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**DAVID
THORBURN:**

This afternoon, by welcoming our virtual audience, the audience that's looking at this lecture on MIT'S OpenCourseWare, some of you attentive viewers may notice what the students here would not notice-- that seven years have elapsed. There's no podium-- some of you may have gotten that-- and a much older professor. I hope that our completion of these lectures seven years later will not result in a reduced or less energetic performance. I'll do my best.

We come now to the end of our first segment in the course on silent film. And I thought it would be helpful to use today's lecture in part to create some perspectives on both the silent film, the idea of the silent film-- not just the particular films we've looked at, but more generally the phenomenon of silent film, the whole phenomenon-- and some perspectives that will also help us look forward to what will follow, to the sound films that will follow this week.

I'd like in a certain way to do this by complicating an idea I've already suggested to you about the notion of the film as a cultural form. What does it actually mean to say that a film is a cultural form? What, in a concrete sense, does this phrase signify? Well, one answer I think I can offer by drawing on your own experience.

My guess is that all of you have watched older films, films from 20 or 30 or 40 years ago, and immediately been struck as soon as you began to watch the film by certain kinds of differences that the original filmmakers would have been oblivious to. And I'm talking about things like the hairdos of people, the clothing that they wear, the way automobiles look, or even a world in which there are no automobiles, the physical environment that is shown.

One of the things that this reminds us of is that always, even the most surreal and imaginative and science-fictiony films, always inevitably in some deep way, in some essential ways, reflect the society from which they come. They may reflect more than that, and they may be influenced by other factors as well, but they are expressions of the culture that gave rise to them in certain really essential ways.

And one of the things this means, among other significance, one of the most interesting

aspects of this recognition is the fact that films get richer over time. They become artifacts of immense anthropological interest, even if they're terrible films, because they show us what the world of 50 or 25 or 30 years ago actually looked like and how people walked and how people combed their hair and what kind of makeup they wore, all of the things, many of the things, which in many respects, the people making the original film would simply have taken for granted as part of the reality they were trying to dramatize.

So one way of thinking about film as a cultural form is to recognize that as films grow older, they create meaning. They become more interesting. They become richer, and a corollary implication of this idea that films become richer is that the meaning of any individual artifact, cultural artifact, especially cultural artifacts as complex as films, is always in process. But the meaning is never fully fixed or finished, that new significance and new meanings emerge from these texts with the passage of time, as if the texts themselves undergo a kind of transformation.

One final point about this, just to sort of tweak your broader understanding of these kinds of questions-- one of the kinds of transitions that occurs with particular artifacts is they sometimes move or make a kind of transition from being recognized as merely ordinary and uninteresting parts of the society from which they grow, from which they emerge, simply ordinary routine aspects of the experience of society. Later ages may value these routine objects as profoundly valuable works of art.

And in a certain sense, one could say that the film in the United States underwent a transition of that kind, that at a certain point in the history of our understanding of movies, American culture began to recognize that movies were actually works of art, that they deserved comparison with novels and plays and poems and so forth, probably an idea that all of you folks take for granted. Many of members of your generation admire movie directors more than they do novelists and poets-- a radical mistake it seems to me, but that's my literary bias showing through. I certainly admire great directors certainly as much as I do good novelists.

But the fact is that this is really not the case. This recognition of the film as an artistic object, as I've suggested earlier in the course, is not some fixed or stable identity that the film has had from the beginning. It's an identity that the film has garnered, that has been laid on the film later as cultural changes have occurred and as other forms of expression have emerged that have put the film in a kind of different position hierarchically from other kinds of imaginative expressions.

And as I've already suggested many times in this course, we'll come back to this principle, because it's such a central historical fact about the nature, the content of American movies especially. It's the advent of television that is partly responsible for the transformation, although it takes some time for the transformation in American attitudes toward what movies are, because television became the throwaway item, the routine item, the thing Americans experienced every day. And the consequence of that was to change our understanding of what the film was.

