Stand-up comedy and cultural spread: The case of sex roles*

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ABSTRACT
Culture has to do with representations which are privately stored in a number of individuals and publicly transferred from one person to another maintaining a certain stability in the process of transmission. Widely shared cultural representations involve a mutual manifestness of assumptions making the cognitive environment of a collectivity become wider. In this article, it will be argued that stand-up comedians play an important role in the transmission, reinforcement and adjustment of cultural representations, especially when they are engaged in humorous monologues whose provocation of laughter is not based on explicitly linguistic strategies, but lies in the joy of mutual acknowledgment of what culture is (or should be) like. This claim will be illustrated with an eight-case typology of possible effects from comedians’ cultural representations concerning sex roles in society.

1. Introduction
Culture is an ambiguous term which is approached differently from research fields such as anthropology, sociology, or sociolinguistics. Within cognitive linguistics and anthropology, specifically, culture is related to mental representations which can be made public and therefore liable to transmission and spread both vertically through generations (e.g. myths) and horizontally across a specific population (e.g. fashionable clothes). Therefore, culture entails a transformation of representations through a mental-public-mental process of re-shaping:

Most representations are found in only one individual, but some get communicated, transformed by the communicator into public representations and re-transformed by the audience into mental representations. Some even get communicated repeatedly, spread out in a human population and may end up being instantiated in every member of the population for several generations. (...) Each member of the group has, in his or her head, millions of mental representations, some short-lived, others stored in long-term memory and constituting the individual’s ‘knowledge’. Of these mental representations, some -a very small proportion- get communicated repeatedly, and end up being distributed throughout the group, and thus have a mental version in most of its members. When we speak of cultural representations, we have in mind -or should have in mind- such widely distributed, lasting representations (Sperber, 1996: 25, 33).
In this article it will be argued that stand-up comedy, that is, the variety of comedy in which a comedian or a comedienne appears on stage with few or no props to entertain the audience, is an ideal example of public production in which the cultural representations of the individuals in the audience may be modified (i.e., reinforced, contradicted, erased, added, etc.) by the comedian’s linguistic stimuli. These cultural representations, being mutually manifest in the specific physical environment of the comedy venue, become more or less faithful versions in the minds of the audience (who can, in turn, transform these mental representations into publicly transmittable ones later on), thus adding to their chained propagation and, eventually, to an epidemiological view of cultural spread (cf. Sperber, 1985, 1996). This mutuality of representations (made available through communication) also plays a crucial role in the formation, stability, and transmission of certain cultural stereotypes among the population (cf. Lau, Chiu and Lee, 2001: 355; Lyons and Kashima, 2001).

The structure of the article is as follows: After this introduction, section two is devoted to two main types of beliefs: intuitive and reflective (following Sperber’s 1997a proposal). These types are related to the human ability to represent and metarepresent their own or other people’s beliefs and propositional attitudes. In stand-up comedy, the members of the audience have individual mental backgrounds (some portion of them regarded as ‘cultural’) which are affected by the comedian’s words when uttered in the performance and contrasted with these individual mental backgrounds.

Section three is about manifestness. It will be argued that many of the humourous effects arising in stand-up performances come precisely from the joy of realising that certain representations are actually held by a number of individuals at the venue (that is, they turn out public and not private representations, as previously expected by the members of the audience). This fact is highly manifest in the specific context of the venue, and entertained humorously. The mutual manifestness of certain representations leads to a change of attitude towards them: representations which the audience regarded as essentially private are now treated as publicly shared, and eventually as undoubtedly cultural:

Common experience and communication bring about a similarity of representations across individuals; or, loosely speaking, they cause some representations to be shared by several individuals, sometimes by a whole human group. This loose talk is acceptable only if it is clear that when we say that a representation is ‘shared’ by several individuals, what we mean is that these individuals have mental representations similar enough to be considered versions of one another... When we talk of cultural representations... we refer to representations which are widely shared in a human group (Sperber, 1996: 82).

In section four two approaches to the method of transmission of cultural representations are briefly contrasted: imitation-based memetics versus transformation-based epidemiology of representations. It will be argued that, given the heterogeneous quality of the mental representations stored in the mind of every individual attending a stand-up comedy performance, newly acquired representations communicated by the comedian are bound to interact individually with every member of the audience, leading to a picture of transformation, rather than imitation, of representations. Some of these, of course, will acquire some level of stability and resemblance in the minds of the audience, making it possible for them to be treated as shared cultural representations.

Section five is specifically on stand-up comedy. Crucial aspects of this kind of humorous performance, such as the roles of comedian and audience, or the issue of authority (essential for
the acceptance of beliefs and their eventual cultural spread) will be dealt with. The focus in this article will be the typical stand-up comedy monologues which do not appear to contain the typical humorous strategies (unlike jokes), but are felt to be humorous nonetheless.²

Finally, in section six I will exemplify the ideas presented in the previous headings with the cultural representations regarding sex roles in society, and how comedians can challenge or reinforce stereotypical information about these roles. Bearing in mind that the members of the audience differ in the quality and extent of mutual representations, an eight-case typology of possible interactions between the comedian’s words and the audience’s background knowledge will be proposed.


There are two types of representation which play an important role in cultural spread. Normally, people store many mental (i.e., private) representations (e.g. beliefs, intentions, likes and dislikes). These cannot be transmitted to other people unless they are turned into public representations (e.g. spoken utterances, written texts, pictures, etc).³ In turn, the communicator’s public representations are re-transformed into mental representations in the addressee’s mind. Contrary to what one would intuitively feel, it is very unlikely that representations remain identical in this mental-public-mental process of transmission. Duplication of representations is considered in modern pragmatics (e.g. Sperber and Wilson’s 1986/95 relevance theory) to be a limiting rather than a default case (more on this in heading four below). Normally, there is a relationship of resemblance between mental representations and their public counterparts as happens, for instance, with metaphor and other types of loose talk: “Oral transmission is not a reliable means of reproduction; it generates a fuzzy set of representations which are more or less faithful versions, rather than exact copies, of one another” (Sperber, 1996: 32).

Human beings have the ability to hold representations as beliefs plus a meta-representational ability to infer their own and others’ attitudes underlying the content of the representations they process. This ability enables them to construct mentally not only descriptions of states of affairs, but also interpretations, representations of other representations: “Humans use this interpretive ability to understand what is communicated to them and represent meanings, intentions, beliefs, opinions, theories etc, whether or not they share them. Also, they can represent a belief and take a favourable attitude to it” (Sperber, ibid.: 87). Similarly, the audience of stand-up performances use this mental ability to meta-represent the intentions and attitudes underlying the comedian’s words. How strongly the audience support certain assumptions intentionally communicated by the comedian depends upon the identification of underlying propositional attitudes.

Sperber (1997a) divides beliefs into intuitive and reflective. The former are directly derived by the person, e.g. through unconscious perception and inference, and form a reliable, commonsense background of assumptions about the world we live in. They tend to be simple and accessible beliefs and are held by default unless there is evidence to abandon them (these attributes give them some cross-cultural stability). The latter, reflective beliefs, need not be fully understood, and their credence may be enhanced by a validating source of authority, for instance the authority of parents or teachers. Their strength varies from mild opinions to strongly held convictions. Reflective beliefs are normally acquired through communication and from an underlying intentionality to transmit them.

Often the actual source of the representation makes it a belief. This is the case of reflective
beliefs supported by the authority of the source. For instance, in (1) below (Sperber, 1996: 90), the son may not understand completely what his mother is saying, but her authority is enough to hold it as a half-understood reflective belief supported by this credence:

(1) Mother to son: “God is everywhere”.

Therefore, communication plays a crucial role in the construction of reflective beliefs, which are added to (or embedded in) intuitive ones. It should be noted that reflective beliefs can be turned into intuitive beliefs if their source leads to the person’s support as part of his/her factual knowledge. In Sperber’s (1997b) words,

Rather than arriving at [certain] intuitive beliefs (...) by means of your own perceptions and inferences, you might have arrived at them via communication. Someone you trust might tell you any of [them]. You would then disquote the content of the communication from the belief that it has been communicated and believe this content directly. Communication plays here, to some extent, the role of experience by proxy. You might yourself have formed such beliefs via perception and spontaneous inference, had you been placed in a position to experience their perceptual basis.

For instance, if TV viewers constantly listen to the weatherman saying that it is unlikely that it will rain in Alicante the next day since that is a very dry area of Spain, viewers may disquote the source of the reflective belief (the weatherman says that it hardly ever rains in Alicante) and start believing it as their own intuitive belief (I believe that it hardly ever rains in Alicante), probably forgetting where they first acquired that belief.

This dual quality of beliefs, together with the human-inherent metarepresentational ability, provides a reliable source of mental representations improving the person’s knowledge. For instance, one can hold parallel mental representations concerning the same referent in the world, one intuitively grasped and the other metarepresentationally through access to cultural stereotypes. In Pilkington (2000: 112f) we can find the following example:

(2) Richard is a gorilla.
(3) a. Gorillas are fierce, nasty, prone to violence.
   b. Gorillas are shy, sensitive creatures, given to bouts of sentimentality.

