ON THE MOVE:
MIGRATION AND MOBILITY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND EURASIA

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ABSTRACTS
UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT PANEL

Katie Ayanian, International & Area Studies, Washington University in St. Louis
Conflict Management in the Southern Caucasus: National Narratives and Geo-politics

The complicated history of the Southern Caucasus has made this one of the most conflict-ridden regions in the world. The geopolitical conquests between the Russian, Ottoman and Persian Empires, over the past 500 years caused massive population upheavals of locals and greatly limited opportunities for regional self-governance. The Azerbaijanis, Armenians, and Georgians, the three largest ethnic groups in the Southern Caucasus, trace their ancestral ties to this area back almost two centuries. These three distinct ethnic groups have mobilized to form their own nation-states at various times throughout history, but they did not last long before they were defeated by the much larger neighboring empires. It was not until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s that Armenians, Azerbaijanis and Georgians established permanent independent states. The establishment of independent states in the Caucasus was a great achievement, but once again brought up the ongoing territorial dispute over control of Nagorno-Karabakh. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan lay claims to this enclave near the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, and this dispute has fostered a hostile political climate between the two states. While international actors have made some attempts to mediate the conflict, they have been largely ineffective in ameliorating the situation. Until there is a catalyst in the international community that pushes for a peaceful resolution of the Karabakh quarrel, it is likely that Armenia will continue to control this disputed territory.

Erin Humphries, International & Area Studies, Washington University in St. Louis
Understanding Russian Decision-Making in Kosovo and Georgia

During the NATO Intervention in Kosovo in 1999, Russia decried the violation of Serbian sovereignty and territorial integrity without UN authorization. But in South Ossetia nine years later it unilaterally intervened and violated Georgian sovereignty and territorial integrity. How can a country that was so staunchly supportive of the inviolability of one state take what appears to be precisely the opposite position with another less than a decade later? Through an exploration and application of Mearsheimer's Offensive Realism theory, Wendt's Constructivist theory, and national narratives, this paper seeks to understand Russian motivation for its involvement in both Kosovo and Georgia with a particular focus on the Russian relationship with NATO and the West.

Matthew Lee, International & Area Studies, Washington University in St. Louis
Afghanistan’s Bane: The Crippling Legacy of the Durand Line

Established in 1893 as part of the Durand Agreement between Britain and Afghanistan, the Durand Line formed the border between Afghanistan and what is now Pakistan. Immediately controversial, as it split the Pashtun tribal areas in the region, the demarcation was an effort by the British to weaken the ethnic group’s power in Afghanistan. The Durand Line was also quickly made irrelevant, and remains so today, as few people living in the area recognize its existence in any practical sense. This porous nature of the Durand Line has had a significant impact on the history and development of Afghanistan. In the 1980s, thousands of mujahideen flowed back and forth across the Line in order to wage jihad against the Soviet invaders. Today, Taliban militants follow this pattern in their insurgency against the United States and the fledgling Afghan state. This paper seeks to examine the legacy of the Durand Line, its current impact on the enduring conflict in Afghanistan, and how it will continue to shape the future of the country.
Mobility, Technology Transfer, and Material Culture at the Heart of Eurasia: Prehistoric Nomads of Kazakhstan

This paper presents archaeological data on prehistoric pottery production in Kazakhstan, to address questions about what regional traditions in material culture can convey about society, and how technical knowledge is transferred among geographically remote communities. Around 4000 years ago a shared material tradition emerged across much of central Eurasia, which marked a prelude to the widespread socio-economic ties characteristic of the region today. Known as the Bronze Age, this early period in Eurasia’s prehistory comprised of small-scale and geographically dispersed nomadic herding communities who engaged in a number of material industries, such as potting, metallurgy, and weaving. With very few urban centers, much of prehistoric material production would have operated in non-industrial, domestic environments. The vast body of material culture has attracted a great deal of scholarly interest, with archaeological investigations on the Bronze Age reaching back to the 19th century CE. However, archaeologists barely comprehend what the material culture demonstrates about the everyday life and organization of these early pastoral societies, or how they were connected. Scientific research of artifacts and their production is required to expand the discourse on mobility and technology transfer in this geographic region. The pottery data presented here was analyzed using newly developed scientific methods designed for identifying the nature of preindustrial craft production technologies. This research aims to draw prehistoric archeology of central Eurasia into contemporary and cross-disciplinary discussions about how society at the local scale is impacted by growing participation in the global economy.