Now of course, the Europeans had an insight like this long before the Americans did, and that's something I'll talk about a bit later today and also at other times in our course. So that's one way of thinking about what it means to say that a film is a cultural form. It means that it's unstable in the sense that its meanings are not fixed, and the way in which a culture categorizes and understands a particular artifact is also something that's unstable, that undergoes change over time.

But there are other ways to think about this problem of film as a cultural formation, as an expression of society, and I want to tease out some of those meanings for you as well. One way to come at this problem is to think of a kind of tension or even contention between our recognition that film is a global form-- that is to say that because the movies are watched across national boundaries, movies that are made in the United States can influence movies that are made in Europe and vice versa.

So in one sense, the film, especially after film got going within the first 10 years of its life, it had become an international phenomenon, and American films were watched in Europe, and European films influenced American directors, even at very early stages so that we begin to get certain kinds of films that certainly appealed across national boundaries. And so there is a kind of global dimension to what film might be.

And there's another way of thinking about what it means to talk about film as a global phenomenon, not as a merely national expression. And that has to do specifically with the way in which particular directors and films in particular societies can influence world cinema. And from the very earliest days of cinema, as I suggested, this has been a reality. As David Cook's *History of Narrative Film* informs you, and I hope you'll read the assigned chapters on Russian film closely, because I can only skim these topics in my lecture.

What you'll discover among other things is that the great American director, DW Griffith, had a

profound impact on Russian films and that, in fact, at a certain point in the history of Russian films, there was a workshop run by a man named Kuleshov, who actually took DW Griffith's movies and disassembled them shot by shot and studied the editing rhythms in his workshop. This had a profound impact not only on Russian cinema, but Griffith's practices had a profound impact on virtually all filmmakers.

And there's a kind of reverse influence, because certain Russian directors, Eisenstein especially, but also Dziga Vertov, their work had a profound impact on the films from Western Europe and from the United States. So it's a two-way process. It's too simple to say that particular films are only an expression of French culture or only an expression of Russian culture or only an expression of American culture. They are also global phenomena, and they were global phenomena from almost the earliest stages.

So it's important to recognize this tension or this balance. There are dimensions of film that reach across national boundaries. And as we've already suggested, one of the explanations for the success of American movies in the United States was in part a function of the fact that they did not require language in nearly the same degree. They were visual experiences, and an immigrant population coming into the large cities of the United States at the turn of the century was one of the primary factors that helps to explain the phenomenal quick growth of the movies from a novelty into a profound embedded cultural experience.

So it is a global phenomenon in a certain way and reaches across national boundaries. But there's also-- and we need to acknowledge this side of the equation too-- there's also a profound, a really deep fundamental sense in which films, at least until very recently, are an expression of the individual national cultures from which they come. I say until very recently, because some of you must be aware of the fact that a new kind of film is being made now by which I mean a film that seems to appeal across all national boundaries, that doesn't seem to have a decisive national identity.

At least some films like that. I think the Bollywood people are making films like this. Americans are certainly making films like this now. And sometimes if you think of some of the action adventure films that will have a cast that is drawn from different cultures, a sort of multiethnic and multilingual cast, all of them dubbed into whatever language the film is being exhibited in, you'll see an example.

What's begun to emerge now in our 21st century world is a kind of movie that already

conceives of itself as belonging to a kind of global culture. So far I'm not sure these movies have as much artistic interest as one would like, but it's a new phenomenon, and the globalizing tendencies of digital technology are certainly encouraging new ways to think about the origins or the central sources of movies.

But until very recently, it is still the case that virtually every film made in any society reflected in deep and fundamental ways aspects of that society. And one of the reasons that this is such an important thing to recognize is it means that, especially in cultures like the European societies and those in the United States, the movies are profoundly illuminating source of cultural and social history. Even if they had no artistic interest, they would be worth teaching and studying. And the fact that some of them are luminous works of art makes teaching them a particular pleasure, a particular joy, a real vocation.