This metaphor relies on cultural stereotypes regarding the gorilla’s behaviour (3a) which are, then, mapped interpretively onto Richard’s own attributes. However, an ethologist may well have reached a different conclusion intuitively, for instance (3b), after his analysis (e.g. perception) of their behaviour. Even so, the ethologist will still understand (3a) when hearing (2). The explanation of this dual-access, parallel view of the behaviour of gorillas lies in the method of mental storage. For the ethologist, the attributes in (3b) are stored as factual assumptions, directly grasped from his own observation, but the ones in (3a) are metarepresentationally stored following a schema such as “it is believed in this culture/society that p” and after the scope of “this culture” has been narrowed in relevant terms. Cultural stereotypes such as the qualities in (3a) are normally common to a whole community, becoming what anthropologists usually call collective representations attributed to a whole social group (Sperber, 1996: 35) and need not be erased when the person privately constructs parallel but differing beliefs on the same referent.

In the specific context of stand-up comedy, the audience arrives at the venue with a
particular store of mental representations, either intuitively or reflectively acquired, plus parallel metarepresentationally acquired cultural representations. The private/cultural interface plays an important role in the explanation of why certain monologues arouse laughter in the audience. Later in this article, it will be argued that one of the main sources of humour in stand-up comedy monologues is, precisely, the audience’s realisation that many thought-to-be privately stored representations about the world, are actually collective cultural representations shared by a number of people in the audience. Laughter is, perhaps, the most evident signal of mutual cultural awareness in stand-up comedy, providing a direct insight on the cultural quality of their representations. In this re-shaping of the audience’s attitude towards representations, culture is spread in a virus-like way, bringing out the collective in the individual.

In any case, in heading four below I will argue that new information (from the comedian) interacts individually with the unique information stored in the minds of the audience. There can be no replication of information if people hold an unpredictable number of private beliefs and cultural representations which form a particular background against which the assumptions arising from the comedian’s words are assessed (cf. Gatherer, 1998).

3. The joy of manifestness

In the previous paragraphs I mentioned in passing the hypothesis that one of the sources of humour in stand-up comedy performances is centred upon the audience’s awareness of sharing certain beliefs and upon the sudden realisation that previously considered private representations are, in fact, publicly spread through the audience and hence acquire a sudden cultural status. However, the term “shared knowledge” is far from uncontroversial, since one can only make predictions about which assumptions are really shared.

Sperber and Wilson (1986/95, 1990) claim that people can only be aware of manifest information, and not be sure of how much information is actually shared. On every particular context, every person has a cognitive environment made up of all the facts that are manifest to him/her. They define manifestness as follows:

A fact is manifest to an individual at a given time if and only if he is capable at that time of representing it mentally and accepting its representation as true or probably true (1986/95: 39).

The fact that manifest information is inferable or perceptible does not necessarily mean that it will be entertained or processed, only that it may be. For example, in situation (4a), all the assumptions in (4b-e) are manifest to Tom, but he will probably access only the first two (which are highly manifest, whereas the second two are weakly manifest):

(4)  a. [Tom hears the doorbell].
    b. The doorbell has just rung.
    c. There is someone at the door.
    d. The electricity is not turned off.
    e. The person at the door is tall enough to reach the bell.

The audience in the comedy venue also have their own cognitive environment made up of all the assumptions that are manifest to them at that moment. A part of these manifest assumptions
comes from the linguistic input of the comedian’s words. There is, then, a *mutual cognitive environment* in the audience containing, among other assumptions, the ones made highly manifest by the comedian’s words. My point is that the fact that the audience is aware that this mutual manifestness of information is, itself, highly manifest. The comedian, for his part, has to predict which information will cross-cut the audience’s cognitive environments, that is, which is their mutual cognitive environment, and which information is likely to interact in such a way with this environment that new strengthenend cultural assumptions are spread throughout the audience. In Koziski’s (1984: 57) words, “many stand-up comedians jar their audience’s sensibilities by making individuals experience a shock of recognition. This occurs as deeply-held popular beliefs about themselves -even the hidden underpinnings of their culture- are brought to an audience’s level of conscious awareness”. Imagine, for instance, that some members of the audience went through the event depicted in (5) below and thought that this was their own private experience and that it was unlikely that anybody else had gone through the same experience:

(5) Have you ever sat in a bar, at a table, two or three chairs around it? Somebody is bound to come and say: “Are... are you... *sitting* in that chair?” “No, I’m sitting in this one”. “What I mean... is anybody *sitting* in that chair?”. “Yes, there are eight people having a gang-bang!” *[audience laughs]* (...) Have you ever sat, say, in a park... on a newspaper? *sit on a bench...? it’s wet... put a newspaper there... sit there...? I guarantee you... I guarantee you... after five minutes... in *two* minutes a guy will come and say: “Are... are you... are you *reading* that?” *[audience laughs]*. “Yes, I have an eye in my anus!!” *[audience laughs]* (Dave Allen).

The sudden realisation of the *public* domain of this experience brings about a mutual manifestness of this experience, which spreads through the audience and acquires an immediate cultural status in the audience (that is, it turns into a collective representation). Ruiz Moneva (p.c., 25-3-2002) is right in pointing out that the audience’s realisation that *only* them, at the *specific* context of the venue access this mutually manifest collective representation is, itself, highly relevant for the members of the audience.

Improved cultural knowledge arises from the combination of the audience’s previously stored information and the comedian’s input of new information, and this inter-connexion is used as one of the premises in an inferential process which yields new, updated information about the world, that is, yields relevant cultural information which spreads like an epidemic around the minds of the people sitting in the audience. This last point will be developed under the next heading.

### 4. Cultural spread

There is no doubt that culture spreads through a population. And one basic medium of transmission is communication. Language is at the heart of many of our commonsense representations about the world. In this paper I will briefly focus upon two models of cultural spread: the *memetic model* and the *epidemiological model*. The former advocates a gene-like view which involves duplication of cultural representations in the process of transmission. The latter supports a virus-like approach in which representations necessarily involve transformation as they are transferred from communicators’ minds to addressees’ minds via public
representations. I will argue (with Sperber, 1985, 1996) that culture cannot be based of replication or duplication, since people’s particular cognitive environments interact in unpredictable ways with new, in-coming information.

4.1. The memetic stance

First suggested by Dawkins (1976) and brought back into fashion by Blackmore’s (1999) recent publication on the subject, the meme-view of culture is based on a gene-like picture of cultural units, memes, which are transferred across a population via replication or imitation.

There are problems with this view of cultural transmission. To begin with, there is the loose definition of the term meme. It seems as though any cultural item can be called a meme:

Every idea or form of behavior that you learned from someone else, not on your own, is a meme. The list is endless: gestures, tunes, catch phrases like “Kilroy was here”, fashions in clothes such as the current droopy trousers worn by young boys, ways to make anything (pots, chairs, cars, planes, skyscrapers), marriage customs, diet fads, art, novels, poems, plays, operas, tools, games, inventions, ideas in science, philosophy and religion -all are memes. What sociologists call mores and folkways are memes. From a “meme’s-eye view” -a favorite phrase of memeticists- all your beliefs about anything are clusters of memes. If you are a skeptic, your skepticism is made of memes. Was Jesus the son of God? If you think yes, that’s a meme. If you think no, that’s also a meme (Gardner, 2000).

The most general definition of meme is found in Wilkins (1998): “a meme is the least unit of sociocultural information relative to a selection process that has favourable or unfavourable selection bias that exceeds its endogenous tendency to change”. It is clear that for memeticists cultural items remain relatively intact in the whole process of transmission:

The whole point of memes is to see them as information being copied in an evolutionary process (...) Given the complexities of human life, information can be copied in myriad ways. (...) The information in this article counts as memes when it is inside my head or yours, when it is in my computer or on the journal pages, or when it is speeding across the world in wires or bouncing off satellites, because in any of these forms it is potentially available for copying (Blackmore, 2001).

This copying is unlikely, as already asserted, given the inevitable re-shaping that takes place between mental and public representations on the one hand, and between old, background information and new information being communicated, on the other.

4.2. The epidemiological stance

This view is supported by anthropologists such as Sperber (1985, 1996). It attempts “to explain cultural macro-phenomena as the cumulative effect of two types of micro-mechanisms: individual mechanisms that bring about the formation and transformation of mental representations, and inter-individual mechanisms that, through alterations of the environment, bring about the transmission of representations” (Sperber, 1996: 50).

Within an epidemiological approach, transformation is the normal effect in cultural spread (although cultural items manage to retain some stability in the process of transmission). The
epidemiological metaphor of cultural transmission is particularly useful to explain how representations are transferred throughout a population:

Some representations are transmitted slowly over generations, the so-called traditions, which resemble endemics. Similarly, other representations spread rapidly throughout a whole population, but with a short life-span, the so-called fashions, which resemble epidemics. There are also differences: viruses spread by replication, and rarely undergo mutation. Representations, on the other hand, tend to be transformed each time they are transmitted. Reproduction of representations, if it ever occurs, is an exception. So the task here is, rather than explaining why a disease is transformed in the process of transmission, to explain why some representations remain relatively stable and become cultural artifacts (Sperber, 1996: 58-59).

If we bear in mind the fact that people hold an unpredictable array of representations, beliefs, and attitudes towards beliefs, and that people never share their cognitive environments but, rather cross-cut one another’s environments, it will be easy to conclude that the comedian’s words uttered in the specific context of the comedy venue can only interact individually with each member of the audience, and the cultural representations that the comedian intends to make manifest are inevitably transformed in the combination of personal background information and new in-coming information.

