

“In Finland I am the $M^A^N!$ ” Gender, Irony and Exoticism in *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*

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Introduction

In 2005, my attention was caught by a somewhat exceptional media phenomenon. It seemed that an old favorite of mine, talk show host Conan O’Brien, had formed an absurd relation to Finland. During the 13th season of his *Late Night with Conan O’Brien* (broadcasted by NBC, New York), the host was frequently making fun about the fact that Finns had started to appear in the studio audience. Finns had also started to send him both admiring and mocking mail. This interaction was mostly spontaneous, even though it was partly a response of goading by the Finnish Channel SubTV, broadcasting the show in Finland.¹

In autumn 2005, Mr. O’Brien also found out that he looked exactly like – or bore some resemblance to – the president of Finland.² As there were political elections coming in Finland, he started making mock advertisements to support Tarja Halonen, repeatedly pointing out that he looked exactly like the president of Finland: “I just like looking like a foreign head of state – even if it’s a woman. I just like it.”³



The Newspaper Stand of Ilta-Sanomat, a Finnish Tabloid Newspaper, 14 October 2005, comparing Conan O’Brien and Tarja Halonen. The news was commented on by Conan in *Late Night* episode 2135, 21 October 2005. Photo: Anu Lahtinen.

This joke got a life of its own, and even the American media got interested: the advertisements were commented on and the presidential elections were reported in ABC, Fox News, and CNN, to name a few.⁴ The joke reached its culmination in February 2006, when O'Brien and his camera group travelled to Finland to shoot material for a special Finland episode and actually met president Halonen.⁵ The visit was even covered by CNN, CBS and NBC, and NBC's *Today* show broadcast a live interview "Strong to the Finnish: Where in the World is Conan?" by Katie Couric.⁶ The Finland episode was later nominated for several Emmy Awards, even though these promising prospects ultimately turned into nothing.

This encounter between two cultures offers possibilities for multiple interpretations and contextualizations. As observed by Conan O'Brien himself in an interview, the whole chain of events illustrates the globalization of TV audiences. Certainly, one could also analyze the growing impact of the entertainment industry on politics, and wonder if the presidential elections of a small country are just a late night joke? The possibilities of interaction between the TV star and his fans are also an interesting phenomenon. In this article, I focus on the interplay of gender, irony and exoticism, and how the case of Finland suits the self-ironic comedy of Conan O'Brien.

"A Dorky, Insecure Dadaist?"

Formerly a writer for another comedy series, Conan O'Brien was chosen to succeed David Letterman in NBC's Late Night show in 1993. O'Brien had a famously rough start.⁷ Later, however, he became one of the bright stars of the American late night sky.⁸ A couple of years ago, NBC even announced that he would replace Jay Leno in *Tonight Show* in 2009. In September 2005, mixed reactions to this future replacement were reflected in a cover story by Vanessa Grigoriadis in *New York Magazine*, asking: "How did a dorky, insecure Dadaist end up the next king of comedy?"⁹

A certain diffidence, absurd humor and self-deprecation are, indeed, trade marks of O'Brien's show performance (along with his red pompadour). To be sure, the "real" Conan O'Brien has certainly the goal-directed side in him as well, and he has shown his ability to adopt many different roles in the course of each episode. In his performance as a talk show host, however, he has decidedly put emphasis on self-irony and deprecation. These traits are everywhere: in the monologue, in sketches, the interviews and in awkward moments which he tends to save by turning the irony against himself.¹⁰ It is more than just a casual gag; it is part and parcel of the logic of the show. Compared to the relatively smooth-rolling performance of *Tonight Show*, for example, Conan O'Brien's character and the show as a whole are continuously in danger of falling apart. The staff, audience, visitors, sketches and the host himself repeatedly interrupt the course of the show, as in sketches "Spontaneous Announcement Syndrome" and "Can't Waste Any Time".¹¹

It is understandable that this self-deprecating humor, described as a defence by O'Brien himself,¹² has sometimes been interpreted as plain insecurity. Especially in the beginning, the style was sharply criticized by critic Tom Shales, for example: "As for O'Brien, the young man is a living collage of annoying nervous habits. He giggles and titters, jiggles about and fiddles with his cuffs."¹³ Later, the performance has become more polished and controlled.

