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The Comic Counterfactual:

Laughter, Affect, and Civic Alternatives

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Abstract

This project contributes the *comic counterfactual* to the critical lexicon of rhetorical studies. Using a range of examples from political comedy, this paper offers six distinguishing features and several temporal functions of this concept. I argue that the comic counterfactual invites audiences to critically reflect upon the political, social, and performative consequences of historical events by bringing affective, sensory weight to alternative visions, moving unaccountable private interests into public culture, targeting the subtle determinisms that can easily creep into communication, and creating plausible ways to reworld the status quo. I discuss the limitations of the comic counterfactual in the political economy of media and offer several conclusions for rhetorical research and practice.

Key words: rhetoric; comedy; politics; performativity; The Yes Men

The Comic Counterfactual: Laughter, Affect, and Civic Alternatives

Although comedians have been practicing some of the most engaging political discourse in U.S. media over the last two decades,¹ it is not always clear what rhetorical purposes comedy serves in public affairs. Whether it's Stephen Colbert giving congressional testimony in character or Samantha Bee's tongue-in-cheek interviews with politicians, what such discourse does and how it works continues to deserve closer analysis. Forms like parody can put overly elevated discourses in their places, providing audiences with spaces for independent judgments that "counter idealization, mythic enchantment, and other forms of hegemony."² Beyond radical critiques, however, comedy can invite audiences to engage with plausible political alternatives, particularly when working with affect, performativity, and other rhetorical factors.

Given these evolving forms of public discourse, scholars have underscored a need to "craft a new vocabulary" for parsing comedy's features and functions.³ Toward this end, this project contributes the *comic counterfactual* to the critical lexicon of rhetorical studies. Counterfactuals have been traditionally defined as alternate constructions of the past that show how the world may have turned out differently. The rewriting of a past presidential speech to show how discourses or events could have proceeded along different lines can be considered a counterfactual.⁴ This essay adds the modifier "comic" to the noun "counterfactual" to construct both a descriptive and heuristic concept. As a unique comedic form that serves expressly political ends, comic counterfactuals provide one way of understanding the rhetorical nature and functions of comedy.

Far from a frivolous enterprise, comic counterfactuals use comedic methods to juxtapose certain events against alternate realities. In creating a plausible but separate world, such

discourse invites audiences to see overly naturalized human practices, so that unrealized histories or alternate present or future avenues for change emerge as preferable to present conditions. I argue that the comic counterfactual invites audiences to critically reflect upon the political, social, and performative consequences of historical events by bringing affective, sensory weight to alternative visions, moving unaccountable private interests into public culture, targeting the subtle determinisms that can easily creep into communication, and creating plausible ways to reworld the status quo.

This essay refers to a range of examples from political comedy to construct six distinguishing features for comic counterfactuals. To deepen this analysis, I also examine the comedic activist group The Yes Men as a site that articulates the concept's distinctive contours and functions. Working from a tradition combining performance art, online and offline protest, and the application of comic techniques, The Yes Men use comic activism to expose the problems of powerful organizations.⁵ Different than many comedic efforts in which entertainment is the central goal, however, The Yes Men underscore how "everything we do is for the message; it's the message above all, and comical techniques can convey it."⁶ Examining The Yes Men further provides a way to understand the limitations of the comic counterfactual in the larger political economy of media.

This essay will first explore interdisciplinary literatures on counterfactuals. I then construct six features of comic counterfactuals with literature on related concepts and examples from political comedy. Some temporal functions of comic counterfactuals are then provided through an analysis of how The Yes Men have used this strategy. The essay concludes with a discussion about the limitations of comic counterfactuals and implications for rhetorical research and practice.

What are Counterfactuals?

Literatures exploring counterfactuals highlight some general and field-specific themes. Fundamentally, a counterfactual forwards an idea about something that did not happen to show how the world could have been different.⁷ In historical studies, counterfactuals developed as part of a genre of alternate history in which a hypothetically altered event could have created new outcomes.⁸ Historians use counterfactuals to construct scenarios imagining what might have happened if a losing presidential candidate had won an election, or to investigate theses like, “if the Armada had defeated the British, there would have been no Protestant stronghold, and no modern capitalism.”⁹ In doing so, counterfactuals undermine the human tendency to see the past as less contingent than the future.¹⁰ Interdisciplinary attention to counterfactuals further reflects our environment’s instabilities, given the vagaries of global economics, climate change, etc.—calling into question deterministic, evolutionary accounts of history, which can be found in both capitalist and communist creeds.¹¹