Despite the likelihood of cultural transformation, the mutually manifest quality of these new representations, backed-up by the communal laughter in the physical context of the theatre, also provides a levelling function in the quality and stability of storage in the audience’s minds. Actually, within epidemiological models of cultural spread it is advocated that cultural representations remain more or less stable in the process of transmission, with little modification in the causal chain of transformation, but duplication remains a limiting case. The existence of individual aspects in cultural awareness prevents duplication: “talking about cultural representations means to talk about representations which are widely shared in a human group, and to explain them is to explain why they are widely shared. Different degrees of ‘sharedness’ imply a non-neat boundary between individual and cultural representations. Hence, the epidemiology of representations is good in making our understanding of micro-processes of transmission and macro-processes of evolution mutually relevant” (Sperber, ibid.: 82).

5. Stand-up comedy and cultural representations

5.1. Introduction

People who attend a stand-up comedy performance want to be entertained. They also improve, to a greater or lesser extent, their representation of the world while ‘having a laugh’, as a consequence of the interaction between the comedian’s input and the audience’s background knowledge. Apart from the basic expectation of the audience to be amused, there are expectations in the audience regarding how stand-up comedy works and what role, if any, the audience plays in the performance. Take, for instance, the ritual of making the decision of entering the physical space of the venue:

To attend a stand-up performance involves a conscious series of decisions that are not part
of being exposed to conversational humour at home, in the workplace, in a social gathering, or in any other impromptu situation. Friends must be notified, a consensus to go and watch comedy must be made, travel to the venue must be arranged, weather must be contended with, cash points have to be visited, parking has to be found or public transport negotiated, money must be paid to gain admission, and seating must be taken in an arranged environment. Even on the smoothest of nights, phone calls will probably have had to be made for times and places to meet to be arranged. All of these actions will entail some sort of specialist knowledge and a certain amount of taking on of responsibility. The processes that make up this venture may appear complex or apparently relatively simple but they must be gone through and in turn they work towards positioning our expectations for the evening and mark the experience of watching and performing stand-up as distinct from conversational joking (Rutter, 1997: 70).

The so-called spatial variables (Rutter, ibid.: 53f) influence the humorous outcome of the performance. For example, it has been demonstrated that laughter is contagious, and therefore the larger the audience, the more likely that performances will successfully arouse a humorous response. The mutual manifestness of the comedian’s intended humorous effect spreads rapidly in the specific physical context of the venue.

Other features of stand-up comedy which may affect both the way in which this type of discourse is processed and the amount of interaction allowed between comedian and audience include the following:

1. Stand-up comedy is normally performed in pubs, at least in Britain.
2. There is often a minimal space between the performer’s area and the audience’s.
3. The microphone is normally the only stage prop during the performance.
4. Seating is a matter of first-come-first-served. This has a levelling effect on the audience (no seats are more expensive than others).
5. Often the audience sit around tables in a pub-like fashion: “groups will not only share the watching comedy, but discussion, laughter, buying of drinks in rounds, comment on performance and the taxi fare home. Sitting around a table rather than in the rows of a theatre auditorium allows and encourages this” (Rutter, ibid.: 72).

These ingredients of stand-up comedy are part of the audience’s background knowledge and reinforced each time the ritual of attending the venue is followed: the performer and the audience negotiate, accept and expect the set format that comedy in pubs promotes and that the live situation is inseparable from the comedy experience” (Rutter, ibid.: 74). In this sense, stand-up performances resemble institutions, in which some cultural representations are distributed via ritualized repetitions, and the audience end up sharing the regulatory role which some representations play in the way the performance is carried out (cf. Sperber, 1996: 29, 75; 1997b).

Some specific stand-up comedy expectations are explained in more detail under the next heading.

5.2. Expectations

As pointed out above, there are expectations in the audience concerning how performances are to be carried out and what level of interaction is supposed to exist between them and the comedian. The repetition of stand-up rituals provides an stabilising effect in the way the
expectations are fixed in the minds of a whole audience.

A. Comedian

The authority of the source plays an important role in the transmission of cultural representations. Often authority is the main validating context of many reflective beliefs which people store. Similarly, stand-up comedians are granted authority to control the way the performance proceeds (cf. 5.3.1 below). For instance, one of the audience’s background expectations upon attending the show is the possibility of being addressed individually at some point of the performance, normally in a position of inferiority and subject to whatever humorous intentions the comedian holds. Contrary to this opinion, Mintz (1985) claims that the audience laugh precisely because the comedian is ridiculed on stage:

Traditionally, the comedian is defective in some way, but this natural weaknesses generate pity... He is thus presented to his audience as marginal. Because he is physically and mentally incapable of proper action, we forgive and even bless his ‘mistakes’... In his role as a negative exemplar, we laugh at him. He represents conduct to be ridiculed and rejected, and our laughter reflects our superiority (p. 74).

Although some comedians do play on this kind of superiority feeling in the audience, on other occasions the comedian does control what is said, how it is said, and how much interaction he or she feels like having with the audience. Besides, and crucially in this article, the comedian’s authority is necessary for the audience to construct and spread cultural representations of their own, once the comedian’s public representations (above all their monologues) are contrasted with individually acquired private mental representations.

B. Audience

No doubt, the audience attends a performance expecting to be amused, “to get their money’s worth”, and this fact exerts some pressure on the necessary humorous outcome of the performance. Attending stand-up performances is a ritual which, due to the physical qualities of the venues where the shows are typically held, is appropriate for the meeting of friends and the conception of comedy as a group ritual: the physical environment “encourages group interaction as going to stand-up comedy, like going to the pub, is almost invariably a group process. In contrast to traditional theatre which tends to appear to cater towards a concept of the bourgeois individual rather than encouraging the interacting group, people do not tend to go to venues on their own unless they are planning to meet friends there” (Rutter, 1997: 72).

Sometimes some members of the audience go as far as to insult the comedian, if they feel that the performance is not meeting their expectations, and exchanges of insults with the comedian are also common. Several comedians have acknowledged the fact that a good ‘feeling’ between comedian and audience is essential for a successful performance, which often involves some ability to predict the specific interests and cultural beliefs which they hold:

(6) When the audience is good, they seem good. When they are bad, they seem very bad... I guess if you have group leaders in the audiences that lead group laughter, it’s a big help. If I know three tables love me in a club, I can almost guarantee I can get the whole audience (Woody Allen, quoted in Wilde, 2000: 23).
(7) The greatest thing that a performer can have if he’s going to be successful, is an empathy with the audience. They have to like him. And if they like the performer, then you’ve got eighty percent of it made. And if you don’t have that, it’s damned difficult to get the audience on your side. If they resent you or if they don’t feel empathy with you or they can’t relate to you, as a human being, it gets awfully difficult to get laughs (Johnny Carson, quoted in Wilde, ibid.: 156).

(8) To me, really good comedy is a dialogue -it’s not a monologue. Their laughs are as important as what I’m saying. Laughs contain thought, you know. There are different shapes and sizes and sounds and colors and each one says something. So that’s the audience’s part, and then I say my part (Jerry Seinfeld, quoted in Wilde, ibid.: 336).

C. Humorous strategies used

The audience expects comedians to use typical joking strategies in their performances. These include jokes following the incongruity-resolution schema, punning devices, etc., which have been analysed extensively already and which I will not pursue here (see Yus, 1997; Attardo, 1994; and Rutter, 1997: 225f, among others, for discussion). An example of a typical joke -based on punning associations- as part of the comedian’s performance is quoted below:

(9) I was in a restaurant and on the menu it said “goose”. I haven’t tried goose for many years, so I said to the waiter: “how’s the goose?”. He said: “I don’t know, I didn’t ask him”. “No!”, I said, “what’s it like?” “Like a white duck, only bigger” (Dave Allen).

The interest in this article is mainly focussed on some comedians’ monologues, for instance the ones typically found in performances by Dave Allen in UK, Jerry Seinfeld in USA, or the actors on the TV program El club de la comedia in Spain. The monologues of these comedians often lack typical and over-used humorous strategies (apart from the comedian’s skill when employing them) and their main source of humour seems to lie, precisely, in the audience’s joy of mutual manifestness of cultural assumptions and impressions, some of which the audience thought were privately apprehended and turn out to be publicly acknowledged instead, which favours their epidemiological spread inside the theatre. On other occasions, the joy of manifestness lies in cultural representations which are simply strengthened by the comedian’s monologue. This is typical of British humour, very prone to self-parody: “We seem instinctively to laugh at anything which depicts a caricature of our own routines -hence the bewildering success of totally unfunny sit-coms. In sit-com, the comic things can be unwashed socks or brightly coloured clothes; these recognisable details have become funny because they anticipate a minor domestic farce in which we will see ourselves reflected” (Bracwell, 1994: 6). In either case, cultural representations end up shared by the whole audience and, despite the unpredictable interaction with beliefs held individually, they spread in an epidemiological process of transmission.

A specific interest in this article is to analyse the way cultural assumptions regarding sex roles in society are strengthened or challenged in stand-up comedy performances, and how these cultural stereotypes affect the way the performance proceeds (cf. heading 6 below). Archetypal assumptions are also part of male/female comedians’ humorous repertoire based on these roles.

5.3. Stand-up comedy and cultural spread
5.3.1. Authority

Comedians need to build up a relationship with the audience in which it is clear that they hold the authority and exert control over what is said in the performance and how much interaction with the audience is allowed. As pointed out above, authority sources are crucial for the construction of a validating context in which reflective beliefs can be constructed.