So if we talk about films as a national expression, what we're talking about here is the extent to which the assumptions about personal relationships and the assumptions about the way society operates are going to be grounded in culturally, socially specific phenomena, socially specific practices. And we're also talking not just about the content of movies, but also about the structure of the industries which end up providing movies to the public.

And part of what I want to at least allude to today in the lectures and materials that we're looking at today is to crystallize or concretize this idea that the variations that are possible within the broad universe of the cinema so that, for example, the individual and atomistic system that developed in the United States for the production of movies, the capitalist arrangements that developed in the United States for the development of movies, are in many ways radically different from the systems that were developed in some European societies or in the Soviet Union. And there's a particular contrast with the Soviet Union, which developed movies in a quite different way and had a quite different notion about them.

The emergence of the movies coincides in some degree with the turmoil in the Soviet Union. The Russian Revolution is 1917. Movies become a central source of information and propaganda for the emerging of Soviet culture. Lenin called movies our greatest art form, because he understood how important they were in promulgating certain ideals and embedding those ideals in the society.

And in fact, there were not in Russia a series of independent companies that produced films. There was a top-down arrangement in which the government controlled filmmaking. It doesn't

mean that they didn't make remarkable and interesting films, but it was a different system. It was a top-down system.

We had central government financing in which the genres in Soviet films could be said to have had what we might call rhetorical sources. For example, a revolution story is one genre of Russian film, celebrating the heroic struggle of the people. There were even sort of genres that we might call building genres or creating genres, and they were about creating a farm or building a skyscraper. And the film was put in the service by the Soviet state, was put in the service of this emerging society. It was understood as a system that would mobilize mass social forces for the betterment of society.

And these differences in attitudes and in the ways films are financed and who makes the decisions about what films will go forward, of course, has a profound impact on the nature of those movies. Our demonstration instance today will be one of the most famous passages from Eisenstein's *Potemkin* to demonstrate some of the, in a much more concrete way, some of the implications of this difference between American and Russian film that I'm suggesting.

There also profound differences, and I'll develop this argument a little more fully to this evening when we shift over to the great German silent film that we're going to look at tonight. There are profound differences between the American and German systems of moviemaking and attitudes toward the making of movies. And I'll elaborate on some of those notions later today in the evening lecture.

But for the moment then, suffice it to say that virtually all movies are going to reveal or are going to embody the values and assumptions of the culture from which they come, that that makes them anthropological artifacts of profound significance and distinguishes French film from British film from American film in ways that continue to be illuminating and significant.

But there's certain other contrasts or potential tensions in this notion of film as a cultural form that I'd also like to develop or spend a little bit more time on. One of them is the notion that there's a profound, even a fundamental difference, more broadly, not just between French and American cinema, but between all forms of European cinema and the American version. And this is a principle we'll talk about more this evening, but I want to allude to it now.

One of the ways to crystallize this is to remind you of something we've already talked about briefly in the course, which is the migration of filmmaking from the east coast to the west coast in the early days of filmmaking in the United States, the flight of filmmakers to California. And

we've talked a little bit about why that's a significant transformation and a significant move. But perhaps, the most important aspect of this historical fact, the migration of the movies to the west coast, is that what this meant is that the movies in the United States were able to develop in a culture whose intellectual and artistic and cultural authorities were on the east coast, as far away as possible from where movies were developing.

In other words, the American movie is much more fundamentally in its emergence a popular form, a form that has no consciousness of itself as a work of art. It knows that what it's trying to do is make money and entertain people, and the earliest-- very early, there were some directors like DW Griffith who recognized the artistic importance of movies. I don't mean there weren't directors who recognized it. Chaplin surely thought of himself as making works of art, especially later in his career.

