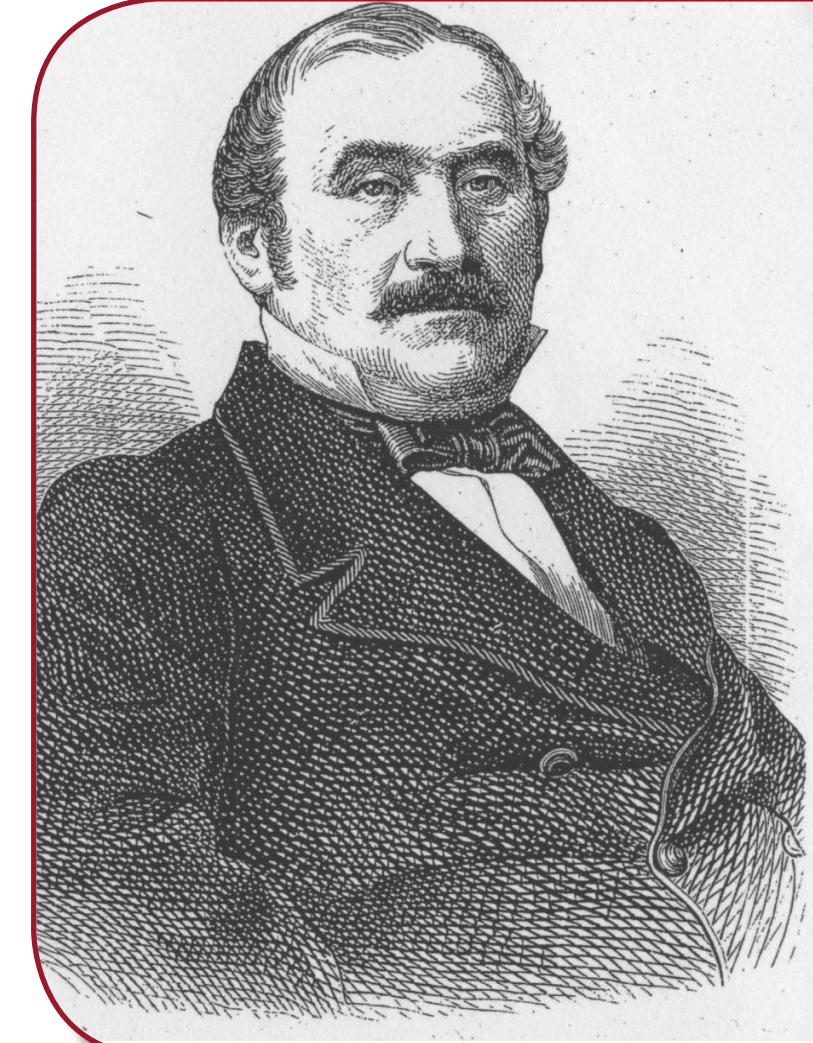


The Figure of the Clown in the Writings of German-Jewish Authors from Galicia

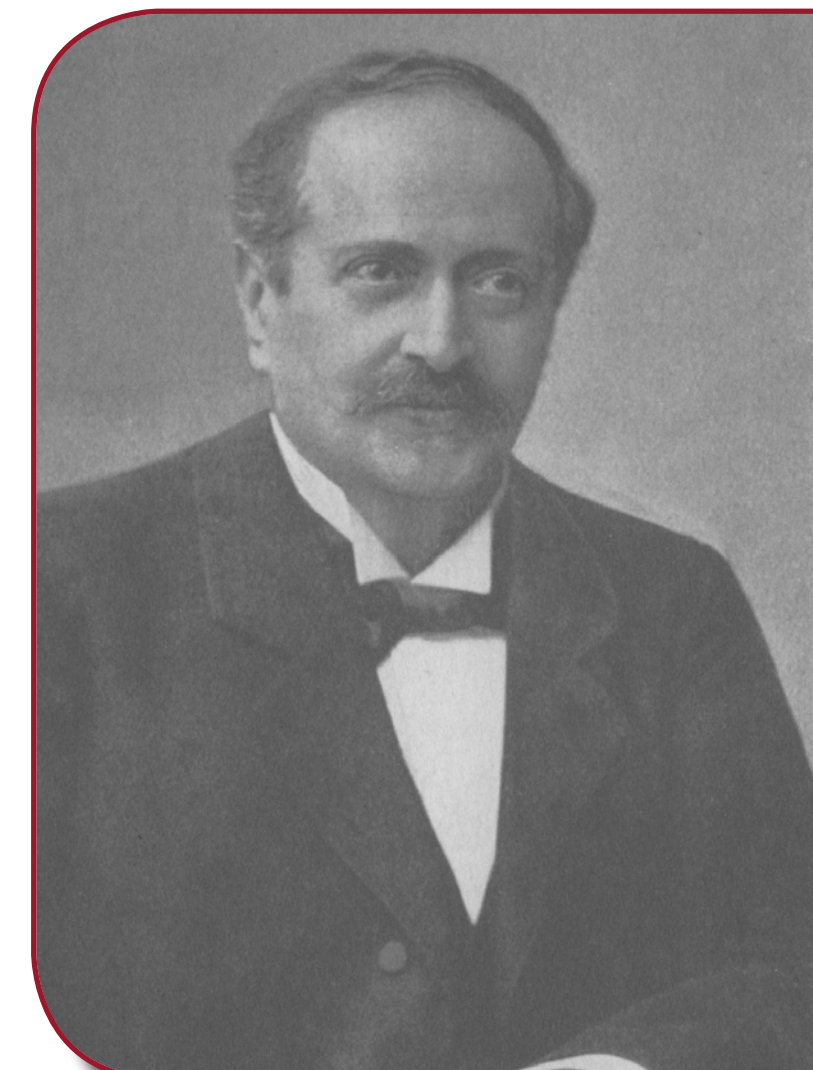
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PhD Program "Austrian Galicia" (2010-2013)

The objective of my research is to explain why a clown figure plays a key role in the works of three writers from three different generations in the short history of German literature from Galicia (it encompasses only 150 years). I work with the hypothesis that the clown figure is an expression of the way the three writers Moritz Rappaport, Karl Emil Franzos and Joseph Roth thought of themselves as artists. Their self-understanding as Jews confronted them with discrimination and marginalization. As artists, it was exactly this somewhat detached or isolated position from which they drew their imaginative power and inspiration. These two views of themselves are closely intertwined in the motif of the exotic outsider in society who has to sell his art for little money: the clown. Moreover, the clown figure was also a reaction to the extensive debates about Jewish assimilation of that time, which deeply affected all three migrant authors.



Moritz Rappaport
* Lviv 1808 - † Vienna 1880



Karl Emil Franzos
* 1847 Czortkow - † 1904
Berlin

My research is based on the following literary texts: the epic poem "Bajazzo" (1863) by Moritz Rappaport; the novel "Der Pojaz: Eine Geschichte aus dem Osten" (1994) by Karl Emil Franzos; the novels "Zipper und sein Vater" (1928), "Hotel