O'Brien has said himself that he especially enjoys playing the role of a self-important, deluded fool – and revealing the hollowness of this character's delusions. In this connection, O'Brien has repeatedly expressed his admiration for Peter Sellers playing Inspector Clouseau. The Monty Python group and Buster Keaton are also among his models.¹⁴

It is often the masculinity of the character O'Brien that is at stake. He may try to follow the patterns of macho behavior, but the requirements turn out to be out of his reach. A typical "deluded fool" case can be found in a sketch, for example, about a fake tv soap "Noches de Pasion con Señor O'Brien", supposedly made for Telemundo, NBC's Channel for a Spanish-speaking audience.¹⁵ In the beginning of "Noches de Pasion", O'Brien is playing the seductive Latin Lover aka Señor Conando, imitating the machismo that is stereotypically associated with Latino culture.¹⁶ His delusions, however, are doomed to vanish when his doctor loudly diagnoses him as "impotente". At the same moment, his glued-on moustache seems to fall off, marking his superficially glued-on manliness.

There are also sketches where attempts to achieve hypermasculinity are abandoned or presented as impossible to reach and thus not worth even trying. Regression is the solution: Conan O'Brien is presented playing a happy college boy with his Gandalf and Shadowfax fantasy dolls, dreaming of his first kiss that he pretends he hasn't experienced at the age of 42, commenting on his looks ("I'm six foot 4 inches and I have the voice of a nine-year-old"), happily playing with My Little Ponies and bra's. In some cases, he may even refer to himself as a female, as in *Emmy Awards Gala* in 2005: "Every little girl dreams of winning an Emmy, and I was no exception."¹⁷

On certain level, at least, these gags and sketches are ridiculing the characteristics that are often connected to so-called hegemonic masculinity: *power, strength, success, inner valiancy and outer credibility, self-control, especially control of feelings, and virile heterosexual ability*.¹⁸ Stereotypes of femininity are not so much at stake: the show very much focuses on definitions of masculinity. Moreover, the metastructure of the show does not show any special signs of goal-directed deconstruction of masculinity.

“Strong to the Finnish”: Interpretations and Reinterpretations

In the context discussed above, the Finland fever and the exoticism of Finland can be seen to serve as a suitable background for O’Brien’s self-deprecating stardom – especially when it comes to his resemblance to president Halonen. This discovery allowed him repeatedly to enthuse about looking like a woman, and when in Finland, discussing with Katie Couric, declaring that he was using more hair products than the president.¹⁹

Even the Finnish fans adopted, commented on, and developed this gender play. Having gathered at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport to see a glimpse of their idol, they greeted him in their banners as “Mrs. President”, or wore T-shirts with self-made slogans such as “Conan – I just love *her*”.



Finnish Fans at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, 11 February 2006.
Photos: Anu Lahtinen.



As is typical of exotic representations, the Finland of the show is an almost fictitious distant country – rather in the same way as Kazakhstan is for the fictitious comic character of Borat, a fake Kazakh reporter, played by Sacha Baron Cohen. In distant Finland, O’Brien could claim to be a golden god: “In Finland, I am the MAN” (ending in falsetto voice).²⁰ In the talk show itself, his claims of influence were contrasted with pictures of cold and deserted wilderness, totally unaffected by his pompous claims.²¹

Paradoxically, there were many Finns who stated that “Tarja is our President, but Conan is our King”.²² But even if the whole population had worshipped him, the country of Finland would still have been small enough to serve for O’Brien’s self-irony, in his statement “Hasselhoff is giant in Germany and [ehm] you know, I’m big in Finland”.²³