But the fact is the American movies begin on the farthest Western verge of the society. Nothing developed there. New York is the cultural center. Boston is a cultural center. Maybe we could even say some of the great Midwestern cities have some kind of cultural authority, but there's nothing on the west coast. And what that means is that all the writers, all the dramatists, all the actors, all the theater actors, all the poets, all the musicians-- they were in the East. They lived in New York, and there was a kind of freedom that this imparted to American movies.

And this is a very sharp contrast with the development of almost all forms of European cinema, partly because the cultures are literally geographically more limited, unlike the vast expanse of the United States. But also because of the much stronger traditions in these European societies of high culture, the much stronger respect in these societies for theater and for poetry and for prose narrative.

In the European societies, and this was especially true in Germany, but it was true in some degree in every European society, including the Soviet Union, there was a sense that the movies were emerging in the shadow of older art forms whose greatness and grandeur shadowed, menaced this emerging form. And in a way, the distinction I'm mentioning, the difference I'm mentioning, accounts both for the limitations and for the glories of both kinds of film, because if the European film was more static-- and we'll talk much more.

I'll give you some examples of this tonight. If the European film was more static, it was less cinematic in a way in its early years, because it thought of itself as emerging from literature,

from theater, from poetry. And in fact, some of the important early German filmmakers especially were people who came from theater, and they had theatrical notions of what art was.

We'll talk more about this this evening. So because that was true, the glory of the early European cinema was its recognition that it could be artistically powerful, its sense that it was talking about important subjects. But of course, the limitations were that it was often very boring visually, that it was serious, but not a movie, that it didn't exploit the properties of the medium nearly as quickly. It didn't try to explore the unique properties of the medium nearly as quickly, in part because it was so in thrall to inherited ideas of artistic value and artistic expression.

This isn't entirely a disadvantage, as I said, because it also imparted to European filmmakers a sense of dignity and the importance of their enterprise that served them well in certain ways and made them pick ambitious subjects. And you'll see the outcome, the final outcome, once the European film was liberated into a greater cinematic freedom. And I'll show you an example or two tonight of that. It became something immensely rich in part because it had this legacy of high art behind it and high artistic ambitions.

The United States' story is almost the opposite. In the United States, there was a kind of glorious sense of having no responsibility toward older art forms. There was something exuberant, experimental, joyous, unembarrassed about early American films. They didn't think of themselves as artwork, so it gave them a kind of freedom. They were also vulgar as hell. They were often trivial and silly. They often had limited artistic ambitions, but they explored the nature of the medium in a way that became the legacy of movies and a legacy that was communicated to other societies as well.

Well, this distinction then between American and European cinema is something I'll develop a little bit more fully with examples this evening. But it's a crucial distinction. It's a crucial difference, and it tells us a lot about both forms of filmmaking.

There's one final tension that I want to mention here. We'll return to it again when we come to look at *Singing in the Rain* later in the course, which dramatizes this subject among others. There's another kind of tension implicit in what I've already said, which is the tension between what we might call popular culture, notions of culture that are enjoyed by the masses, by everyone as against high culture like opera and poetry and theater, which only the educated

people go to. And this tension is especially important-- it's important in many films-- but it's an especially important tension in American movies.

And one of things that we will come back to in different ways as we think about these American films is the way in which very often, American films position themselves as the antagonist of high culture. And there are many films that actually do that, and some of the Marx Brothers films systematically dismantle the objects of high culture.

There's one Marx Brothers film called *A Night at the Opera*, which takes place in an opera, and the whole set comes crashing down. The whole place falls apart in the course of the film, acting out a kind of aggression against the older art form. And this is a tension also that we will see played out in some of the films we're going to be looking at a bit later in the course.

So this notion of Hollywood as the embodiment of a certain kind of demotic vigor and populist energy is a helpful way of thinking about how, especially in the early years, American film was somewhat different from European film, and how it also very aggressively was happy to distinguish itself from established art forms.