Savoy" (1924) and several essays and columns by Joseph Roth featuring a clown, such as "Der Tod im Zirkus" (1921), "Artisten und Friseur" (1922), "Vormittagsprobe im Zirkus" (1923), "Das Café der elften Muse" (1923), "Grock" (1924), „Juden auf Wanderschaft“ (1927), "Little Titch" (1928), "Der Mann, der Ohrfeigen bekommt" (1929) and "Der unbekannte Clown aus Barcelona" (1939).

Due to the relatively precise focus, I am able to perform a lot of close reading in my work. Additionally, I contextualize the literary texts with historical material to understand the implications of the clown figure in the discourses on Jewish assimilation at that time.



Joseph Roth
* 1894 Brody - † 1939 Paris

The expected conclusions of my work are as follows:

- The clown figure in the oeuvre of these Galician writers is always marked by transition: the protagonists of the literary works escape from their traditional Jewish environment and try to integrate into the Gentile society, but they never quite succeed and end up as outsiders, marginalized by both the traditional Jewish community and the Gentile society.
- The clown figure also stands for migration: as circus clowns do, they continually travel around. Some migrate only within Galicia, others actually cross borders. Their migration mostly implicates a movement from the east to the west.
- The clown is a figure who gets laughed at for his actions. This touches upon the issue of Jewish art, which is often not acknowledged by the Gentile society or even conceived of as a meaningless imitation of Gentile art.