The final Finland Episode also follows the logic of self-deprecation: it is more about Conan in deserted scenes and behind closed doors than about fans and media that were actually following him continuously. Even though NBC’s report in program *Today* also offers pictures of excited fans, Conan is staged to give a report “in a forest, in the Middle of Finland” – supposedly standing in the middle of a snowy spruce forest – actually at the parking place of the Finnish MTV3 TV channel, in the middle of Helsinki.²⁴

Within the Bounds of Irony

[--] irony often means saying what you mean at a slant [--] oversetting: so that a reader might hear (through the performance of a given set of words) not only their split levels of implication but also the divergent relation between an apparent surface intent and an often political undertow.²⁵

What, then, can be concluded from this self-deprecating stardom? On the one hand, its many sides may be seen to allow some room for emancipation and deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity. Here I refer to Mikko Lehtonen's analysis of Monty Python and to Virpi Blom's analysis of *Beavis and Butt-head*. Lehtonen sees the Monty Python humor as an emancipating deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity – ridiculing attempts of creating rigid segregation between the “feminine” and the “masculine”.²⁶ Virpi Blom, in turn, has argued that a parody of idealized, mythical masculinity can make our expectations and stereotypes visible, and allow some room for new interpretations – plurality of masculinities.²⁷

There is also justification, however, for more pessimistic interpretations of the potential of the show. O'Brien's comedy can be seen to invertedly add just another layer of irony in our culture. Airing late at night, he may seem like the marginalized fool he himself claims to be, not causing much damage or good. The kaleidoscope of ironic comedy is defensive and evasive by nature, and it does not easily adapt itself to simple happy endings. At the very least, however, it allows many alternative ways of reading, adopted by his fans, for example.²⁸ Self-deprecating stardom may allow some room for diversity – and suggest that presenting yourself as an “insecure dadaist” can make you a star.

Transcriptions of Excerpts

“GOING TO FINLAND”

Late Night with Conan O'Brien, episode 2187, NBC, 7 February 2006

VERBAL TRACK

Conan O'Brien: I've said this quite a bit lately, but ... as some of you are aware – I am huge in Finland – just huge. I'm a Golden God in [the country of] Finland – it's just true! It's... (applause) Every star has their region. [David] Hasselhoff is giant in Germany and [ehm] you know, I'm big in Finland [laughter + applause], that's just how it goes. And [for a while] we did... and this is true: apparently there are... a lot of people in that country watch this program, it's shown there three days later [--] It's all – I think in prime time and they gobble the show up ... like a herring. (laughter).

Anyway, it's a big deal there and [they...] we get tons of mail all the time and people from Finland come in and there is always someone from Finland in the audience. Is there someone tonight from Finland in the crowd? – oh yeah (applause)

– hi how are you Missy, how are you? Well, yeah – how are you... and then it's true – I am a god in your country, isn't that true –

Finnish audience member: (nodding) [Yes, that's true]

C: Okay – you seem depressed saying it, but... I didn't like your tone: it was like (sighing) “that's true”. (laughter)

[*O'Brien explains how they noticed the resemblance between him and the president of Finland.*]

C: It's high time that I meet my loyal fans in Finland. [--]

And apparently everyone in Finland is thrilled that I'm coming – it's just set up a hysteria. In fact they had a live camera set up to record the [ehm] celebration that took place after I made my big announcement. This is [eh] the reaction in Finland.

[*A clip is shown*]

(laughter)

C: (slightly embarrassed) Well, it's gonna be that times two when I show up. Or times three. Just imagine.

VISUAL TRACK

Close up on C

Shot of a Finnish audience member waving
Switch to C

Switch to the Finnish audience member
Switch to C

Pictures of C & Tarja Halonen side by side

Switch to C

A deserted, snowy landscape is shown. Only wind can be heard wailing.
Switch to C

“STRONG TO THE FINNISH: WHERE IN THE WORLD IS CONAN?”