I want to take a quick, what will appear to be a digression, but actually isn't. I want to talk a bit now about two crucial terms that will be useful in our discussions of the matters I've already raised and some other matters that will come up later in the course, and then return after clarifying these terms to an example from *Battleship Potemkin*, Eisenstein's most famous film, to demonstrate something of what I mean by the principles of top-down organization and film as propaganda that I was talking about earlier, as well as calling your attention to some of the artistic innovations that we still attribute to Sergei Eisenstein.

The two terms I want to discuss are the terms montage and mise en scene. They're contrasting elements of what is in all movies. In a certain way, the term montage and the term mise en scene describe the most essential features of what movies are. Mise en scene, a term drawn from the theater, which literally, it's a French word. It literally means what is put or placed in the scene, what is in the scene.

Mise en scene refers to the single shot, to what goes on within the single continuous unedited shot of film, the frame of film, however long it lasts. And the mise en scene of that shot is virtually everything inside that frame. In other words, even how the actors move in the frame is part of the mise en scene, but especially, the mise en scene emphasizes what is the environment like, what's the furniture like, what's the relation between the foreground, the

middle ground, and the background.

And in mise en scene, the emphasis is on the composition within the frame, and sometimes very great directors will compose their frames with such subtlety that if you freeze them, they look like paintings. They're balanced or unbalanced if that's the artist's intention in particularly artistic and complex ways.

So we can think of this in some sense almost as having a kind of painterly equivalent. What goes on in the scene within? The other great term, montage, which is also a French term, comes from the verb the French verb monter, which means to assemble or to put together. And a montage means what is put together, what is edited, what is linked together.

So a montage means the editing of continuous shots in a sequence. So the montage of a film is the rhythm of its editing. So all films have both elements in them, and in fact, we need to be aware of both of them. When we look at a film, it's often very helpful to ask yourself questions about the rhythm of the editing, to pay attention to how long the shots are held, to the way the film is edited. Again, the Eisenstein example we're going to look at in a minute will give you some dramatic instances of why manipulating the editing and the montage can be so dramatic and so signifying.

So there's a kind of convention that has developed, and though it radically simplifies in some ways, it's a simplification that's immensely instructive. One way you can talk about directors is to categorize them as montage directors or mise en scene directors. Mise en scene directors-- I'm oversimplifying, remember, because there's montage in every film. So a mise en scene director can be a master of editing too, and a director that we identify as a montage director certainly has to know how to manipulate his mise en scene.

So it's not as if one kind of director doesn't do the other thing, but what it does try to signify, what it does try to indicate is that directors we call montage directors are directors whose effects come in a central way from the way they edit the film, from the quickness of their editing, from the way their editing manipulates or controls meaning in some sense.

And we therefore would think of montage directors-- Eisenstein is a classic example. Hitchcock is probably the contemporary example, near contemporary example, that most of you might have in mind, in which the editing of the film, the quickness with which the shots develop, the way the music is superimposed on the editing rhythm, to increase your emotional response to the film. What we would say is that that's what a montage director embodies.

So if we say that Hitchcock is a montage director, what we mean is that most of his most profound meanings come from the way in which he edits his film. And a contrast would be, let's say, with a director like the director we're going to see in a few weeks later in the term, Jean Renoir, a realistic director who might be called much more fully a mise en scene director, because he does edit. His editing rhythms are subtle, but he's interested in long takes.

Montage directors like short takes, shots that last only a short time. In the most dramatic segments of the segment from *Battleship Potemkin* that I'm going to show you this afternoon in a few minutes, sometimes the edits are so brief that they don't even last a second and a half. The average number of shots in the film as a whole, in *Battleship Potemkin* as a whole, the shots last four seconds. That's not very long.

In a Renoir film, they might last 10, 15 seconds, sometimes much longer than that. That's a very long time for a shot to be held, and if a shot is held that long, it means the camera will move, action will occur in it, but it'll still be a single shot. And can you see that if you hold the shot for that time, and the camera moves like this, what is it encouraging?