While it is part of regular human reasoning patterns, thinking about counterfactuals more explicitly can lead people into deeper understandings of complex, taken-for-granted systems, opening space for testing different ideas and expanding hypothetical reasoning.¹² The history of science is replete with figures who used counterfactuals, since the scientific method itself assumes some counterfactual reasoning in helping scholars think through what theories might be rejected or accepted.¹³

Since many variables are always at play, some historians argue that counterfactuals should be constructed as close to the conditions of what happened as possible.¹⁴ Others emphasize that such arguments differ by degree, not kind, however, since “miracle counterfactual” questioning like “if the population of the southern Sudan were Caucasian and

Christian, would the West have intervened earlier or more effectively” can also help people work through political and ethical problems.¹⁵ “Analytical utility” can hence trump realism as a criterion for counterfactuals, so they may be employed less for their accuracy than their imaginative power.¹⁶

In philosophy, scholars use counterfactuals to generate alternate, conditional statements about reality in ways that go beyond reasoning about the past. These speculations could include: “if the reactor were to fail, this mechanism would click in.”¹⁷ Philosophers attribute a heuristic function to the concept and have generally not required a “full-blown realism” with counterfactuals.¹⁸

Psychologists have been the most focused on the construct in the past several decades. Where historians and philosophers tend to use the concept in larger social terms, psychologists use counterfactuals as a variable describing individual thought processes. In situations where harm may have occurred in a person’s life, “counterfactual reasoning entails thinking about how bad outcomes could have been avoided.”¹⁹ It involves a mental simulation about alternative realities that could include intrapersonal statements such as, “if only I had gone to university, I could have pursued a different career.”²⁰ Similar to other disciplines, psychologists focus on how people can juxtapose a counterfactual against some perceived reality.²¹ More on the “realist” side of the debate, a psychological counterfactual asks individuals to play with new information that is temporarily taken up as reality,²² and should carry “entertainability presuppositions that their antecedents be possible with respect to the counterfactual domain.”²³ Psychologists look at how counterfactual thinking can promote creativity, improve negotiation skills, and generally increase “motivation, encourage persistence and model success through a process of reflection and evaluation of alternative states.”²⁴

Literary scholars apply counterfactuals within stories, especially through “implied authors” and characters who invoke unrealized scenarios, depicting “foreclosed possibilities, lost opportunities, and near misses.”²⁵ They can be considered figures of speech, highlighting options while making judgments in a manner that is “anything but unreal.”²⁶ One study underscored their importance when, for instance, “your favorite character in a television sitcom is in serious trouble because he trusted the words of a hypocritical friend. Knowing that the story is not true, you may nonetheless think how things could have turned out differently had your favorite character been smart enough not to trust the vicious friend.”²⁷ In other words, counterfactuals have value in simulating unexplored choices.

In the social sciences and professional settings, counterfactuals are used in a more exacting fashion as a method for making empirical inferences. In a turn from only focusing on the past, scholars use the counterfactual as a tool for hypothesizing about future results.²⁸ Counterfactuals have been applied in economics and finance, urban planning, and political science.²⁹ Since “some counterfactuals are more strained, farther from the data, or otherwise unrealistic,” such work has used empirical data to support inferences.³⁰ Counterfactuals are also used in legal proceedings, particularly to help jurors think about causes and effects and what courses of action are possible.³¹

In sum, interdisciplinary research on counterfactuals highlights several features for analysis. Counterfactuals show how the world could be different, generating alternate scenarios and illuminating contingencies countering the status quo. They can bring causes and outcomes more sharply into view while spotlighting hypocrisies, evaluating performances, and exploring missed inventions. More contested is how plausible or probable counterfactuals should be. Yet all accounts indicate that some external event(s) should serve as a basis for counterfactual

explorations. While counterfactuals generally reflect on past concerns, scholars increasingly highlight their relevance to the present and future. In the next section, I highlight several features of comic counterfactuals through a range of examples.