Authority also makes it possible to store half-understood beliefs. In Sperber (1996: 88) we find the following illustration: A teacher says to a pupil called Lisa that there are male and female plants. She does not quite understand what the teacher means by that, but she knows that animals and humans do have this sexual duality. The fact that her teacher is endowed with authority in these matters is enough for her to believe (reflectively) that there are sexes in plants, even though this is only a half-understood idea. In other words, the intuitive belief in (10a) below provides a validating context for the embedded reflective representation of what the teacher says in (10b):

(10) a. What the teacher says is true.
   b. The teacher says that there are male and female plants.

Similarly, authority is also essential in stand-up performances, since “stand-up comics can only be successful in their craft when they can convince an audience to look at the world through their comic vision” (Greenbaum, 1999: 33). The comedians are aware of the role which authority plays in the world of stand-up comedy:

(11) If an audience feels superior to you, then you’re in trouble... If you can pretend they are superior. There’s a difference there. If an audience feels superior to you, they can be rude. They don’t even turn around to watch you. If they feel equal to you, then you’re in good shape. (...) The audience must trust you and you have to be able to lead them by the hand. Once you can lead them by the hand, you can take them through any avenue of comedy. You can take them on a very serious subject and they will go with you. All of a sudden you hit them with a block-busting punch line... but they must trust you. (Joey Bishop, quoted in Wilde, 2000: 103 and 113).

(12) [For anyone to learn to be a comedian one needs] a enjoyment of being a leader and taking them where you want ‘em to go. You’re the troop leader, the scout master. Enjoyment of being set apart, being up there instead of one of them. You gotta recognize that. It’s an egoistic thrill. You’ve gotta have a very strong, healthy ego. Sometimes it’s a very strong, sick ego that drives people... then you get a different kind of humor (Phyllis Diller, quoted in Wilde, ibid.: 221).

(13) I can just look down and there’s X amount of people that’s frightened of me... I just wink and that makes them laugh. It’s amazing the effect power has on people (Dick Gregory, quoted in Wilde, ibid.: 253).

(14) [W]hen you’re on a stage, people look up at you and up to you. There’s a presence of superiority in talking down to people, instead of being on the level, on the floor... (George Jessel, quoted in Wilde, ibid.: 290).

5.3.2. Comedians’ monologues as sources of cultural spread
Comedians usually resort to short stories in their performances. These stories make manifest a number of assumptions, which interact with the audience’s own mental representations (e.g. beliefs) in a way which is only partly predictable. Assumptions may be deeply affected during this transmission involving mental representations (comedian’s thoughts) turned public representations (comedian’s words) and re-transformed as mental representations (audience’s thoughts).

Although transformation (and not replication) is the normal outcome of this process of transmission, some assumptions do tend to remain relatively stable in the process, and acquire a “communal” status throughout the whole audience. These are cultural representations, which are backed-up by the comedian and the mutual manifestness achieved inside the physical space of the performance.

On purely methodological grounds, from now on a distinction will be made between private beliefs, those which an individual has acquired via his/her own unconscious perceptual and inferential devices (intuitive beliefs) or via communication from an authoritative source or any other validating context (reflective beliefs), and metarepresented cultural beliefs, those which the individual ascribes to a culture or community (and assumes that they are widely spread throughout the population) but which may or not match his/her own private beliefs, as would be the case with the ethologist in examples (2) and (3) above. The distinction is not rigorous, since the latter type is also reflective, requiring a validating context (via metarepresentation) for mental storage, but I think this distinction can be useful to determine what really goes on in the audience’s minds when confronted with the comedian’s monologues.

The comedian’s monologues address a number of social issues (including sex roles, see heading 6 below) and aim at unfolding cultural aspects which were unknown, not fully understood or previously undetected by the audience (Koziski, 1984: 68; Mintz, 1985: 76). The eventual improvement in the audience’s representation of the world makes the comedian’s words highly relevant. For instance, a very relevant aim of human cognition is to erase inconsistencies in their understanding of the surrounding world, and the comedian’s wit and observation of the world provides an amusing source for an adequate erasure of these inconsistencies. Consider, for instance, Dave Allen’s excerpts in (15-17):

(15) The English are the most illogical nation in the world. And you’re guided by the most illogical notices in the world. For example, in this theatre here tonight, the audience that are here are informed by the management that when you leave here, you must leave by the exit, only [audience laughs]. Now, I’m Irish, I don’t have to be told that... [audience laughs] “The solid wall gap”... I go for the gap [audience laughs]. (...) I actually saw once a door which said “this door is not an exit”(!?)[audience laughs]. (...) I saw in Manchester, on the outside of a door, a notice which actually said “this door is neither an exit nor an entrance, and must be kept closed at all times” [audience laughs] Why don’t you brick the bloody thing up and forget about it? [audience laughs].

(16) When I see things like “part-time females required”... What’s a part-time female? [audience laughs] I saw once a notice recently which said “Are you illiterate? Are you unable to read and write? So, contact us at this address”...[audience laughs] I’ve actually seen, by the river Thames, a sign which says “this area is liable to flooding. If this notice is covered, do not park your car here” [audience laughs].

(17) It’s extraordinary, in a way... when you pick up something which is purely alcohol... and
say to somebody: “good health!” [audience laughs]... When you actually think of the properties of alcohol... the damage it does to you... it destroys your brain cells... gives you enormous headaches... double vision... destroys your stomach life, your kidney, your liver... and we say... “good health!” [audience laughs]... we say “cheers!”, “good health!”, “long life!”, “happiness!” [audience laughs] We should be actually saying “misery!!” “short life!!” [audience laughs].

Illogical items which pervade our culture such as the ones foregrounded in (15-17) are very familiar to the audience, but before Allen uncovered this illogicality, they accepted them as commonsense cultural items. Improved information about doors and signs is not only manifest now, but mutually manifest in the audience, and a cultural re-shaping takes place in the theatre. (15-17) focus specifically on illogicalities in the way language is used, a relevant issue on its own. The interest in Allen’s words lies in the improvement of the audience’s representation of the world and how to interact linguistically with it, on the one hand, and in the mutual manifestness of the comedian’s wit to track down the illogical nature of everyday language, on the other. These interests concern human rationality, since one of its main aims is, precisely, to prevent logical contradictions in the information acquired by cognitive mechanisms.

Mintz (1985: 147) refers to this cultural re-shaping when he underlines the creative distortion of stand-up comedy, which is “achieved through exaggeration, stylization, incongruous context, and burlesque. (Treating that which is usually respected disrespectfully and vice versa). These and other techniques all disrupt expectation and reorder it plausibly but differently from its original state”. Comedian Johnny Carson’s words in (18) and comedian Jerry Seinfeld’s in (19) are also interesting here:

(18) You can take a very common situation and your point of view or your attitude toward it and what you see in it may be completely different from what somebody else sees in it. They will comment on it one way, you may take a completely different approach to it, and this is where humor comes out -your specific look at something the audience hasn’t thought of (quoted in Wilde, 2000: 169).

(19) [M]y comedy is... to pick things apart. To look at something that seems so trivial in life. Like I do this thing about cotton balls and how women need thousands and yet men don’t seem to need any. I mean what are they? And, I’ll get more into that than I could “my girlfriend” or some subject like that -that a lot of people would find attractive as a subject, but somehow doesn’t attract me... I get interested in the type of faucets that they use at the airport in the sinks, and wondering how much milk you have in the refrigerator and the little interrogation that you go through if you live with someone. “Who had the milk last?” And “What time did you get up?” And “Whose milk was that?” Those little things in life... that’s what I like to get in there (quoted in Wilde, ibid.: 338).

A more interesting effect of comedians’ monologues is the interface between what I have labelled private beliefs versus metarepresented cultural beliefs. Often, the comedian makes manifest a number of assumptions which interact with privately acquired beliefs. Basically, the relevance of this interaction of background and new information lies in the awareness that these beliefs are, in fact, widely shared by the audience, and thus acquire a sudden cultural status. Take, for instance, Dave Allen’s words regarding Christmas:
(20) Christmas is becoming much more stressful. (...) I don’t bring my Christmas tree into the house until Christmas Eve. The lights work perfect... looks beautiful... Two hours before the shops close... every little bastard light goes out!! [audience laughs] Now, for the next two hours I am scurrying like a lunatic around London, like a demented lunatic in ever increasing circles, searching madly for one little green Christmas tree light that was made in Taiwan in 1966 [audience laughs]. (...) What is this lunacy with Christmas trees? (...) Can you imagine that any other time of the year... if you brought a tree into the house... silver balls on it... and a fairy on the top? They’d put you away! [audience laughs] Actually, this year, to ensure that I got a good Christmas tree this year, I went and picked it earlier. It looked perfect, beautiful shape... wonderful, wonderful shape... dark green... thick... bushy. That was then [audience laughs]. Now it looks like it suffers from acid rain. Even the fairy on the top is losing its hair! [audience laughs].

(21) If it’s difficult to get a Christmas tree, it’s even more difficult to get rid of the bloody thing! [audience laughs] (...) The dustman won’t take it... You can’t burn it... (...) And you find yourself... creeping around your neighbourhood trying to find a builder’s skip [audience laughs], and you can’t find one, so you dump it in somebody’s garden [audience laughs]... and think “Thank Christ! Got rid of it!!”... Come back to your own house and there’s two Christmas trees there! [audience laughs].