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“In unserem Kreise” Czech-Jewish Activism and Immigration in America, 1939-94

A small cohort of Czech-Jewish activists in America struggled publicly with nostalgia and loss after fleeing Nazism and Communism. Edified during the war by support from major Jewish organizations, they took it upon themselves to speak for Czechoslovak Jewry. Then, with the advent of the Cold War, they turned their attention to tending the memory of their lost homeland, understood both geographically and temporally. This study first addresses their immigration patterns, their motivations, their visions for the future, and then distinguishes them from other Czechoslovak-Jewish immigrants. Next, it follows the evolution, not only of their activities, but of their relationship with their past, as they slowly and painfully relinquished it to history. In doing so, this study suggests much about silent processes that affected a broader spectrum of Jewish immigrants to the United States of America in the middle of the twentieth century. It also demonstrates the significant impact that larger Jewish institutions had in cultivating, shaping, and then abandoning Jewish national communities there.
Panel I – Visions of Mobility

Jan Musekamp, European University Viadrina and Washington University in St. Louis

Paris – St. Petersburg: Shrinking Spaces in the 19th Century

Today, airplanes cover the 1,750 miles between St. Petersburg and Paris in about three hours. For contemporaries two hundred years ago, it took weeks by coach and boat to get from the Russian to the French capital. I argue that the transportation and communication innovations of the 19th century and their gradual implementation had even more dramatic globalizing effects than had airplanes, cars, and innovations in communication in the 20th century. Not only did they change mobility patterns but also the horizons and identity of Europeans who by the end of the century could make use of a dense transportation network spanning the whole of Europe.

In a first step I challenge the view that it was not until the railroad that revolutionary changes in transportation occurred. I will focus on the improvements before the triumph of the “iron horse”, giving an overview over the changing cross-border mobility of goods, people, and ideas prior to 1840, with a special focus on France, Prussia, and Russia. Thus, starting in the early 1800s, a new system of canals, highways, stagecoaches, and steamboats already facilitated transportation a lot and introduced patterns we usually associate with the rail, just as schedules, fixed ticket prices, and conduct rules.

In a second step, I have a closer look on how the railroad accelerated a “shrinking of spaces” between Paris and St. Petersburg. Originally not planned to connect the European countries and their people and economies, already by the late 1860s a dense network of cross-border railroad lines brought France, Prussia and subsequently Russia closer together. The new means of transportation drastically reduced travel times of passengers, goods, and thus ideas, leading by the late 19th century to an increasingly globalizing world.

I close with an outlook on some of the areas most touched by the so-called transport revolution, and that I deal with in my broader research agenda.

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Harriet Murav, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Technology, the City, and Literature: Bergelson and Shklovsky in Berlin

In the aftermath of the Russian Civil War, many prominent artists and intellectuals from Russia migrated to Berlin. Among them were the essayist and Futurist critic Viktor Shklovsky and the Yiddish fiction author David Bergelson. Each of these writers was acutely aware of his temporary dislocation; clear parallels can be traced between their respective fiction and nonfiction reflections on this dimension of their experience. Berlin offered urban mass phenomena and technological sophistication that is well-documented in the literature on the city in the 1920s. Berlin itself provided a fresh impetus for the literary experimentation evident in Shklovsky and Bergelson's writing from this period. Shklovsky had already written his critical manifesto "Art as Device" before arriving in Berlin; however, he developed and elaborated this concept in his Berlin era work, in which literary and technological devices are linked. Bergelson, like Shklovsky, was fascinated by the technological innovations of his time. His 1929 fiction work Mides ha-din (The Harshness of the Law) tells the story of a heroic Bolshevik who dies in the attempt to establish the new Bolshevik order in a border town. The novel uses several avant-garde literary devices that may be traced to his experience of Berlin. My paper explores the intersection of technology, migration, and literary innovation in Shklovsky and Bergelson, using Kracauer and Simmel as a theoretical point of departure.