Comic Counterfactuals

Comic counterfactuals have almost all the features of counterfactuals highlighted in previous literature, but they are also distinguished by how their comic elements work. It is first worth recognizing the serious inflections that work on counterfactuals have been given to this point. Attending to qualities like realism or utility has likely led scholars to miss the entertaining aspects of some counterfactuals. A primary feature of the comic counterfactual is that it strategically aims to be funny and create laughter to some degree. Not all counterfactuals do this. The point of conducting this discourse in a comedic register is to generate attention and engagement with the counterfactual. The comic modifier acts as a hook for the counterfactual, inviting citizens to expand their perspectives and choices by not getting caught in a single story about “the way things are.”

The significance of bringing laughter to bear on the counterfactual lies in its connection with affect. Laughter is largely involuntary and affect-laden. Far from its common associations as a “diversion,” rhetoric that seeks to evoke laughter tries to saturate a space with the somatic and sensory. These physiological pressures play a part in matters involving the body, feeling, energy, and the overall “sensorium” that scholars see as critical to understanding rhetoric.³² Comedy seeks physiological change, attempting to work with affect in ways that more rational modes of rhetoric cannot. Yet the importance of the counterfactual part of this concept should not be lost here—where laughter targets an affective leap toward the counterfactual, the

counterfactual itself grounds the comic back in a cognitive argument about another way the world could and should be.

For example, Samantha Bee visited the United Nations to discuss gender and politics with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.³³ Highlighting the former secretary's isolation and difficulty navigating the male dominated environment, in one bit Albright invites Bee into her "super secret office"—the women's restroom—where a blue-helmeted peacekeeper serves them both wine. Bee's presence as a comedienne and use of jokes in the normally stern environment act as hooks for a counterfactual: there should be more women in power at the UN and in other governmental institutions worldwide. To anchor the bit and provide a contrast with her counterfactual, Bee walks through a UN hallway with nothing but portraits of past male leaders in it. She then segues to four interviews with female heads of state from other countries to lend urgency to the idea that the counterfactual can and should be a possibility.

Strategically aiming to create laughter, Bee attempts to break the boundaries of linguistic and extra-linguistic arrest in the status quo. When speaking with Albright, she frequently casts exaggerated looks of disgust and confusion about what's practiced in governmental environments to disrupt the spell of performative formalities holding these conditions in place. Performativity "holds that any essential or substantial category of difference is the effect of repetitive, performative iterations,"³⁴ showing that it's not just affect, but repeated affect-laden rhetorics that freeze bodies and thoughts in contexts. The technique is similar to "mockumentaries" that use comedy to disenchant viewers from the seemingly objective, authoritative, omniscient, transparent, didactic voice present in documentaries.³⁵ Being served wine in the bathroom invites a dislocation from the normally performed, asking viewers to suture themselves to a future where women leaders have a substantial presence in global politics.

Comic counterfactuals have a rhetorical and critical focus. Neither the comic nor counterfactual components are enacted for their own sake. By generating an alternate world, they intend to persuade that a past, present, or potential future set of events is misguided. Like all the features mentioned in this section, this focus should be seen as a matter of degree. Where pranks like *Improv Everywhere's* No Pants Subway Ride may be invented to persuade random strangers to laugh and find more opportunities for joy in their everyday lives,³⁶ they're not making a case that clothes are oppressive on public transportation. On the other hand, a stronger rhetorical and critical focus is consistently provided by *The New Yorker's* The Borowitz Report, with its headlines such as "Trump Economic Plan Calls for Every American to Inherit Millions from Father."³⁷ Among the less subtextual writings of *The New Yorker* magazine, Borowitz's headline creates a counterfactual where Trump makes this statement, but does so to attack both Trump and a context where the wealthy have a better shot at economic opportunities than other citizens.

Comic counterfactuals like these can incorporate a range of comedic techniques, including irony, parody, or satire. For instance, the Billionaires for Wealthcare's impersonations of representatives from major corporations constitutes a parody that imitates the form and a satire that targets the content of overly commercial identities in the healthcare system.³⁸ The activists focus the affective and performative commonplaces of healthcare discourse by using expensive-looking costumes, song parodies, and behavioral stunts to elevate a vision where all citizens have a right to medical services free from excessive profiteering. The choice of comic method or "perspective by incongruity"³⁹ is less important than the service to which it is put: targeting the status quo with a past, present, or future counterfactual.