(22) To me, the most annoying thing about Christmas is wrapping paper. Why can’t the manufacturers of wrapping paper make wrapping paper so large that I can wrap up two presents? Why is it always one and a half? [audience laughs] I’ve actually got to the point that I buy the presents to fit the paper. I buy a big present... and a small present [audience laughs].

Individuals in the audience who have privately stored similar beliefs or felt similar feelings related to some or all of the Christmas issues addressed by Dave Allen, will suddenly (with the aid of communal laughter in the theatre) realise that these beliefs are also part of the other members’ background knowledge. Much of the humour arising from these monologues lies in this private/public interface.

This interface is also applicable to impressions, not fully propositional, and which the audience felt at some stage of their lives, but did not reflect on them until the comedian’s words encouraged that in the audience (cf. Ross, 1998: 108; McIlvenny et al., 1993: 239). Imagine, for instance, that a number of mothers in the audience were disappointed, when giving birth in hospital, to be under a bright light in the room. This is not a propositional belief, but a sudden negative impression to which mothers would not pay much attention, once the baby is born. Phyllis Dyler’s words explain the relevance of a comedian reminding the shared feeling of this impression:

(23) [When asked if there is any one particular type of joke that she has found gets a bigger response than another] Yes, yes! The closer it’s based to absolute, solid truth, the funnier it is because you bring out a funny attitude in a great truth. Let me give you a couple of such examples. “There’s one thing about the business that really frightens me, the bright lights -because when I was a housewife, if I ever had this much light on me, when I woke up, I had another kid”. See, it’s so true! If you’ve ever seen an obstetrician deliver, my God, it’s bright, white tile and the light... and what makes this great is that it’s the worst situation
Again, mutual manifestness of this thought-to-be private impression is highly relevant to a specific part of the audience: “It’s interesting to study the comedic response as a vehicle for making visible to an audience tacit areas of unacknowledged human attitudes and behaviors, residing in private, unofficial realms (...) The audience may hear their own behavior described as if it is an alien culture in the sense that they knew that information all along but no one ever said it like that to them before. However, even though the comedian and his audience share culture, part of the cultural knowledge with which they operate is tacit (that is, hitherto unspoken)” (Koziski, 1984: 59, 61). Besides this private-turned-public source of laughter, mutual manifestness of cultural representations is indeed another major source of communal humour inside the physical environment of the performance. In comedian Jack Dee’s words, “humour is to do with the realisation and relief that someone else has recognised something that you do or think” (quoted in Bracewell, 1994: 6). In any of these two major sources, laughter plays the part of manifesting that certain assumptions are indeed widely mutual in the audience (cf. Rorie, 2001). To sum up, these are the main sources of cultural awareness within stand-up comedy performances:

1. Private beliefs which suddenly acquire a public dimension through the comedian’s words.

2. The strengthening or re-assessment of cultural representations, either because the performance provides a mutual manifestness of these representations, or because the comedian unfolds inconsistencies in them.

3. The reflective attitude towards private impressions which members of the audience regarded as purely personal, but suddenly realise that these have also been felt by other people in the audience.

To these sources, I would like to add a fourth one: the challenging or re-shaping of unfair cultural representations, normally pervasive social archetypes. As will be illustrated in the next heading regarding sex roles, criticisable cultural representations are often challenged by comedians, in an attempt to erase archetypal cultural representations which linger on despite the development of Western societies. But the mutual manifestness of these challenges is not enough. Even if private representations may well be affected (and re-considered) by the new, in-coming representations coming from the comedian, the very fact that the comedian underlines the criticisable representations somehow reminds the audience of the metarepresented representations which they indirectly store in their minds, making the spread of cultural stereotypes multifaceted and inevitable.

6. Sex roles

6.1. Sexual stereotypes

A huge amount of bibliography has been published on the issue of sex-role stereotypes and their sources. These refer to general roles in society, and also to linguistic stereotypes on the way men and women typically speak.
Sex roles are acquired through different validating contexts: one of them is the authority underlying parents' language. This important source is later complemented with the values acquired at school and through different mass media discourses (literature, film, television, magazines, advertising...) emphasising both the traditional roles of men and women in society, and over-stressing the importance of physical appearance over personality in women’s lives (see, among many others, Kazen, 2000: 346; and Yus, 2001, ch. 2-3 for a general review). Dimaggio (1997) and D’Andrade (1995), among many others, have emphasised how people resort to a sort of automatic cognition on these cultural issues, relying heavily on culturally available schemata (object or events which provide default assumptions for a community). Later in the article it will be pointed out that comedienes usually focus their performances precisely on issues of body care and beauty, unlike male comedians.

There are also linguistic stereotypes concerning both sexes. Among others, these refer to the following aspects: 1. women use linguistic markers of politeness more frequently; 2. women use less unacceptable language (swearwords, taboo words...); 3. women have a cooperative attitude in their conversations; 4. women speak a lot (e.g. the stereotype of women’s tendency to gossiping); and 5. there are female-specific conversational topics.14

There is no space in this article to discuss in detail all the aspects related to the enduring quality of sex-role cultural beliefs. What interests us here is, basically, the existence of several sources of mental representations on sex roles. On the one hand, the audience have acquired private representations through intuitive or reflective sources and, fitting or contradicting these representations, they may also store parallel cultural metarepresentations regarding sex roles. As illustrated in (24), from an English alternative comic, private reflective beliefs acquired through an authoritative source (parents in this case) is no guarantee that metarepresented cultural beliefs will be erased from the person’s mental background knowledge:

(24) [A father -C- and a mother -A- talk to their son -B-]
A. Tarquin, go and help Malcolm tidy the house up... and the tea needs cooking and the washing doing... I’m going to my study to meditate...
B. Aren’t you going to help us?
A. Oh Tarquin! You know we don’t enforce sexual stereotypes in this house... It would be sexist for me to do any housework.
C She’s right, Tarquin! Men have been oppressing women for centuries and are responsible for all the world’s evil, so it’s only fair that we should make up for it now.
B Housework’s for girls... I want to go and play war. (“The Modern Parents”, Viz 60 [June-1993], p. 20).

Comedy in general, and stand-up comedy in particular, also exhibits stereotype-enduring attitudes in some of the performances, even in those made by comedienes (cf. Andrews, 1998). Some of the most frequent ones are the stereotypes of women as housewives, and women’s obsession to be beautiful and have a beautiful body.15 The latter undoubtedly moulds women’s performances, becoming one reiterative topic on which comedienes focus their humourous strategy (Sheppard, 1977: 366). Indeed, “the issues that a female comedian faces in relation to dress and body are different from the outset as she is judged primarily as sexual object which she then has to negotiate through the performance and content of her humour. The male comedian has a much wider range of humour options” (Porter, 1998: 79-80). In any case, comedians have to predict the cognitive environment of the members of the audience and, more important, the mutual cognitive environment cross-cutting the individual environments of these members. This is not
an easy task, since there are various sources for the formation of beliefs regarding sex roles, some of which acquire a cultural status (what has been labelled metarepresented cultural beliefs) matching, contradicting, extending etc. the audience’s own private beliefs on these sex roles. As suggested above, these private beliefs may be acquired via spontaneous perception or inference (intuitive beliefs) or through the validating contexts made available by a source of authority (e.g. parents, education and the media).16

6.2. Sex-role stereotypes and stand-up comedy performance

The comedian’s knowledge of the audience’s background mental representations and of the pervasive endurance of cultural stereotypes affect the performance of male comedians and female comediennees. As will be commented upon in the next heading, often comedians challenge these background expectations and stereotypes with the aid of their authority on the stage. Some of these challenges focus on the unfair language used when referring to both sexes, as we can see in the following excerpt by Dave Allen:

(25) If you compare animals to humans, as far as females are concerned, sex rears its ugly head. What is normally complimentary to a male... comes a total insult to a female. For example, if you say to a male... “he’s a ram!”... you think about sexual prowess... “you ram!” “bull!” “he’s a real stag!” [audience laughs]. I mean... people say that... “a stag!” “stag!” “he’s a stallion!” [audience laughs]... all highly complimentary. But you get the female of the species... and you apply it to a female... call a woman... “cow!”... there’s nothing nice in “cow!” “fat cow!” “stupid old cow!” [audience laughs]. If you say to somebody “he’s a gay dog”... someone is... [he smiles ostensively] [audience laughs]... “she’s a bitch!” [audience laughs]... sly!, sneaky! Foxes... You think that a fox is clever, sharp, intelligent... “Vixens?”... mean!... crafty!!

However, challenging a cultural stereotype also means pointing out to the audience that it exists, which entails that a side effect of cultural challenges in stand-up comedy is the strengthening of parallel metarepresented cultural beliefs (see 6.3 below for a typology of cases).

Certainly, the behaviour of many comedians and comediennees on the stage does not fit mutually manifest cultural assumptions in the audience. One of them, at least in the context of British and American stand-up performances, is related to the audience’s expectations on the very presence of women on the stage:

(26) [B]eing a woman, right away you walk out to almost total rejection. Almost nobody wants you to be a female comic and they give you a lot of static just because of your sex. It’s almost the same as they don’t want a female President. There’s an old cave-age saying: “Keep women in their place -in the cave- back in the cave with a spoon in their hand”. Men have this silly, witchy, witchcrafty attitude that a woman who is a comic has lost her femininity (Phyllis Diller, quoted in Wilde, 2000: 207).