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In 1899, the Varsovian civil engineer Emil Sokal wrote “in the West, they maintain that time is money; here it seems that time still has little value, yet there will come a time of change when rapid locomotion will prove invaluable, and the automobile will become an extraordinary benefit for us by replacing the train in many instances, serving as a main station at one’s front door.” Sokal’s enthusiasm for the automobile was much like the famed writer Bolesław Prus’s fervor for the bicycle some eight years before, when he gushed that the bicycle was a “miracle in an age that [did] not believe in miracles,” a literal vehicle for personal and national regeneration. In their enthusiasm for the new superlative machines of the age, Prus and Sokal were not that different from educated observers elsewhere, though both of them sensed that their society was somehow behind and they therefore placed greater hopes in the power of these new machines to help propel them forward. When, after a period of initial enthusiasm neither machine enjoyed the widespread adoption that they experienced in much of France, Germany, Great Britain or the United States, Polish enthusiasts were apt to be disappointed. This paper will explore the adoption and promotion of bicycles and automobiles in Poland from their introduction in the late nineteenth century until the 1930s by looking at cycling and automobile clubs, specialty publications, and secondary sources about their adoption, stressing the pattern of dreams for the future, followed by the realization that the best most could do was to go along for the ride.
**PANEL II – CIRCULATING IDENTITIES**

Chia Yin Hsu, Portland State University  
**The Ruble in Manchuria: The Circulation of Money and Conceptions of National Sovereignty at the Chinese and Russian Frontier, 1890s-1920s**

Transformed by Russian colonial expansion in the late 1890s, the Chinese territory of Manchuria turned from a remote frontier into a locus of global metropolises in the making, where a complex money economy comprising of multiple currencies took root. Mirroring global rivalries and localized contestations that followed Russian expansion, and the multiethnic setting of this border region between Russia and China, this money economy took the form of competing and coexisting currencies that by the 1920s included various Russian rubles, the Soviet chervonets, a Japanese yen, and a variety of Chinese dollars. This paper explores how the circulation of money—in particular that of the ruble, and the movement of funds, resources, and personnel across the Russian Empire to implant the ruble in this region—helped shape Russian and Chinese conceptions of territorial and national sovereignty at this porous frontier. Tracing a range of ruble-related interventions—from Imperial Russian efforts to create a ruble for Manchuria to inscribe the territory as Russian, to Soviet currency “unification” policies in the Russian Far East after 1922, aimed at standardizing the use of the chervontsy—this paper suggests that these ruble-related interventions worked at times to erode boundaries, and, at times, to entrench them and erase the diversity of this frontier region.

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Christopher J. Ward, Clayton State University  
**Far from Home: Railway Workers’ Experiences Abroad during Construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM), 1974-1984**

The first months of 1974 saw a phenomenon not experienced in the Soviet Union for almost twenty years—the mobilization of the nation in a colossal struggle between humans and nature in a distant sector of the country. This new endeavor, the Baikal-Amur Mainline Railway (BAM), asked for self-sacrifice and discipline in order to construct a “Second Trans-Siberian Railway” between Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East. To achieve this goal, the youth of the USSR, with assistance from young people of other “fraternal nations,” would exploit the vast natural resources of the region and bring civilization to a once desolate place.

This paper will investigate the impact of railway workers who traveled outside the USSR as ostensible ambassadors of Soviet achievements, the creation of the officially-generated illusion of BAM as a Showcase of International Solidarity and Cooperation, and the impressions of foreigners who worked on the endeavor. Based on my findings in the archives, I hold that Soviet workers abroad damaged the project’s reputation in the eyes of some of their hosts, particularly some members of older generations, who disapproved of the Soviet youths’ poor behavior and lack of dedication in representing the project positively.

However, I have also discovered that the tens of thousands of young citizens from “fraternal nations” who encountered the workers learned that their Soviet counterparts were not doctrinaire do-gooders, but instead kindred spirits that shared their interest in informal socializing, which included the use of alcohol and sexual experimentation. Instead of promoting BAM and Soviet state socialism, Soviet workers abroad deflected attention from the project while gaining rare personal knowledge of the world outside the Soviet Union.

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Adrian Wanner, Penn State University