The comic counterfactual largely simulates behavioral, policy, or other changes that can be positioned plausibly alongside the limited options citizens may face, without losing sight of

the possibility being advanced. Some tensions surface here between the comic and counterfactual parts of the concept. If communicators go too far in the direction of the funny but implausible, the counterfactual message may be lost. But a counterfactual scenario that's left too implicit or replicates the targeted event too closely may also lose rhetorical force.

In an infamous scene from the movie *Borat*,⁴⁰ comedian Sacha Baron Cohen plays a character from Kazakhstan who has been invited to sing the U.S. national anthem at a Texas rodeo. Before singing, Cohen proclaims to his audience that in Kazakhstan, “we support your War of Terror,” to which the patriotic crowd erupts in applause. While lost on those being filmed (showing how plausible the crowd treated the situation), at least for viewers the character Borat's presence at the event turns the typical scene into a counterfactual, and the twist from the usual “on” to “of” terror imbues the moment with further alterity, implying the U.S. war has been creating acts of terror, not just responding to them. The weight of the comic counterfactual is put on the message and, paradoxically, the seriousness with which Cohen and the crowd perform their roles.

Cohen's actions at the rodeo illustrate how comic counterfactuals implicate plausibility and performativity. Through a performative lens, “specific utterances may be seen as indications of the conditions of possibility of their audiences.”⁴¹ As Judith Butler writes, “conventionalized repetitions” focus the “boundaries of intelligibility” and how they get reproduced.⁴² Neither Borat's presence nor the comic shift in language appear to transport those at the rodeo toward the counterfactual. The crowd only starts to boo when Cohen sings his version of the Kazakhstan national anthem (as he informs them, “to the tune of your national anthem”) starting with the line “Kazakhstan is the greatest country in the world.” But even here the rejection of Borat only serves to confirm the crowd's hyperpatriotic subject positions. For viewers, that Cohen

positioned this event so plausibly within the status quo invites identification with alternative conditions. The film shows how constructions like the “war on terror” only come into being through performative, sensory, and scenic reproductions. While laughing at the crowd being “duped,” observing these repetitions lends force to the counterfactual’s plausibility; this wasn’t an absurdist scenario, and neither is a vision of the world that escapes the range of intelligibility it affords. In its attempts to provide plausible grounding, however, the Borat example could be faulted for being too implicit about the counterfactual, underscoring the next, related criterion.

Unlike much comedy that simply goes from sense to nonsense,⁴³ the general direction of comic counterfactuals is from sense to nonsense to newsense. Anchored in a relatable event, communicators can use comic methods to jolt audiences into the new perceptions offered by a counterfactual. Yet comedy can limit persuasion, so satirists should be careful not to provide “discounting cues” in their work, instead signaling the seriousness of their messages.⁴⁴ The design of humor can prevent jokes from being discounted, leading recipients to scrutinize arguments by making it difficult to ignore an issue at stake.⁴⁵ Similarly, comic counterfactuals are careful not to undermine what can be possible. They are distinctly rooted in social or material events that have become tangible in thought and practice. They are hyperreal, sticking closely to their original sources while tweaking the content, structure, or delivery of the discourse for comedic effect.⁴⁶ This makes comic counterfactuals a distinct use of rhetorical comedy, since the comic largely relies on a “logic of the absurd,” and in jokes’ generally, “implausibility massively dominates plausibility.”⁴⁷

Grounding for the comic counterfactual becomes significant when we consider how decontextualized and unstable messages can become across the internet and similar spaces. Examining how a satirical news page’s comedic story about Hilary Clinton campaign manager

John Podesta got picked up by right-wing conspiracy theory sites as proof that the campaign was involved in a satanic drug and sex-ring operation, Carstocca highlights how easily unmoored comedic messages can become from their originating conditions.⁴⁸ Without signals about the distance between the event the counterfactual is targeting and the counterfactual itself, a nesting doll of significations can ensue, especially with increased comic inflections that exaggerate beyond their originals in an attempt to create laughter. Lacking plausible signals, the more the message can drift into comically unstable interpretive space that can serve any political ends.

To address this problem and keep the counterfactual moored against an external event, comic counterfactuals tend to show rather than tell about needed changes. They focus on creating a scene, not just thinking about it. They go beyond the hypothetical “wouldn’t it be funny and meaningful if . . .” to practice the counterfactual. To deepen the idea that the status quo is insufficient and that a counterfactual could provide a better past, present, or future, they do more than just create a funny event with an important message—they tend to bring material, embodied, and visual rhetorics to bear on the counterfactual.