(27) It takes a certain audacity for a woman to go on stage and say, right, listen to me and look at me; I’m going to make you laugh (Helen Lederer, quoted in Goodman, 1992: 294).

(28) Men in the audience treat female comics differently, too; they’ll take less from you, particularly anything of a sexual nature. It makes them cringe where it wouldn’t if it was
a bloke saying it (Deirdre O’Kane, quoted in Fay, 2000).

(29) Comedy is itself an aggressive act; making someone laugh means exerting control, even power. But a woman cannot come off as overaggressive or she will make people uncomfortable -a condition not conducive to laughter. Many researchers note the position of superiority held by the joketeller, a position that might be uncomfortable for some of the parties when the performer is female (researcher Julia Klein, quoted in Naranjo-Huebl, 1995).

(30) If you’re a woman, it’s difficult to break through the barrier of having others to accept you as funny. There’s all that training you’ve had since you were three. Be a lady! Don’t yell or try to be funny. Just be a nice little girl. Sit quietly with your knees close together, and speak when you’re spoken to (Carol Burnett, quoted in Horowitz, 1997: 11)

The comedienne’s two main methods of ‘female reaction’ in stand-up comedy are summarised below:

(a) Not to be linguistically feminine. Many comedienne intentionally depart from the expected appropriate language of women (politeness, lack of swearwords, etc.). For instance, Jenny Eclair in Top Bitch (1995) used ‘strong’ expletives, and eschewed polite language (cf. Liladhar, 2000). Besides, Williams (1998: 152) points out how lesbian comedienne are not expected the same level of linguistic inappropriateness as their gay counterparts because of the cliché that women should not swear.

(b) Not to be physically feminine. Joan Rives, for instance, based the humorous effects of her performances on her negative characterisation, both of her role as woman and her physical look as a failed woman, unattractive, and with no female attributes (Mintz, 1985: 75). Other comedienne such as Ellen Degeneres appear on stage dressed in sex-neutral even masculine clothes, in order to de-emphasise their feminine image and obtain additional power over the audience (Goodman, 1992: 297).

6.3. The epidemiological role of stand-up comedians

The words uttered by the comedian have an effect on the audience’s background knowledge. New, in-coming information is contrasted to previously stored information, and the result may be a strengthening, an erasure, or a refinement of assumptions, among other possibilities. Above in this article, it has also been mentioned that an important role of comedians’ monologues is to make mutually manifest -and public- what was previously regarded as purely private.

In the case of sex-role stereotypes, the comedian or comedienne has to bear in mind the existence of the two types of mental representations (i.e., beliefs) which have already been distinguished for methodological purposes (even if there is certainly some overlapping of scope between them):

1. Private representations (e.g. beliefs), which the person assumes as part of his/her background knowledge and which, in the case of individual beliefs, can be sub-divided into:
   1.a. Intuitive beliefs, acquired spontaneously via perception or inference.
   1.b. Reflective beliefs, metarepresented beliefs whose validating context is usually made available through communication and a source of authority. In the case of sex roles, two major sources for the formation of reflective beliefs are parents’ and school education and the constant barrage of information reaching the person from media discourses. In one of his shows, Dave
Allen joked about the first of these sources, parents’ stereotype-consistent education on male and female roles in society:

(31) One of the main changes in today’s society is our attitude to what we could call the stereotype of the sexes... or the role that sex plays. If you actually think back to your childhood... We had very distinctive lives... My mother was a great believer in what we could call sexual differences. I was four years of age... I would walk with my mother down the street... my mother would say things like “David, walk on the outside”. I’d go “What do you mean?” “Walk on the outside of me”. “Why mummy?”. “It leaves your sword arm free” [audience laughs]. “What are you talking about? I don’t have a sword!” [audience laughs]. “No, but in the days, years ago, when men did have swords, some men might want to attack the female, so the male would walk on the outside of the female so he can get out his sword and fight that person... See? That’s why you walk on the outside”. “But... but... I don’t have a sword!” [audience laughs]. “No! But you protect mummy!... You protect!!... male!!... you’re a male!! You’re the stronger of the two!! Males are the hunters! The providers! Females stay at home, and make a home and a nest and keep it warm for the... Stop crying!!” [audience laughs].

2. Metarepresented cultural beliefs. Also reflective, but which may differ drastically from the holder’s private representations, as was illustrated in examples (2) and (3) above. For instance, two members of the same audience may differ in their mental representations if one of them privately acquired the belief that men and women should have equal opportunities in society, but was nevertheless aware of the cultural female stereotypes that abound in the media, and the other member was brought up to consider women’s role inferior to men’s in society and whose archetypal private beliefs were strengthened by cultural stereotypes reaching that person from multiple media discourses.

The comedian’s prediction of the audience’s arrangement of these multiplicity of beliefs is important, but the interpretive of the outcome of contrasting the comedian’s speech and the audience’s background knowledge is not highly predictable. What can be hypothesised is that many of these old information-new information interfaces will produce a reinforcement, a questioning, or at least a mutual awareness of the existence of cultural stereotypes.

Let us consider some types of background knowledge in the audience and how the comedian’s monologues might affect them. Concerning sex-role beliefs, we will distinguish between two broad categories: stereotype-consistent information (representations such as women’s passive role in relationships, home-bound life, obsession with looks and body shape, etc.) and stereotype-inconsistent information (not fitting this stereotypical cultural information). In all the cases we will consider the input from metarepresented cultural beliefs to be stereotype-consistent, given the quantity of stereotypical assumptions which acquire a representational status in the audience’s minds through public media discourses (press, TV, film, comics, magazines...), but the possibility of stereotype-inconsistent cultural metarepresentations from media discourses is not denied.

To illustrate the categories proposed, we will use examples of typical cultural archetypes:

A. Comedian’s monologue: stereotype-consistent in cases 1-4 below (all women should be housewives) and stereotype-inconsistent (monologue by Dave Allen) in cases 5-8 below (women play the active role in cross-sex relationships).
B. Private representations in the audience: either stereotype-consistent (all women should be housewives in cases 1-4; women play the passive role in cross-sex relationships in cases 5-8), or stereotype-inconsistent (women should be whatever they want to be in cases 1-4; women play the active role in cross-sex relationships in cases 5-8).

C. Metarepresented cultural representations in the audience: mainly stereotype-consistent (all women should be housewives in cases 1-4 or women play the passive role in cross-sex relationships in cases 5-8) as portrayed repeatedly in media discourses. Again, the possibility of stereotype-inconsistent information from media discourses is not dealt with, given the vast amount of stereotypical information in these discourses, but this possibility is not denied either.

Cases 1-4: The comedian’s monologue fits cultural stereotypes

In these four types the comedian’s words strengthen cultural stereotypes currently held by the audience, either privately or as a cultural metarepresentation. Consider, for instance, the hypothetical monologue in (32):

(32) Women don’t like swearwords. That’s a fact. Take my wife, for example. We had a gorgeous honeymoon but, for no reason, back at home she called her mother. She told her that the honeymoon had been wonderful... so romantic... But she complained that, as soon as we returned, I started using the most horrible language... saying things she’d never heard before! All these awful four-letter words! She even asked her mother to come get her and take her home! Her mother was surprised since I have always been a nice guy [audience laughs]. Her mother replied: “Sarah, Sarah, calm down! Tell me, what could be so awful? What four-letter words has he been using?” My wife was very upset, but honest, there was no need: I only suggested her normal four-letter words like dust! wash! iron! and cook! [audience laughs].

This stereotype-consistent monologue would yield four possibilities of interaction with the audience’s private representations:

1. a. Comedian’s input: stereotype-consistent
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): stereotype-consistent
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): stereotype-consistent
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: stereotype-consistent

In case 1 the comedian’s words strengthen previously held private and culturally metarepresented beliefs in the audience which fit the cultural sex-role stereotype. A relevant effect in this first case is the mutual manifestness of cultural information, the public status that private beliefs acquire, and the parallel spread of stereotype-consistent representations. Besides, some of the audience’s reflectively acquired beliefs may be transformed into intuitive ones, given the source of authority with which the comedian is normally endowed.

This case is the one which most strongly favours the epidemiological spread of stereotype-consistent cultural representations. This fact is supported by the evidence that in the processes of transmission stereotypical information has a greater tendency to remain stable (and more likely to spread epidemiologically) than stereotype-inconsistent information. For instance, Lyons and
Kashima (2001) observed that when their informants transmitted a story to others, the stereotype-consistent information contained in it was reproduced more often, and more faithfully than the stereotype-inconsistent one, the latter progressively dying out as the chain of transmission proceeded. This first case also fits Douglas’s *rite* (1978, quoted in Mintz, 1985: 73), that is, a context in which shared cultural representations are publicly affirmed. In other situations, what takes place is a re-examination of these cultural representations (Douglas’s *anti-rite*) fitting other prototypical cases such as case 7 below.

2.  a. Comedian’s input: *stereotype-consistent*
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): *stereotype-consistent*
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): *stereotype-inconsistent*
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: *stereotype-consistent*

The audience has stored intuitive beliefs about sex roles in society which do not match their metarepresented cultural beliefs. For instance, that would be the case of a family in which non-sexist roles are continuously displayed in front of the child leading to stereotype-inconsistent intuitive beliefs. However, the audience is also able to generate, through their own metarepresentational reasoning (and maybe validated by the source of authority in media discourses or in communication from other reliable human sources), reflective attitudes towards these roles, some of which do not match these intuitive beliefs. There is, then, a parallel (and contrastive) storage of representations, stereotype-inconsistent intuitive beliefs, and stereotype-consistent reflective beliefs. These individuals face the storage of asymmetrical private beliefs but may deduce that cultural stereotypes on sex roles are the social norm (through the back-up of their parallel metarepresented cultural beliefs), and this belief will surely be strengthened by the comedian’s stereotype-consistent authority-loaded input. In this case two cultural stereotypes are also likely to spread through this type of audience.