Today show, NBC Universal, Inc., 14 February 2006. (Katie Couric & Conan O’Brien)

VERBAL TRACK

Katie Couric [*reporting from Torino, Winter Olympics area*] Conan O’Brien is causing a big stir in a very unlikely place: Finland! But it is not because of his jokes; it’s all about the way he looks. He is the self-deprecating host of NBC’s *Late Night with Conan O’Brien*...

Conan O’Brien (on the video clip): I’m a big star in NBC... okay, just play along...!

K:... often joking that no one watches the show. But more than four thousand miles away from his New York studios, O’Brien and his gang have become cultural icons – in Finland!

So what’s all the fuss about? It seems O’Brien bears a striking resemblance to Finland’s first female president, Tarja Halonen.

In fact, O’Brien’s show actively campaigned for the president during her recent re-election bid.

(Mock advertisement²⁹)

Male voice (in Finnish):
Slobodan Milosevic, Attila,
Kenraali Khan, Benito
Mussolini, Manuel Noriega,
Skeletori ...
He olivat kaikki kauheita
johtajia, ja kukaan heistä ei
näyttänyt yhtään Conan
O’Brienilta.

Lisääkö Suomi tänä
sunnuntaina uuden
nimen listaan?

Tarja Halonen: oikea valinta
Suomelle, [oikea valinta koko
maailmalle].

(audience applause)

VISUAL TRACK

Close up on Katie Couric

Video clips of LNwCOB

A map showing the route from New York to Finland

Video clips of fans and C at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport, Finland

Pictures of C and Tarja Halonen side by side

Clip of American TV news reporting elections in Finland

Mock advertisement:

Pictures of the mentioned non-preferable leaders. English subtitles: “Slobodan Milosevic, Attila, General Khan, Benito Mussolini, Manuel Noriega, Skeletor.

What do they have in common? They were all terrible leaders, and they all looked nothing like Conan O’Brien.”

An unflattering picture of Sauli Niinistö, Tarja Halonen’s challenger.

English subtitles: “This Sunday, will Finland add a new name to the list?”

Picture of Tarja Halonen .

English subtitles: “Tarja Halonen, Right for Finland, Right for the world.”

VERBAL TRACK

K: Finnish fans have even started showing up in his audience.

C (on the video clip): Is there some one tonight from Finland in the crowd? – Yes there is...

K: So Conan thought it was only right for him to visit the Nordic country and meet his look-alike.

C (on the video clip): I, Conan O'Brien, will be going to Finland!

K: And Conan plans to ask the president for a cabinet position.

C (on the video clip): I'd like to be the inspector of saunas, mostly women's saunas.

K: In a much colder climate, O'Brien may have finally found an audience.

And Conan is in Helsinki right now, enjoying apparently. I hear all those welcomes; Conan, good to see you!

C: Good to see you Katie, how[re] you doing?

K: I'm good – we have a – what I'm told – [?] a storing delay here so please forgive us if.. [er] folks at home for hearing a big pause between my questions and your answers. I guess... should I call you Inspector O'Brien, Conan, because as we heard, you did request a cabinet post; were you granted it?

C: I was not granted the cabinet post, I'm very upset. I went to see the president, and I had to spend most of the time reassuring her that vice president Dick Cheney has no plans on visiting Finland. They're apparently terrified of him here.

K: Well, what else did you and the president talk about, Conan?

VISUAL TRACK

Video clips showing Finnish audience members in LNwCOB

Shot of C announcing his visit

C is being drawn away by a dog team

Video Clip of the press conference at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport

Video clips of fans at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport

Good-humored face of C – now a live broadcast from Finland.

[Conan is supposedly standing in the middle of a snowy spruce forest – actually at the parking place of the Finnish MTV3 TV channel, in the middle of Helsinki.]

During the questions, K and C are shown side by side: when Conan answers questions, camera switches to his face

[Note: US vice president Dick Cheney had recently, by accident, shot at a member of his shooting party.]