This is partly what the “comic” modifier offers counterfactuals. Appropriate to the nature of the enterprise, academic discussions about counterfactuals have tended to be logocentric. Comedic discourses certainly employ words and language, but use more corporeal and multimodal forms of rhetoric. The use of characters, behavioral tics, and even music brings attention to how realities come supported not just by premises but by a host of performative habits that create meaning. For example, John Oliver’s creation of a website and actual fundraising for his “Our Lady of Perpetual Exemption Church” created a comic counterfactual complete with the trappings of televangelist language, stylized bible handling, gospel choir, and gold-tinged furniture.⁴⁹ Oliver went beyond a thought experiment, offering a performed

experiment that attacked how tax loopholes have turned many churches into rich, practically for-profit institutions in all but name.

Different than how counterfactuals have been envisioned to this point, comic counterfactuals ask people to experience the change that's needed. We know that "physiological indicators are at least as important as verbal discourse in facilitating emotional exhortation."⁵⁰ At a minimum, the comic methods seek to evoke a brief bodily change through laughter—which is instantly performed rather than logically debated—to shock citizens out of seeing an event in only one way, amplifying the rhetorical and critical focus. This rhetoric attempts to manage affective investments that often resist "signification and narrativization" through their assemblage of "felt attentions and obligations."⁵¹ Were Oliver's conclusion stated simply (the finances of religious institutions should be subject to some oversight), the pull of performative habits buttressing the status quo would have less force than the invitation to feel and then view the counterfactual possibility.

If anything, we learn that hopeful, laughing bodies can conduct rhetorical criticism. Sloterdijk's useful distinction between a merely apathetic and disillusioned "cynicism" and a productive, cheeky, and courageous comic "kynicism" is partly wrought from bringing one's body to critical civic work.⁵² Comic counterfactuals too target fixed selves and identities with new ways of *being* politically. Hariman notes that "the single most pervasive element of stand-up comedy is to bring the topic, any topic, down to the body and all its desires, embarrassments, and infirmities."⁵³ Similarly, art that uses forms like "entropic satire" can touch, charge, and mobilize the body for political purposes.⁵⁴ Comic counterfactuals focus identity commitments and repeated, performed assertions, often through visceral parodies that make it difficult to look at the originating event in the same way again.

As a matter of degree, comic counterfactuals can also be distinguished by their direct intervention into public affairs, compared with forms that rely on skepticism from the sidelines. Consistent with the counterfactual literature's emphasis on hewing closely to original event(s), alternate pasts, presents, or futures are made more reasonable by reducing the distance between the targeted and counterfactual realities. Comic counterfactuals tend to involve the very settings where the status quo is being played out; they are not like most in-studio segments from late-night shows such as *The Daily Show*, *Saturday Night Live*, or even stand-up in nightclubs that work in locations far from what is being critiqued.

On the other hand, Stephen Colbert's biting satirical speech at the 2006 White House Correspondent's Dinner illustrates a direct intervention, turning what had normally been an evening of easily deflected jests into a major evaluation of both the media figures and presidential administration present.⁵⁵ In character, Colbert made the normality of the evening's type of comedy for the powerful into a counterfactual that undermined those expectations. At least for internet audiences, this event's resonance and virality likely came from the comic counterfactual being so close to the event and people being critiqued. Colbert also formed a legally recognized Super PAC in 2012 as a "comic corrective" to loopholes in current campaign finance laws,⁵⁶ directly intervening into election processes through a comically inflected counterfactual urging audiences to advocate for an alternative political world.

If "meaning is an effect of, or at least is made possible by, rhetorical processes that underlie and precede it," and signifiers are "socially routinized," "habitually repeated . . . sites of investment" where "subjects develop virtually automatic attachments to signifiers that remain largely invisible to them,"⁵⁷ then comedic closeness is more important to criticality and reworlding than has been realized. Where intersubjective accounts of rhetoric may miss the

“symbolic economy” prefiguring meanings and subjects,⁵⁸ critical interventions and new inventions that go to the places where those social fields are held in place stand to bring more punch to political comedy than otherwise might be the case. A century of communication research underscores the importance of immediacy, adaptation, relevance, and presence (or discourse that “acts directly on our sensibility”⁵⁹) to the effectiveness and ethicality of rhetoric. Focusing the sensorial densities underlying these acts, the interventions of comic counterfactuals highlight a strategy that works with these understandings.

