

# **Bureaucratic Poetics: Brian O’Nolan and the Irish Civil Service**

## **Virtual Workshop**

**26–27 November 2020**

### **Organised by**

Frida Beckman, Bo G. Ekelund, Jonathan Foster, Elliott Mills, Christophe Premat

### **Supported by**

the research network “Language and Power” at Stockholm University

### **Introduction: 11.00 – 11.30**

Jonathan Foster (Stockholm) and Elliott Mills (Trinity College, Dublin)

### **Keynote lecture: 11.30 – 12.30**

Colbert’s Police Files: The poetics of bureaucratic character in seventeenth-century France

Jonathan Patterson (Oxford)

### **Panel 1: 13.30 – 14.30 (Chair: Bo G. Ekelund)**

Bureaucracy and creativity: preliminary thoughts on Cornelius Castoriadis’ theory of  
imaginary significations

Christophe Premat (Stockholm)

Shakespeare’s license

Derek Dunne (Cardiff)

Bureaucracy, Clerks and Spectral Realities in David Foster Wallace’s *The Pale King*

Sixta Quassdorf (St. Gallen)

### **Panel 2: 15.00 – 16.00 (Chair: Christophe Premat)**

Woolf’s Westminster: defamiliarising the state in *Mrs. Dalloway*

Jonathan Foster (Stockholm)

Bureaucratic Sorceries in *The Third Policeman*: Anthropological Perspectives on a  
Counterintuitive Kinship Between Magic and Officialdom

Alexandra Irimia (Western Ontario)

The Art of Bureaucracy: Carter Scholz's "The Amount to Carry"

Joseph Brooker (Birkbeck)

**Concluding remarks: 16.00**

**Day Two: November 27**

**Introduction: 11.00 – 11.30**

Jonathan Foster and Elliott Mills

**Keynote lecture: 11.30 – 12.30**

"A distasteful milieu": Brian O'Nolan and the civil service, 1935–53

Martin Maguire (Trinity College, Dublin)

**O'Nolan and official archival material: 12.30 – 13.00**

Maebh Long (Waikato), Christian Dupont (Boston), Elliott Mills

**Panel 1: 14.00 – 14.45** (Chair: TBC)

**Bureaucracy in O'Nolan's shorter fiction and plays**

Bureaucracy Rhetoric in *Faustus Kelly*

Julieta Abella (Buenos Aires)

"Why can't I marry Bridie and have a shot at the Civil Service?" – Or, the Bankrupted

Antithesis between Civil Service and Writing in Brian O'Nolan's Short Fiction

Talia Abu (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

**Panel 2: 15.00 – 15.45** (Chair: TBC)

**O'Nolan and his ICS colleagues**

In Civil Service: John Garvin, Seán MacEntee,  
and Brian O’Nolan’s *Teach an Chustaim* as Intellectual Environment  
Tobias Harris (Birkbeck), Joseph LaBine (Ottawa)

“I have in detail kept all those trusts”: Myles na gCopaleen’s *Cruiskeen Lawn* and Seán  
MacEntee  
Germán Asencio Peral (Almeria)

**Panel 3: 16.00 – 16.45** (Chair: TBC)

**Bureaucracy in O’Nolan’s novels**

“Splendour and Strong Arm, Vessel of the State”: Irish Civil Service in Flann O’Brien’s *The  
Dalkey Archive*  
Andrew Vincent McFeaters (New Mexico)

Becoming Anomic: O’Brien’s versions of the Irish Civil Service  
Maria-Ana Tupan (Alba Iulia)

**Panel 4: 17.00 – 18.00** (Chair: TBC)

**O’Nolan and state institutions**

Miss, Ms Mrs? What’s in a Name? Flann O’Brien and An Gúm  
Brian O’Conchubhair (Notre Dame)

Myles’ 1946 Fiasco: Irish National Transport and Its Wartime Crimes in *Cruiskeen Lawn*  
Amy Nejezchleb (Bellevue)

“F\_\_\_ the County Council”: Flann O’Brien, Local Government, and the State of Exception  
John Conlan (Notre Dame)

**Concluding remarks: 18.00**