VERBAL TRACK

C: We talked about our incredible similarity, our physical similarity... and [er]... nothing a woman wants to hear more than “You look exactly like Conan O’Brien...” (with a short laugh) We had a good chat, she was very kind (with a short laugh) – [there’re/they are] lovely people here, they’ve been very kind to me. I’m coming [to you?] now from a forest in the middle of Finland, there’s a bear [walking/working?] at the camera. It’s a lot of fun here. (laughter)

K: Now Conan, how did you first notice the similarity in your appearance [er] with the president of Finland?

C: It was a coincidence, I just watch a lot Finnish television, it’s just been my thing for years.³⁰ We actually had [er] – we actually had someone from the audience... as people came [??] from Finland, and someone gave us a picture and said “You look an awfully lot like our president...” So I started... [er] we started doing jokes about it. Our show is aired in Finland three days later; it became a huge deal, [er] and I [showed up?] at the airport the other day and there were a couple of thousand people there. And they were going crazy. So I think I’m staying here. So long America, I’ve found my real home.

K: I think maybe you should because... apparently you gave a brief press conference and you decided to actually read a statement in Finnish. Let’s take a listen and we’ll ... we’ll see how good you were with that.

C (on the video clip) [...?]
ja ystavallisuudesta, joka
on jo kauan antanut odottaa
itseään Amerikossa.“]³¹

K: Very very impressive Conan; you know I was thinking as looked at your pictures side by side: you do resemble one another but she definitely needs more product in her hair, Conan, have you discussed that with your skin care regiments?

VISUAL TRACK

Pictures of C and Tarja Halonen side by side
Switch to C

K and C side by side

Switch to C

C and Tarja Halonen side by side

Switch to C

Video Clips of fans at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport

Video Clip of the press conference at the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport

Switch to K
K and C side by side

VERBAL TRACK

C: I have, as you know Katie, 'cause you have actually seen me in action, it takes nine NBC make-up people fifteen hours to do my hair every day. There's mayonnaise in here, there's [spackling compound?], [er] there're fifteen hair nets, different kind of steel bolts; so I am talking to her and she is gonna change her look.

K: I know it's quite an architectural wonder. Well listen Conan, it's good to see you. You should stop by and see us in Torino on your way home.

C: Yeah, actually I thought that the Olympics were here. I made a mistake. I've been looking around and there's nothing going on. So ... so maybe I'll try and pop down and say hi to you guys.

K: All right; in the meantime, enjoy the solitude, and tell the people of Finland that we said hello as well.

C: [...] All right, yeah, bye bye..

VISUAL TRACK

Switch to C

K and C side by side

Switch to C

K and C side by side

C gives a short laugh, casting a look at the "forest" behind him, thus emphasizing the absence of people

“SPONTANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENT SYNDROME”

Late Night with Conan O'Brien, episode 2124, NBC, 4 October 2005

VERBAL TRACK

Conan O'Brien: all right folks my next guest tonight [is]...

Actor1: May I have everyone's attention! Everyone please! I was recently diagnosed with SAS, Spontaneous Announcement Syndrome. It's a condition that compels me to grab your attention and make you listen to me, even though I have absolutely nothing to say. Thank you. (sits down)

(laughter, applause)

C: Okay, well anyway, my next guest tonight...

A2: (rising from his seat near A1) Ladies and Gentlemen! (laughter) Spontaneous Announcement Syndrome is highly contagious. (laughter) You can acquire it through casual contact with a known carrier as I just did. (laughter) Thank you, that is all. (laughter, applause)

C: (irritated, drumming his fingers) OK, anyone else? No? Good? My next guest is...

A3: Folks, folks, [may I?] direct your attention to the front of my face; I seem to have come down with a strain of Spontaneous Announcement Syndrome that makes me talk like an airline pilot. (laughter) It's [currently?] cool in the studio and no clouds, and we should be getting back to Conan right about now.

(laughter, applause)

C: Ok, folks, you all know my next guest...

A4: Señores y Señoras...!