3.  a. Comedian’s input: *stereotype-consistent*
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): *stereotype-inconsistent*
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): *stereotype-inconsistent*
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: *stereotype-consistent*

The comedian’s stereotype-consistent representations on sex roles contradict the audience’s private representations. On paper, contradictory information stands a chance of turning out relevant if, as a consequence of contrasting new and old information the outcome is an improved quality of the person’s knowledge. However, in this third case the strength of the audience’s private representations (intuitively and reflectively acquired) overcomes the strength of the comedian’s input. Even so, as a side effect of contrasting stereotype-consistent information with strongly held stereotype-inconsistent private representations, the metarepresented cultural representations (which currently do not match the audience’s private representations) also have to be activated to a greater or lesser extent. Mutual manifestness of cultural stereotypes, even if it does not affect private representations, is spread in the audience through metarepresentational activation.

Another possibility is that the comedian’s authority backs up the communication of stereotype-consistent information which leads to an elimination of the audience’s private stereotype-inconsistent beliefs which contradict the comedian’s manifest ones. There may even be a replacement in the storage of intuitive beliefs, so that from now on some members of the
audience will intuitively believe what was reflectively inferred from the comedian’s words.

4. a. Comedian’s input: stereotype-consistent  
b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): stereotype-inconsistent  
c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): stereotype-consistent  
d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: stereotype-consistent

This case is similar to case 2 above. It differs in the quality and source of stereotype-consistent private representations. This time, the comedian’s monologue on traditional sex roles contradicts the audience’s intuitively acquired beliefs, but not their reflective ones. Through the member’s own reasoning or through a trust in the reliability of representations acquired from media discourses or other authorised sources (e.g. parents, peers...), the outcome is a certain strength of stereotype-consistent information over intuitive inconsistent beliefs (some of which may turn stereotype-consistent under the authorised input from the comedian). Again, cultural stereotypes spread in the audience through the strengthening of both reflective private beliefs and metarepresented cultural beliefs, and maybe also through the contradiction and elimination of intuitive beliefs given the evidence against their support.

**Cases 5-9: The comedian’s monologue does not fit cultural stereotypes**

In these cases the comedian resorts to his/her authority on stage to challenge currently held cultural stereotypes on sex roles. Consider, for instance, Dave Allen’s monologue in (33):

(33) Women are much more independent nowadays and I’m very pleased with that. They are much more aware of their own sex. They’re not quite so prepared to play the subservient role to the hairy macho that existed. You remember them? I mean... there was a time when girls would wait for the initial advance from the male, which generally came up when the pubs had closed... [audience laughs] in between yawns... and belches [audience laughs]. Their bodies were subjected to a kind of groping, fumbling attack! [audience laughs] (...) In a way, there is a role reversal taking place. Women are much more, as we say, independent... more prepared to go out... and pick up somebody. If they fancy some fellow they don’t sit on the other side of the room and wait for some kind of magical thing to happen... They are always quite prepared to go across and pass a compliment... (...) They are much more direct about sex and what sex is for them... and quite rightly. I mean, women will talk about... orgasms, “my own right to have an orgasm”... “I’m not your sexual play thing... I want! I want! You had it last night, it’s my turn tonight!” [audience laughs]. And the male now... doesn’t know how to react on this! He was the hunter!... now he’s the hunted! He doesn’t know what he can do in the foreplay! He doesn’t know what to do with it! And she goes “I want an orgasm!!!” [audience laughs]. (...) The male... retreats! Basically, females are now talking about [mimics being a woman speaking] “Are we gonna make love? Are you just gonna lie there? He suddenly goes [mimics the man’s answer] “I... haven’t taken any precautions” [audience laughs]. (...) He says things he’d never said before... “I’ve... got a headache” [audience laughs]. And she’ll say “I’ve got something to cure that!” [audience laughs]. There’s a total turnabout now in male and female sexual relationships! The male is actually faking the orgasms!!

This stereotype-inconsistent monologue would yield another four possibilities of interaction with
the audience’s private representations:

5. a. Comedian’s input: **stereotype-inconsistent**  
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): **stereotype-inconsistent**  
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): **stereotype-inconsistent**  
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: **stereotype-consistent**

Cases 5 to 8 fit one of the prototypical situations of stand-up comedy: the one in which the comedian tries to subvert currently held cultural stereotypes, and mostly so if we analyse comedienne’s performances whose main topic is the unfair endurance of sex-role stereotypes (Greenbaum, 1999: 36). Much of the audience’s enjoyment comes from their realisation that, at least within the boundaries of the performance, cultural and linguistic norms can be challenged. For instance, in his comments on comedian Billy Connolly, Jeffries (1996) writes that “much of [Connolly’s] humour revolves around swearing, around bums, farts and pricks. We are insufficiently liberated, still tittering about taboos like pre-pubescents, so comedians such as Connolly who stoop to conquer their audiences with toilet humour will always be greeted with hysteria. Here laughter serves as a comic relief: we laugh maniacally at these taboos, thus reinforcing their status and power”.

Specifically, in this case 5 some members of the audience store private representations which differ, both in their intuitive and reflective quality, from their stereotype-consistent metarepresented cultural representations. The comedian’s monologue reinforces these representations. However, as pointed out above, questioning or challenging cultural stereotypes entails their parallel activation and subsequent contrast with private beliefs. Without an intentional spread of these representations, stereotype-consistent information may become mutually manifest in the audience and spread through the specific metarepresentational storage of cultural representations which are not considered to be private. The end of Jeffries’s comments quoted above, in which the status and power of taboos is laughed at precisely through the audience’s acknowledgement of their strength, fits this idea of cultural activation of beliefs which are nevertheless not supported privately.

6. a. Comedian’s input: **stereotype-inconsistent**  
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): **stereotype-inconsistent**  
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): **stereotype-consistent**  
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: **stereotype-consistent**

In case 6, some members of the audience have acquired a number of reflective beliefs which fit current cultural stereotypes but which differ from intuitively acquired beliefs. This would be the case of members of the audience who, despite concluding, through spontaneous reasoning or perception, that sex roles should depart from current archetypal representations, nevertheless find some source of authority, e.g. media discourses, teachers, parents..., validates the formation of parallel stereotype-consistent representations. The members’ reflectively acquired representations match their own metarepresented view of culture. Hence, the comedian’s input contradicts these representations but not the intuitively acquired ones. The outcome may be a competing equilibrium of stereotype-consistent and stereotype-inconsistent representations. In any case, the former have to be accessed in order to test their strength, which makes them mutually manifest to the audience, and liable to spread (through metarepresented storage) in the theatre.
7. a. Comedian’s input: stereotype-inconsistent
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): stereotype-consistent
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): stereotype-consistent
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: stereotype-consistent

In the seventh case the comedian uselessly tries to challenge stereotype-consistent representations held by the audience: intuitively private, reflectively private and metarepresented cultural ones, all of them stereotype-consistent. The strength of this three-way source of representation storage makes it difficult for the comedian’s input to erase the stereotypes and replace them with new stereotype-inconsistent representations.

This case is, perhaps, typical in stand-up comedy: to try to dismantle currently held archetypal assumptions about the world. As already suggested, one of the most relevant aspects of stand-up comedy is to reveal the cultural in the thought-to-be private. Besides, comedians can challenge cultural representations which are felt to be unfair. In theory, there may be an audience-wide re-organisation of these cultural representations in the specific context of comedy, if the strength of privately held beliefs prevents their rejection. For instance, comedienne Anita Wise attempted in her performances to challenge the male obsession with female bodies and their habit of judging women according to their sexual attributes:

(34) Unfortunately it’s true, a lot of men judge women on their bodies. I’m not saying it’s conscious but a lot of guys do that. Like they think that the larger a woman’s breasts are the less intelligent she is. I don’t think it works like that. I think if anything it’s the opposite. I think the larger women’s breasts are the less intelligent the men become (quoted in Rutter, 1997: 199).

However, another possibility in this prototypical case is that the strength of the audience’s stereotype-consistent knowledge may make them accept stereotype-inconsistent input only within the physical realm of the theatre, leaving their general representation of the world unaffected. Several authors have pointed out that challenging attitudes in stand-up comedy is only allowed in its specific context of the venue. This happens to the so-called feminist comedy, defined by Goodman (1992: 289) as “that comedy which purposefully subverts stereotype-consistent expectations about ‘what women are’ or ‘should be’, and which also subverts the very means of expression and representation by and through which such expectations are conveyed”. Indeed, what female humorists can achieve through this type of comedy is often allowed in the separate realm of comedy, but not in the general framework of sex roles in society: “the same woman who does a hugely successful feminist routine in a comedy club or theatre will not necessarily find similar acceptance if she repeats her views at home or at her nine-to-five job” (ibid.).

