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Migration – Memory – Translingualism: Akira Kurosawa's Adaptation of Vladimir Arseniev's *Dersu Uzala* (1975)

The film *Dersu Uzala* (1975), Akira Kurosawa's adaptation of the diaries and memoirs of the Russian explorer of Siberia Vladimir Arseniev, represents one of the director's many attempts to make his cinema into Japan's entryway into the global community of nations. The price of this entry is the acknowledgement as well as forgetting of uncomfortable historical facts. Kurosawa's film is dedicated to a friendship between the Russian officer Arseniev and his guide, the nomad Dersu, in the course of Arseniev's exploration of Siberia in 1902-1907. By celebrating the enabling and productive potential of translinguistic and transcultural misunderstandings, Kurosawa overturns the colonial hierarchy of values and understanding of transmission of knowledge. His cinematic memorial to a Nanai tribesman acknowledges and laments Japan's participation in the extermination of the minority peoples of the Manchukuo state and in the destruction of pre-industrial pan-Asian Siberia.



Olga Solovieva is Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Chicago. Her work brings into dialogue texts and concepts from numerous disciplines, including literature, film, religious studies, art history, philosophy and law. She is interested in what can "be done with words": this leads her to focus on the history of rhetoric, performance, communication, interdisciplinary narratology, and media studies, particularly in their material and corporeal aspects. Her book, *Christ's Subversive Body*:



Practices of Religious Rhetoric in Culture and Politics (Northwestern University Press, 2017), is dedicated to the diachronic and interdisciplinary methodology of comparison. Her current book projects, "The Russian Kurosawa" and "Thomas Mann's Russia," examine the political, philosophical and mediating function of the reception of Russian literature in East and West.