C: Aarrgh! (slams his microphone)

A4: (continues in Spanish, English subtitles appear) Spontaneous Announcement Syndrome does not recognize any borders and can be contracted in any language. I don't ask for your pity, just your understanding. Thank you. (laughter, applause)

C: (furious) All right, that does it! I don't wanna hear another word!

A1: Ladies and gentlemen... (laughter) if you...

C: (enraged) Shut up! Just shut up! I said shut up!

VISUAL TRACK

Close up on C

Switch to Actor1, pretending to be an audience member

Switch to C

Switch to Actor2

Switch to C,

Switch to Actor3 (Brian Stack)

Switch to C

Switch to Actor4

Switch to C

Switch to A4

Switch to C

Switch to A1

Switch to C

VERBAL TRACK

Joel Goddard [announcer of the Show]: Do you know someone with Sudden Talk Show Host Rage? Learn to recognize the symptoms:

- Finger drumming
- microphone slamming
- and extreme sexual impotence

Sudden Talk Show Host Rage – it could happen to you!

C: Argh! (slamming his microphone again)

VISUAL TRACK

A still picture of enraged C

Red words “Sudden Talk Show Host Rage” appear on the screen

A still picture of C drumming his fingers a little bit earlier

A still picture of C slamming his microphone a little bit earlier

Switch to real-time, to C’s bewildered face

Red words “Sudden Talk Show Host Rage” appear again

“CAN’T WASTE ANY TIME”

Late Night with Conan O’Brien, episode 2190, NBC, 10 October 2006

Conan O’Brien: All right... [-] we’re running very short on time tonight, I need to move things along right away, can’t waste any time, so [eh] my next guest is...

Actor 1: Excuse me, Conan?

C: Yes, sir?

A1: Did you just say you are running very short on time tonight?

C: Yes I did. Yeah.

A1: And you need to move things along right away?

C: Yes exactly, that’s what I said: we can’t waste any time (tapping his watch)

A1: Then why are you talking to me?

C: Because you just... you just disrupted the show!

A1: By asking you a question?

C: Right, yeah!

A1: You found that annoying?

C: Well I’m just starting to... yes! So would you please just stop asking questions, I need to move on with the show.

A1: Then why don’t you?

C: ‘Cause you keep asking questions!

A1: I do?

C: You know damn well that you do!

A1: Did you just use a swearword?

C: Yeah I just used a swearword.

A1: Was that really necessary?

C: Okay maybe not but you – you are [going] to make me a little angry.

A1: Why don’t you ignore me?

C: Okay, I’ll ignore you!

A1: By not answering questions?

C: Yeah!

A1: Then why did you answer that question?

C: I don’t know – look, I’ll make a deal with you. If you stop asking questions right now I’ll answer to any questions after the show.

A1: Why would I wait until the end of your show when you’re answering all of my questions right now?

C: Because I’m gonna stop answering them!

A1: When?

C: Now!

A1: Now?

C: Yes!

A1: Why?

C: Okay stop that! Or I’m calling Security. Security, just please do me a favour – get that guy out of here.

Actor 2: Okay sir, come with me.

A1: What if I don’t?