**Recent Post-Soviet Immigrant Writers in Germany: Russians, Jews, or Germans?**

Since the early 1990s more than 200,000 Russian-speaking Jews have settled in Germany as so-called *Kontingentflüchtlinge* (“quota-refugees”). Several of them have become successful writers in German. The trailblazer of this new kind of Russian-German fiction is Wladimir Kaminer, whose book *Russendisko* (2000) established him as one of Germany’s most popular authors. Kaminer has managed to capitalize on his Russian identity in self-ironic performances that both mobilize and undermine ethnic stereotypes. More recently, Kaminer has received competition from several younger Soviet-born female writers. Lena Gorelik, the author of five books of fiction and essays, more openly acknowledges her Jewish background than Kaminer, but she too uses her Russianness as a tool of self-promotion. The same holds true for Alina Bronsky, who emerged in 2008 as a new star on the German literary scene. Her two best-selling novels have both been translated into English. The latest addition to the genre of Russian-Jewish-German immigrant fiction is Olga Grjasnowa’s novel *Der Russe ist einer, der Birken liebt* (“The Russian Is Someone Who Loves Birch Trees”), published in 2012 by the prominent publisher Hanser Verlag. Grjasnowa, who was born in Baku, pushes the idea of a multicultural identity to extremes. Her heroine assumes a consistently “minoritarian” and contrarian position wherever she lives, be it as a Russian-speaking Jew in Azerbaijan, as a post-Soviet Russian-German who identifies with Turkish immigrants and other outsiders, or as an Arabic-speaking Jew in Israel who becomes stranded between the frontlines of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The complicated, multi-layered identities of these authors and their fictional heroes raises a host of questions pertaining to transnational authenticity, including the function of cultural clichés in fashioning an ethno-national identity and the market appeal of Russianness vs. Jewishness vs. Germanness as particular brands in today’s literary economy. This paper will address these issues in the context of today’s global translingual Russian diaspora.
Few aspects of fin de siècle migration out of Central and Eastern Europe captured the public imagination like the drama of white slavery. Images of vulnerable young women swept away from their native soil were the stuff of urban legends everywhere. Contemporary activists estimated that tens of thousands of young women “disappeared” from the Polish lands, from Hungary, and from the Russian Pale of Settlement each year. Part of a much larger movement of people out of Eastern Europe, the pattern of young women traveling abroad on their own, often with the help of intermediaries, was increasingly prevalent in the early years of the twentieth century. Economic deprivation in the under-developed, under-industrialized Polish territories created a pool of needy young women, many of them recent arrivals from the impoverished countryside to the swelling cities. At the same time, late-nineteenth-century pogroms and discriminatory legislation in the Russian Empire left millions of Jews homeless and hungry, forcing them to search for livelihoods outside of their customary communities. Open borders everywhere and the swell of migrants traveling abroad in search of "legitimate" positions provided camouflage for would be traffickers and their customers. Meanwhile, the boomtowns of Chicago, New York, Rio, Buenos Aires, and the cities of North Africa and the Middle East supplied the clientele to augment demand for prostitution outside of Europe. Women who traveled abroad and turned to prostitution in their adopted homes are rarely studied in the context of the range of choices they made. Trafficking research has tended to under-represent the autonomy of these migrants, referring to them as "victims of trafficking," "forced migrants," or "prostituted women," labels that simplify their experience and turn them into passive participants in their own fate. To address this lacuna, this paper looks beyond the melodrama of kidnapping and coercion to examine young female migrants in the context of their lives at home before departing, their personal ambitions, and the difficult decisions they were asked to make. Archival evidence suggests that many alleged trafficking victims in this period voluntarily accompanied their migration agents, at least on the initial leg of the journey, and that some even understood the activities they would be performing abroad. An examination of the details behind the “captivity narratives” that circulated everywhere at the turn of the 20th century suggests more human agency, more ambition, and more ingenuity on the part of single female migrants than the standard story of passive victimhood implies. Using the lens of human migration, the experiences of the women labeled as “trafficked” appear in a new light, not necessarily so different from that of most labor migrants. Migration gives us the vocabulary to look at the peculiar combination of coercion and free will involved in almost every relocation story. Once we look beyond the white slavery mythology promoted by contemporary actors and reconnect these women with their homes, families, and working conditions, we can begin to understand them as an integral part East European history rather than as an embarrassing exception to it.

Elizabeth Blake, Saint Louis University
"Composition and Authorship in the Manuscripts of Sybiracy from the Inter-revolutionary Era"

The generation of Polish Siberian exiles, or Sybiracy, from the inter-revolutionary epoch (epoka międzypowstaniowa) between the November (1830) and January (1863) Uprisings was a mobile group of revolutionaries, whose journeys of exile often began beyond Russia's Western border and extended as far as Irkutsk. Polish remembrances from this period relate a common story of the failure of false names and passports to conceal the future exiles' identities, imprisonment in the Warsaw, Modlin, Brest, or Kiev citadels, transport to Tobolsk by kibitka, and the dispatch, for many on foot and in chains, to various regions of Eastern and Western Siberia. The substance of these experiences was preserved in the form of prison graffiti, notes in personal albums, clandestine correspondence, personal papers, or even
manuscripts that encountered a diverse and significant readership owing to the *samizdat* and *tamizdat* activities of the nineteenth century. Since many *Sybiracy* prioritized the preservation of the written record of their exile, some writers left copies of their notes and manuscripts with comrades, who later published them or incorporated these remembrances into their own writings. For this reason, some Polish accounts about Siberian exile resemble manuscript compilations that include narratives orally related to the author or embedded fragments of other exiles’ stories that may expose an author to accusations of plagiarism, as in the case of Szymon Tokarzewski. This study will examine several Polish accounts representing the inter-revolutionary era to evaluate the nature of their composition in an effort to define the parameters of authorship. Discussions by medievalists such as Alastair Minnis or Erik Kwakkel regarding the practice of authorship in composite manuscripts will provide productive textual approaches with which to address the works of the *Sybiracy*.

