history and problems is not carried by the characters' limited progress. Aleksander the photographer is supposed to be the sole of the film. I see him as the eyes of the innocence that exists amongst the chaos and absurdities of religious and zonal confrontations in the Balkans areas. But we only really see his character move along more shallow than abstract. Instead of seeing more emotions and plight from the character through circumstances of moving away from the Balkans to London, and back to Macedonia to help Zamira, we get limited emotions and just steady despair in his character.

Independence allows us to see simple characters that do not get any character meaning or progression due to the film's empowering visual effects and main plot of aliens and fighter jets. What seems like an action film is all that it really is an action film of moving images. Rain's search into cultural problems in Europe and the World at least provides meanings and symbolic reading into the real social and national problems that do exist in the World. Although the film details the Macedonian mindset, the whole can be taken as a reading of the whole crisis in that part of the World.

Released in the mid nineties, at a time of Bosnian, and Balkan devastation, the film looks into the problems that exist through hatred installed through tradition. Even when in London, we see the crisis continue due to the circle of despair never dying. Not is all what it seems it appears. And this I feel is the main point of the film. The circle of life is not as plain as the circular shape. Instilled problems created through culture, social, and traditional problems and events can always provide circular devastation.

Devastation seen in Before the Rain, circular, only in the sense that cultural negativity will always come around and around. There is no real comparison between Hollywood's Independence Day, and Milcho Manchevski's Before the Rain. The blockbuster hit of a film like Independence Day is for an audience that wants to see images and experiences on screen that enables them to go off into a World of non reality. Rain's story and meanings, allows viewers to use their intelligence and mind to explore cultural situations that do exist in real life.

An examination of a deprived area like the Balkans and the history of war-torn Bosnia of the 1990's, Before the Rain is not a Hollywood blockbuster. No aliens and spaceships. The ideology is not of gaining masses of pop-culture kids and Hollywood enthusiasts. I delve more into Before the Rain film simply because I can relate to the inner meanings more than I can to things that do not exist. A film that tries to gain attention to real culture, life moments that can become and devastate, and a real culture's real life.