Notes

- ¹ About SubTV's influence, see Rainisto 2006, pp. 67–74.
- ² *Late Night* episode 2135, NBC, 21 October 2005.
- ³ *Late Night* episode 2175, NBC, 17 January 2006, and episode 2182, NBC, 27 January 2006.
- ⁴ *Late Night* episode 2175, NBC, 17 January 2006, and episode 2182, NBC, 27 January 2006; "Conan the Impersonator", *CNN*, 31 January 2006.
- ⁵ *Late Night* episode 2198, NBC, 10 March 2006. Video clips are available online at <<http://www.nbc.com/conan>> (accessed 19 August 2007).
- ⁶ *CBS News*, CBS, 23 February 2006; Conan O'Brien's interview, CNN, 10 March 2006; Conan O'Brien to Katie Couric, in *Today* show, NBC, 14 February 2006. For transcription, see the end of the article.
- ⁷ O'Brien was replacing the famous David Letterman, who left to CBS in 1993, after NBC had decided that Leno, not Letterman, was to succeed the even more famous Johnny Carson in *Tonight* show. In the following years, Leno and Letterman were fighting for the supremacy over the time slot preceding *Late Night*. About these "Talk Show Wars 1992–1995", see Timberg 2002, pp. 150–157.
- ⁸ Shales, "Better never than late", *Washington Post* 15 September 1993; "Go gently into that Good Night, already!" *Washington Post* 19 October 1993; "So I Was Wrong...", *Washington Post*, 18 June 1996.
- ⁹ Grigoriadis, "Conan on the Couch", *New York Magazine*, 3 October 2005.
- ¹⁰ O'Brien's self-deprecating style is manifest in Nathan Rabin's interview in *The A.V. Club*, <<http://www.avclub.com/content/node/51876>> (accessed 19 August 2007). See also Danileiko 2005, pp. 56–57.
- ¹¹ For transcriptions, see the end of the article.
- ¹² Conan O'Brien's interview by Bob Sirott, NBC5 (Chicago), 3 May 2006.
- ¹³ Shales, "Better never than late", *Washington Post*, 15 September 1993.
- ¹⁴ Aucoin, "Understanding Conan". *Boston Globe Magazine*, 31 August 2003; Conan O'Brien to Arto Nyberg in talk show *Arto Nyberg*, YLE 1 (Finland), 12 February 2006; Conan O'Brien's interview in *Huomenta Suomi*, MTV3 (Finland), 14 February 2006.
- ¹⁵ *Late Night* episode 2279, NBC, 19 September 2006.
- ¹⁶ About the Latin Lover as one of the most common Latino stereotypes in film, see Berg 2002, p. 76.
- ¹⁷ Conan O'Brien, presenting the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Comedy Series in *Emmy Awards Gala, Star!*, 18 Sept 2005.
- ¹⁸ Lehtonen 1995, pp. 32–33, 154, 172–173; Jokinen 2000, pp. 228–230.
- ¹⁹ The topic was constantly referred to in *Late Night* episodes in NBC throughout January and February 2006. See also *Huuma*, MTV3 (Finland), 18 February 2006; *CBS News*, CBS, 23 February 2006; Conan O'Brien's interview, CNN, 10 March 2006; Conan O'Brien to Katie Couric, *Today* show, NBC, 14 February 2006. For transcription, see the end of the article.
- ²⁰ *Late Night* episode 2183, NBC, 31 January 2006.
- ²¹ Conan O'Brien's announcement of going to Finland, *Late Night* episode 2187, NBC, 7 February 2006.
- ²² A text on one of the banners seen at the Helsinki-Vantaa airport, 11 February 2006.
- ²³ *Late Night* episode 2187, NBC, 7 February 2006.
- ²⁴ About the staging of the interview in Pasila, Helsinki, see entry and comments of the topic "NBC:n väki hermoilee Conan-juttumme takia", 13 February 2006, in the blog *Kolme varttia: 45min. -toimituksen blogi* kept by the staff of the current affairs programme *45 minuuttia* (by MTV3, Finland). <<http://www.mtv3blogi.com/kolmevarttia/?p=28>>, (accessed 19 August 2007).
- ²⁵ New 2003, p. 13.
- ²⁶ Lehtonen 1995, pp. 154, 172–173.
- ²⁷ Blom 1995, pp. 65–66.
- ²⁸ There has been a lot of discussion about this in *Conan-O'Brien.Net Fanboards*, <http://www.conan-obrien.net/forums/> (accessed 13 December 2006).
- ²⁹ *Late Night* episode 2182, NBC, 27 January 2006. Because of three days' delay in the airing of the show in Finland, the episode was seen on SubTV only after the elections.
- ³⁰ This is a typical example of O'Brien's "start-with-a-joke-then go-into-the-serious" style.
- ³¹ The Finnish statement, thanking Finns for amicability, was written phonetically.

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