Given the invention and utility that counterfactuals aim to inspire, comic counterfactuals have a civic focus beckoning public accountability. Colbert’s Super PAC illustrated how campaign finance laws can be abused by private interests, pulling what normally might be a shady operation into public view. In contrast, the popular Bad Lip Reading presidential debate videos, in which presidential candidates’ speech is dubbed over with nonsensical wording,⁶⁰ does not rise to this standard. The Bad Lip videos are often funny, but they are not constructing a counterfactual for the way the debates should have been or could be. They are mostly comedy for comedy’s sake, or nonsense voiceovers without a newsense of imagined civic alternatives.

The best comic forms of social protest combine closeness with accountability. Harold argues for modes of resistance that engage in new possibilities for political action within contemporary media ecologies. She concludes that strategies of purely negative critique or farfetched calls to stop media production cut themselves off from new rhetorical responses to consumer culture that might affirm alternatives beyond a “just say no” asceticism.⁶¹ Independence from markets and governments can simply reproduce the conditions critics target, so methods that jam the “routine responses to words and images” that hold such experiences in place, refolding or appropriating materials on their own terms, hold more promise for politics.⁶²

As one form of culture-jamming rhetoric, comic counterfactuals show that comedy can be optimistic rather than nihilistic about the future. They demonstrate that what we have now could have been a counterfactual itself, and that the status quo is often what's funny and ridiculous.

Last, both comedy and counterfactuals share a common bond in creating pluralistic messages. As a rhetoric that refuses finality and uniformity, joking has been a key historical means of subverting the state.⁶³ Counterfactuals too seek to highlight missed inventions, unexamined options, and deeper hypothetical thinking than implicit thoughts provide. Both the comic methods and counterfactual ends focus stories that are untold, unheard, unknown, or untellable.⁶⁴ The comic and counterfactual play off one another, shaking up solidified rhetoric(s) to open space around an issue. At the very least, the “comic” and “counterfactual” parts of the concept both attempt to make other histories and stories more thinkable.

This is not meant to be a definitive account of comic counterfactuals, but rather a starting point to provoke discussion about some guiding criteria showing how not all forms of comedy or counterfactuals are created equal in serving political ends. To advance this analysis, the next section explores in greater depth the functions and character of this rhetoric.

Temporal Functions

The Yes Men chiefly consist of Jacques Servin (who also goes by the name Andy Bichlbaum) and Igor Vamos (also known as Mike Bonanno), who founded the activist group to show the world what goes on behind the scenes in powerful organizations that place greater priority on profit than people or the environment.⁶⁵ I analyzed nearly 11 years of data generated by the group, especially their three films.⁶⁶ In toggling between current and alternate worlds, The Yes Men's comic counterfactuals seek to expand citizens' choices through three temporal functions: by reconstituting public memories about the past, amplifying mystifications in the

present, and generating possibilities for the future. In each area, this rhetoric fashions unaccountable private events as public matters.

Past Memories

The Yes Men's rhetoric demonstrates how comic counterfactuals can draw attention to dominant and naturalized cultural memories, or the "worldview and ethos of the members of a particular culture."⁶⁷ As historical studies of counterfactuals attest, people have a tendency to see the past through a deterministic lens, since there is no returning to earlier times. More than a series of fixed events, though, the past is a site of rhetorical contestation. The past and present always involve persuasive messages, as a way to understand, justify, or subvert the beliefs and conditions of the current environment.⁶⁸ In this sense, comic counterfactuals work with histories to show how memories can be rhetorically (re)constructed.

In one of The Yes Men's comic counterfactuals, Andy Bichlbaum turned up at a homeland security conference in Washington D.C., impersonating an undersecretary in the U.S. Department of Energy.⁶⁹ In a speech to defense contractors, Republican candidates, and partners, Bichlbaum started his presentation with all the typical, plausible language and behaviors for such an event, before stating that the U.S. government would be revolutionizing its energy policy by creating new wind and solar plants run by native tribes, partly as reparations for historical genocide. To further address the need for renewable energy and a better handling of historical issues, The Yes Men brought a Native American comedy activist group to the event. Inviting viewing audiences to both laugh at the contractors being subject to this counterfactual and to see alternate policies that the government *could* create, The Yes Men and their partners had all the contractors get up on their feet, join together in a circle, and dance and chant about their

commitments to the new cause. After the event, the film shows participants from defense companies like Northrup Grumman praising the experience and this novel policy.