8. a. Comedian’s input: stereotype-inconsistent
   b. Audience’s private representations (intuitively acquired): stereotype-consistent
   c. Audience’s private representations (reflectively acquired): stereotype-inconsistent
   d. Audience’s metarepresentational cultural representations: stereotype-consistent

This case is similar to case 6 above, differing in the source of private representations in the audience. This time, it is their reflective representations that are stereotype-inconsistent and that become strengthened by the comedian’s monologue. Metarepresented cultural beliefs are challenged by the comedian, and their spread can only be made possible through contrasting the
challenged cultural stereotype with the audience’s own beliefs. Despite the challenge, cultural stereotypes become mutually manifest in the audience as a ‘reinforcing’ side effect of the comedian’s monologue.

7. Concluding remarks

Stand-up comedians’ monologues play an important role in the quality of the audience’s private and cultural representations, and on how these representations are epidemiologically spread after becoming mutually manifest in the realm of the comedy venue. This role has been exemplified with enduring cultural stereotypes such as the one(s) concerning sex roles in society. Many of the humorous effects achieved by comedians in their monologues lie, precisely, in the joy of discovering that certain cultural ideas are mutually manifest and not privately held.

In order to explain the likelihood of archetype sex-role beliefs being culturally transmitted throughout the audience, a methodological distinction was made between the audience’s private representations (either intuitively or reflectively acquired, following Sperber, 1997a) and their metarepresented cultural representations, the main methodological advantage of this distinction being the possibility to cover the fact that the latter need not match privately acquired representations on the same issues. The result was an eight-case typology of possible interactions between the comedian’s ‘input’ monologue and the audience’s background mental representations on sex roles in society. This typology is based on the default situation of cultural representations strengthening stereotypes (e.g. from media discourses), but the eight cases analysed in this article would double if stereotype-inconsistent cultural representations were also taken into account.

The analysis of these eight prototypical cases shows how cultural stereotypes spread through the audience: in cases 1, 2, 4 and 7 cultural stereotypes spread either because the comedian’s stereotype-consistent monologue strengthens them or leads to an elimination of contradictory stereotype-inconsistent representations (cases 1, 2 and 4) or because the audience’s private beliefs are also stereotype-consistent (7). In cases 3, 5, 6 and 8 cultural archetypes are challenged either by the strength of stereotype-inconsistent private beliefs in the audience (case 3) or because, despite the challenging monologue by the comedian, the cultural stereotype is activated anyhow in the necessary contrast between stereotype-consistent information and the new, in-coming stereotype-inconsistent monologue by the comedian (5, 6 and 8). In other words, in cases 5, 6 and 8 the stereotype-consistent cultural representation challenged by the comedian inevitably entails a confirmation of the existence of that background cultural rule which the comedian attempts to question.

Notes

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1. According to Sperber (1996: 99), public productions are “perceptible modifications of the environment brought about by human behaviour”. These have, as has already been pointed out, mental representations among their causes and effects: “Mental representations caused by public productions can in turn cause further public productions, that can cause further mental
representations” (ibid.). This causal chain of re-shaped representations is one of the reasons why we cannot approach cultural spread as a process of imitation or pure duplication (as researchers within memetics claim) but a process of transformation of representations, some of which remain more or less stable throughout the epidemiological process of cultural transmission. More on this in heading four.

2. There has been research on the humorous aspects of narratives. See, for instance, Palmer (1988), Attardo (1998, 2001) and Larkin Galiñanes (2000). However, monologues by stand-up comedians often show no clue as to their humour-provoking attributes. We will argue that on many occasions (and apart from the comedian’s own skills when uttering the monologues) humour does not lie in the monologues themselves, but in the effect they produce on the audience’s background beliefs and on the scope of the private/cultural interface of their mental representations.

3. This distinction between mental and public representations can be compared to other dichotomies proposed within psychology. Specifically in evolutionary psychology, one can find the distinction between genotype and phenotype. The former is a mental representation, while the latter is its implementation as behaviour, vocalisation or artifact (cf. Gabora, 1999). Cloak (1975: 170) also makes an interesting distinction between i-culture (cultural items on people’s minds) and m-culture (material manifestations of cultural artifacts): “an i-culture builds and operates m-culture features whose ultimate function is to provide for the maintenance and propagation of the i-culture in a certain environment. And the m-culture features, in turn, environmentally affect the composition of the i-culture so as to maintain or increase their own capabilities for performing that function. As a result, each m-culture feature is shaped for its particular functions in that environment”.

4. In 5.3.1 below it will be argued that stand-up comedians also have to be endowed with a certain level of authority for cultural representations to be spread effectively throughout the audience.

5. Indeed, “human beings somehow manage to communicate in situations where a great deal can be assumed about what is manifest to others, a lot can be assumed about what is mutually manifest to themselves and others, but nothing can be assumed to be truly mutually known” (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/95: 45).

6. Dave Allen’s excerpts in this article are extracted from the videotape Dave Allen. 20 Years of Classic Moments from the Godfather of British Comedy, PolyGram, 1996.

7. This is what Attardo (p.c., 24-3-2002) calls information transmission as a side-effect of humour, “because the presuppositional basis of the utterances has to be accommodated in the shared knowledge of the speaker and the audience. This explains why potentially false, irrelevant, confusing, etc. information can still convey ‘good’ knowledge”.

8. A note of caution here: the fact that laughter spreads across the venue is no guarantee that the comedian’s intended humorous effect has been achieved, let alone that cultural representations (made manifest by the comedian) are similarly held in all the members of the audience. Often the audience laughs for no specific reason, maybe from the fact that they are in a place of
entertainment, or they simply get carried away by other people’s laughter without really knowing why laugher arose in the first place. Thanks to Attardo (p.c. 24/25-3-2002) for pointing this out to me.

9. I am not denying that monologues do have a humorous organisation. Indeed, they also contain humorous devices and even garden-path structures in the narrative (what Attardo 2001 calls jab lines). What I mean here is that monologues are not systematically based on the typical (and often predictable) overt strategies which abound in short jokes, but contain a more elaborate structure. Furthermore, in some cases the monologues are simply stories which appear to contain no overt humorous devices. In these monologues, collective awareness of cultural representations may be found amusing for its own sake.

10. No only in stand-up comedy. Comedy in general abounds in and is influenced by stereotypical assumptions regarding the sexes and cross-sex relationships. See, for instance, Porter (1998: 70) on the spectrum of female types in British comedy, ranging from the dumb blonde, with over-determined sexuality, to the tyrant spinster, with a lack of sexuality or lack of sexual difference. See also Goodman (1992).

11. This fact is essential to understand why jokes based on the incongruity-resolution pattern (Yus, 1997) are very effective: the addressee will try his/her best to solve the incongruity detected in the processing of the joke, but this mental operation is controlled by the joker, who expects some inferential paths and not others in the addressee. It has been demonstrated that there is a humorous effect in the final resolution to the puzzle in the joke (often made available by the joker).

12. Therefore, stand-up performances can be labelled cultural environments, defined by Sperber (1996: 155) as all the public productions in the environment that are causes and effects of mental representations. It blends seamlessly with the physical environment of which it is part. In the specific context of the performance, public productions (comedian’s monologues) trigger (in the audience) the construction of mental representations whose contents are partly determined by the properties of the stimuli (comedian’s words) and partly by pre-existing resources (individual knowledge and mental resources of each member of the audience).

13. Attardo finds it likely that the audience will share feelings about problems getting rid of Christmas trees, but unlikely that they will share the feeling concerning finding trees in their own gardens: “the realization that if everybody feels the same way about the trees, then they will do the same thing you will do (i.e., dump it in someone's yard) comes as a surprise (it is a punch line). So it cannot have been manifest (because if it had been manifest it would not have been surprising). So I totally buy the ‘recognition for the getting rid of the tree is hard’ part, but I have a much harder time for the ‘you’ll find two trees in your yard’ part” (p.c., 25-3-2002). Maybe the latter is not directly accessed by the audience as part of their own background knowledge, but as a logical conclusion from having a garden and being in the same period of the year as other people in the neighbourhood. Even if the audience has not gone through the episode of finding trees in their own gardens, they can surely understand the logical possibility of that to happen.

expletives; ‘empty adjectives’; ‘tag questions’; and ‘a wider range of pitch and intonation’ (than men). Furthermore, ‘superpolite’ forms or ‘compounded and indirect request forms... [and] other excessively polite and euphemistic language’; ‘hedges’; ‘hypercorrect grammar’, an avoidance of ‘vulgar or coarse’ terms and a use of ‘precise pronunciation’. Finally, these features include an inability to either tell or ‘get’ jokes the way men do.

15. In Yus (2001) A distinction was made between woman-as-signifier and woman-as-signified when talking about how the media portray female characters. In general, all the media have over-emphasised the former and made little or no reference to the latter, creating a semiotic imbalance in media discourses which female comedians also acknowledge to a greater or lesser extent. For instance, in an interview comedienne Jo Brand remarked: “there is this attitude towards women which prevails in magazines and on the telly and if a Martian came down to earth and just had to watch telly and read magazines to find out what women were like he’d think that they were all blonde and 25 with big tits, you know. Because that is mainly what you expect on the telly. Also they would think that they were never rude and always looked nice, they always deferred to men, a lot of the time” (quoted in Wagg, 1998: 122).

16. In Yus (2001: ch. 3) the influence of the media is selected as one of the major sources for the formation and spread of sexual stereotypes, but other authors favour other influences. For instance, Morris et al. (2000: 3) underline the importance of spontaneous perception in the formation of cultural archetypes.

References