It's encouraging you to think about the relation between characters and the environment. It's encouraging a kind of realistic response to what the film is showing you, whereas if you're looking at a film in which the cuts occur every two seconds, you don't have time to sort of take in what's the relation between the actor and the furniture.

You're disoriented, and in fact, Hitchcock often brought his editing to a point just below the threshold of disorientation. When Eisenstein was theorizing about the power of editing-- he was one of the first great film theorists-- he talked about the way in which you could control an audience physiologically by manipulating montage. And it's true. You can, as you will know, and something that fascist societies are fully aware of and make use of.

So this distinction between montage and mise en scene is immensely useful, and in some degree, if you apply the terms generously and tactfully, you can learn something about every film you look at by thinking about how these elements work in the film. I want to turn now to arguably, certainly one of the most famous films in the history of cinema and to a particular fragment from the film or an extended one, which I think embodies and will help clarify many of the abstract ideas I've just been suggesting to you.

Let me say a word about the film. The film *Battleship Potemkin* was produced in 1925 at a

point when Eisenstein was now at the height of his power and authority. And it commemorates a moment in an abortive revolution of 1905 so that by the time Eisenstein came to make the film, *Battleship Potemkin* was kind of like a founding story, or at least, it was about an abortive founding that would then occur years later.

What it dramatized was a historical fact. There was a rebellion by the crew of the Battleship Potemkin against its officers, and it the battleship sailed into the port of Odessa, and its mutineers were welcomed by the people in the port of Odessa. And then the czar, angry that his Navy and his Naval officers had been mutinied against, sent soldiers to Odessa to decimate not just the mutineers, but the population of Odessa.

And so the film, it was understood in a way, it was a revolutionary document or an attempt to sort of create a kind of founding myth for Russian society, because everyone watching the film would have known that the real revolution occurred only whatever it was, 12 or 13 years later, and that this was a kind of rehearsal. And so the film would have had a kind of patriotic aura for its audience.

So the passage I'm going to show you is the famous passage. I think David Cook calls this the most famous montage sequence in the history of cinema. It was certainly profoundly influential, and as we're watching it, I may interrupt it to say a few things as you're watching, but I'll try not to do too much interruption. What I want you to watch for especially is not only-- I will have to make some commentary-- as you're watching it, among other things, watch for the way in which the length of the shots or the time between shots varies.

And as this passage begins to increase in intensity and terror, the cuts become even briefer. And then watch also the way in which certain other strategies of Eisenstein's reinforce these montage strategies. For example, where the camera is positioned. Is it looking up at a character, or is it looking down? And very different thing. If you look up, you enlarge, and you mythify. If you look down, you humiliate and minimize. Watch how he does that sort of thing. You'll find it, I think, very illuminating and significant.

The sequence is often seen today, and rightfully, I suppose, as deeply heavy-handed, because you're not allowed when you're looking at this film to have an alternative view of things. The film doesn't leave you room. Eisenstein's strategies don't leave you room for independent judgment. You're immersed in a spectacle so emotional and so wrenching that you don't have time to sort of sit back and think and come to conclusions.

And one could say that this is one of the great differences between montage directors and mise en scene directors. Not an accident most horror movies, all horror movies really, are a form of montage, because your feelings are being manipulated. You're not supposed to be allowed to sit back and say how ridiculously implausible these events are. If that happened, it would spoil the film.

We'll come back to these things. So here is the Odessa step sequence from the *Battleship Potemkin*.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

These are the Odessans welcoming the mutineers. One of the things that Eisenstein was fond of was a theory of montage that was based on two principles. One he called typage, typage-- T-Y-P-A-G-E. And what he meant by typage was the idea that there were ethnic, very racist in a way, that there were ethnic and social types that could be recognized visually. So he would type. So he felt, if I show you this face, you'll know he's a working class character. If I show you a woman with a parasol, you'll know that she belongs to the upper classes. And in fact, he's probably right about that.