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**Tobias Brinkmann, Penn State University**

**Invisible Borders and Missing Migrants: Retracing the Journeys of Russian Subjects through Central Europe and Canada, 1880–1914**

In May 1911 the representative of a Dutch steamship line “lost” three Russian subjects in the East Prussian town Soldau. The agent was in charge of a sealed wagon, which had been attached to an engine at the Prussian-Dutch border crossing Bentheim. Its passengers were Russian subjects who had been denied entry at Ellis Island and were transported back to the Russian Empire under the auspices of the steamship line. In Soldau, ten miles from the border crossing at Illowo, the train came to a halt for several hours, only a short time after a five-hour stop at Goßlershausen, a small train station not far from Thorn. After the passengers became “unruly,” the agent relented and allowed them to get off the train. Yet when the journey resumed three men were missing.

While much has been written about Jewish and other immigrants from the Russian Empire, especially in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Britain, Germany and other destinations, surprisingly little is known about the exact causes for their departure and even less about the paths they chose and the often inconspicuous points of passage such as Illowo or Bentheim. Reconstructing the main travel routes and researching the experiences of migrants in transit shows that the migration policies of different states were closely related and that transnational non-state state actors exerted much influence, notably railroad companies, certain steamship lines and, to a lesser extent, philanthropic organizations caring for and representing the interests of migrants.

In my paper I want to show why and how the mobility of Russian subjects who crossed the Empire’s outer borders was gradually constrained before 1914. Although Russian subjects frequently interrupted their train journey to walk across land borders in Europe and North America, without official papers and in some distance from official control posts, many were “contained” before they reached their intended destination, at points of passage such as Illowo but also along the US-Canadian border. The travails of the involuntary return migrants in Soldau highlight two closely related developments that contributed to the rise of an invisible but increasingly effective border control regime before 1914 that persists to this day around the world: the implementation of “remote border” (Áristide Zolberg) control measures by the United States, and the de facto privatization of transit migration in Germany, the United Kingdom, and Canada.
Dynamic Bohemians: the Russkii Artisticheskii Kruzhok v Parizhe

The period 1870 to 1930 was the heyday of visual artistic exchange between France and Russia, during which countless Russian and later Soviet artists traveled to Paris to visit, study, create, advance their careers, and simply live. Usually, they gravitated towards their creative compatriots—other artists, poets and writers, musicians, scholars and scientists—as well as either political emigres and revolutionaries, or diplomats and other representatives of Russian officialdom. Often, these networks led to the creation of informal and official circles as well as artistic associations that helped mediate between the Russian and French art milieus. The present paper will examine one of these groups, the Russkii Artisticheskii Kruzhok v Parizhe, also known as the Kruzhok Montparnasse, whose members and leading figures were the most mobile of all comparable associations, and who most consciously saw their stakeholders as being in both countries. Due to many factors of their backgrounds, interests and personalities, several of the founders and numerous members of this particular association traveled frequently to and fro between Paris and Petersbourg/Moscow, and served as active conduits between the two countries' art worlds. The organization only existed formally from spring of 1903 until the end of 1907, but it grew out of circles that began to be active circa 1900 and which continued to be so until 1914. I will examine the key differences that allowed this group to be so mobile and how this affected its activities in that time, as well as its legacy.

