

# **“Compartmentation of personality for the purpose of literary utterance”: Pseudonymity and heteronymity in the various lives of Flann O’Brien**

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## **Abstract**

The often overlooked third name in the trinity of great Irish-born modernist writers, Joyce-Beckett-O’Brien, consists himself of a trinity of names: Brian O’Nolan / Myles na gCopaleen / Flann O’Brien. These, along with at least two dozens of other pen-names, are part of an elaborate identity game set up by their author. We will identify these as part of a larger strategy of multiplication and ambiguization of identities, meant to problematize authorship, whether actual or fictionalized. After distinguishing among pseudonyms, autonyms, oronyms and heteronyms, we will determine the roles these play in O’Brien’s literary conception, ranging from the topical-tactical to the philosophical-metaphysical.

**Keywords:** pseudonym, heteronym, autonym, identity