Here are the czar's forces, come to punish the mutineers and the city of Odessa. So the soldiers are on top, and they're forcing people down the steps, and they are presumably shooting them. . Kristen, freeze it for a second.

I don't want to distract you by talking while it's running, so let me interrupt it for a second and say something else about the way the film works. One of the things Eisenstein understood was-- and it's actually a brilliant discovery. He realized that he could create through his strategies, especially of dramatic editing, he could create a situation in which the actual time of the experience that you're watching was not real time, but was what might be called emotional time. That is to say what's happening here, it's probably in the film taking longer than it took in reality, because in moments of horror, the horror is extended. And watch how those kinds of rhythms operate in the film. OK.

Seems like a naive hope. Freeze it again, Kristen. One other quick observation. I hope you recognize how artful this is, even if you're not moved in the way the original audiences would have been. I think contemporary audiences often feel it's too heavy-handed.

They resist the extent to which the film is manipulating them, but think back to the earliest days of film. What an unbelievable, shocking, incredibly exciting experience it must have been for early film-goers to have an experience that-- certainly for the Russian audience, but I think for every audience-- that was so intense and so emotionally powerful, so full of fear and violence that can be evoked by the rhythms of the editing, by the music, by how close-- I hope you noticed the way he mixes in closeups in incredibly powerful ways trying to create certain effects.

Again, you're not given a choice about how to feel about this. You can descend from it by withdrawing your interest, but you can't say, oh, I really love those soldiers who were doing the shooting. Let's make a case for them. The film won't allow you to do that, will it? In that sense, it's manipulating you, but it's telling us a story about the creation of a revolutionary society.

Finally, remember, I said that this is a question about emotional time as against real time. Think how long this has been going on. You think that this massacre is over, but in fact, it's only half over, as you'll see. There's going to be a moment when horse-mounted cossacks, horsemen, show up at the bottom of the steps and get them in a pincher. Go on.

I don't think this soundtrack is the original soundtrack. It's very good though. This is a brilliant moment. I don't know whether we can attribute this to Eisenstein or not when suddenly the music stops. There should be sound now. Maybe something wrong with our print.

I wanted to wait at least until you saw this, because some of you may recognize this moment as something that's been copied in recent American movies, a kind of allusion or a reference to this scene. The moment I wanted you to think about is this baby carriage.

OK. Thanks, Kristen. Blood in the eyeglasses-- can you think of a movie in which you've seen that recently? Maybe not that recently. It's actually an ancient film now by your standards. How about *The Godfather*? There's a wonderful scene in *The Godfather* where a guy looks up from a massage table, and he's shot through the eyeglasses.

Very memorable moment. It's surely an allusion to this movie, but how about the carriage going down? There have been several films that actually recreate that moment, but the one I'm thinking of-- Who is it?

AUDIENCE: *The Untouchables.*

DAVID Yes. From *The Untouchables*. Who's the director? Do you remember? Yes. Brian De Palma's

THORBURN:

film, *The Untouchables*, has a moment just like that. And De Palma, of course, is a kind of historian of movies. Virtually every scene in a De Palma film is a reference or an allusion to an earlier film. And part of the importance of *Battleship Potemkin* is that it is still a fruitful and fructifying source of imagery for contemporary filmmakers.

So let me conclude then by simply reminding you that, as Cook suggests in his book, this is the single most influential montage sequence in cinema history, and that it's a wonderful instance for us, I think, of the way in which film in a different kind of culture, in an authoritarian culture, in a revolutionary culture, full of moral fervor, would be conceived both as an apparatus, as an engine of social transformation by a society that controlled film in a way fundamentally different from the way in which film developed, let's say, in the United States. We will continue these arguments, and I hope complicate them this evening.