

Modernity's "Others": Plurality and Counter- Hegemonic Perspectives in 20th-Century German-Language Literature

BUCERIUS INSTITUTE LECTURE SERIES

Moderated by Ariel Pridan



Felix Nussbaum (1904–1944) *The Folly Square*, 1931

KATA GELLEN Duke University



Galicia as a Literary Idea: Jewish Eastern Europe in the Writings of Joseph Roth and Soma Morgenstern

Galicia, the easternmost province of the Austro-Hungarian empire, was a multiethnic region that was dissolved at the end of World War I. Nevertheless, it continued to have a prominent place in the literary imagination of Joseph Roth (1894–1939) and Soma Morgenstern (1890–1976), two German-language Jewish writers who were born and raised there. Kata Gellen's book *Galicia as a Literary Idea: Jewish Eastern Europe in the Writings of Joseph Roth and Soma Morgenstern* (forthcoming in spring 2026 from the University of Toronto Press) argues that the idea of Galicia allows Roth and Morgenstern to explore the place of Jewish tradition in modernity in the 1930s and 1940s, a time of upheaval and devastation for European Jews. They invoke Galicia in their novels, stories, memoirs, and essays not out of a nostalgic and irrational desire to return to a lost world or to idealize the plight and suffering of Jews, but to face the challenges of their present moment. For Roth and Morgenstern, the literary idea of Galicia is characterized above all by the continuous struggle amidst crisis, conflict, and catastrophe, as well as emergent hope, whether in the form of earthly possibility or redemptive promise.

**Wednesday, March 26, 2025
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On ZOOM : <<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/9785558796?omn=83737752341>>