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Andrzej Stasiuk and the Myth of the Literary Gastarbajter

My paper focuses on Andrzej Stasiuk’s autobiographical quasi-travelogue Dojczland (2007), which I read in the context of the modalities and mythologies of Polish migrations to Western Europe, particularly Germany, in the late-communist and post-communist periods. In this provocative yet melancholy text Stasiuk delineates for himself, as well for other “migrants” who work in the cultural field, broadly conceived, and who might follow in his footsteps, a subject-position of the other – a willful quasi-barbarian from the east arriving in the garden of the civilized west. Referring to himself as a literary “gastarbajter,” a self-affixed tag which he seeks to reify through a discourse of Slavic-Germanic incommensurability, Stasiuk – possibly Poland’s foremost literary voice today, and a fairly well-known author in Germany – situates Poland’s neighbor to the west as a place suitable principally for labor (whatever form it may take), not cultural interchange. For Stasiuk, in the (invariably mythologized) lived experience which trumps the integrationist initiatives and various other “marketing” ventures of EU expansion, Germany remains unknown and unknowable in its essence. Indeed what the Pole in Germany – or another marginal migrant to Germany – can hope for, at best, is an experience precisely of a “Dojczland”: an intermediary, mediated imagined entity, comprised half of desire and half of prejudice, and ruled over by a foreign semiotic system. In this work Stasiuk seems to be suggesting that by Polonizing the name of the host nation, the migrant may strategically obtain a certain comfort of re-territorialization, but by the same token, in so doing, s/he can never access the lived reality of the other (for such a feat would require a willful surrender to the alien semiotic system). Such a conclusion, tendered by a novelist who boasts that he has visited some 70 German train stations and as many as 216 German towns and villages, may strike the reader as disheartening and self-defeatist. However, I think that Stasiuk’s defensive posture, while perhaps useful for the exigencies of this particular narrative of difference, tells only half of the overall story. In my paper I will seek out those textual elements of the mythos of mutual alterity that paradoxically signal a space of hope, pointing toward a possibility of dialogue, of shared understanding. Stasiuk gestures at such “openings” – in the body politic and even within his own configuration of the cultural imaginary of the other – on several occasions in Dojczland, but generally he refrains from exploring them. Reading against Stasiuk’s posited authority in the text, I argue
that wherever he impulsively reverts to ossified or stereotyped positions vis-à-vis the other (in this case, the notion of Germany, as well as the related image of the Pole-in-Germany), Stasiuk is explicitly denying himself the opportunity for new self-knowledge.

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Dr. Nicole Svobodny, Washington University:

**Performance-walks in the Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky**

On January 19, 1919, Vaslav Nijinsky, the Polish-Russian internationally-famous dancer and ground-breaking choreographer, formerly of the itinerant company Les Ballets Russes, gave his last performance in front of a live audience at the Suvretta House Hotel in San Moritz, Switzerland. A few hours before the performance, Nijinsky began writing and in the span of six weeks would fill up four notebooks until on March 4 his wife and her family took him to Zurich, where a doctor diagnosed him as “a confused schizophrenic with mild manic excitement.” Nijinsky would spend the next thirty years of his life in and out of psychiatric institutions, never performing and never writing, indeed for long periods of time barely moving and speaking, again.

Like their author, the notebooks have had a transnational and peripatetic existence. They were first published in 1936 in an expurgated English-language translation under the title *The Diary of Vaslav Nijinsky*. An unexpurgated edition based on the Russian manuscript, and thus retaining Nijinsky’s original sequencing, was finally published in 1995 in French translation, and a Russian-language edition based on the original followed only in 2000.

Nijinsky’s writing has attracted professional psychologists and numerous artistic responses (in dance, film, poetry and drama) but seems to have eluded sustained literary analysis. Yet, Nijinsky clearly intended the notebooks to be a work of art, to which he gave the title *Feeling* (*Чувство*—the name of the Russian 2000 version is *Чувство: мемропа*). But, what kind of art is this?

I argue that Nijinsky presents *Feeling* as performance. He does not dwell on his past ballets—some of the most famous ones receive no mention at all—but he does present new performances within the notebooks. My paper will focus on these partially-framed performances within *Feeling*, these moments when Nijinsky puts down his pen and comes back to tell us about his experience. These performances, including the avant-garde solo show at the Suvretta House and a series of walks Nijinsky takes, explore dance in broader terms of energy and mobility (“life” and “feeling”) in opposition to habit and inertia (“death” and “thinking”). Nijinsky’s writerly “flight into strange fancy” (Chaplin’s description of Nijinsky’s dancing) move counter to another narrative movement, a “plot” (both in the sense of “storyline” and “secret scheme”) unfolding in the Nijinsky household, which Nijinsky as writer, and we as readers, are only semi-aware. This “plot” eventually drives Nijinsky to Zurich and to permanent psychological exile from which, sadly, there would be no return.