The Yes Men performed a comic counterfactual by creating an event where the U.S. government reworked its approach to the past and present. It aimed to be funny and generate laughter (mostly for the film's viewers, although the immediate audience is also captured laughing), had a rhetorical and critical focus targeting social change, brought a pluralism and plausible newsense to the setting (the unlikely inclusion of Native Americans at the conference, with a new policy unveiled that many in the audience even found reasonable), performed the counterfactual with multimodal rhetoric and asked the audience to experience this change (embodying the policymaker and getting the group to conduct chants⁷⁰), directly intervened into public affairs, and targeted a civic issue beckoning public accountability. Overall, the comic counterfactual brought its immediate and viewing audiences into a world where sensitivity to past injustices might refashion current policymaking.

Another of The Yes Men's most ambitious comic counterfactuals pulled a tragedy from private into public space. In India's infamous "Bhopal disaster" in 1984, a pesticide plant owned by Union Carbide exploded, killing 18,000 workers. Most families received less than 1,000 dollars as compensation for the catastrophe. In 2001, Dow Chemical bought Union Carbide, so The Yes Men set up a counterfactual website called DowEthics.com to represent the twentieth anniversary of the disaster, asserting that Dow would pay two billion dollars in restitution for the grievance. Assuming they were Dow spokespersons, the *BBC* invited The Yes Men to speak on the company's behalf in a "broadcast to 300 million people."⁷¹ Bichlbaum's corporate character stated that the company had decided to act ethically by going against its bottom line,⁷² which led Dow's share price to plunge and spawned countless media stories. Some accused The Yes Men

of playing a “cruel trick,” but the activists underscored that the cruelty only lay with Union Carbide and Dow, who had advanced two decades of suffering in a region where 40 percent of the women under 40 have menopause and poisons are still leaking into the ground water.

Here the comic counterfactual worked with past memories to construct a relatively plausible scenario. While the two billion dollar sum may have been high, Dow could have attempted to correct Union Carbide’s track record through restitutions. Dow spent millions of dollars in an ad campaign to clean up its image, with one ad promoting “the human element” in its work, an event upon which the counterfactual was built. From an international perspective, Bhopal had receded from public memory, with Dow’s silence reinforcing that nothing could be done about the disaster. The Yes Men pulled this hidden history back into public view by implying, “what if Dow had acted differently when it bought Union Carbide in 2001?”

In the preceding examples, the comic counterfactuals focus affect and memory. In many of the corporate and governmental spaces in which The Yes Men intervene, there’s a limited range of feeling in favor of highly rationalistic modes of being. Since affect concerns a “*recognition* (of this feeling, or that feeling) . . . bound up with what we *already know*,”⁷³ and “the body’s capacity to affect and be affected, and the vital forces and intensities that exceed linguistic capture,”⁷⁴ even the breakthrough of a smile targeting an alternative thought becomes significant. Staid performatives often carry presumption in these settings, so adding comedy to the policy counterfactuals delink audiences’ typical reactions from taken for granted memories.

Through laughter, comic counterfactuals seek to overcome the petrified thoughts public memories can too easily evoke. Ferguson noted that “determinist theories really do play a role in history: when people believe in them and believe themselves to be in their grip.”⁷⁵ In response to other historians’ charges against counterfactuals, he argued that “probably as many people have

been killed by the unintended consequences of deterministic prophecies as by their self-fulfilling tendencies. . . . their killers have so often acted in the name of deterministic theories, whether religious, socialist or racist. In this light, perhaps the best answer to the question ‘Why bother asking counterfactual questions?’ is simply: What if we don’t?”⁷⁶ Similarly, The Yes Men’s Dow prank contested a past event that private interests preferred to see deterministically fixed, spotlighting the status quo as the ridiculous construction. Dow’s leaders cannot go back and change the fact that 18,000 people died, but some justice for the tragedy’s victims and others facing similar junctures at least becomes more thinkable.

Stories about the past often bind temporality with essence.⁷⁷ With their beginning, middle, and end structures, narratives can make deterministic origins and ensuing action lines seem inevitable, as phenomena that cannot be changed by discourse, minimizing the possibilities for finding new starting points or plot paths. But comic counterfactuals call into question corporate storylines such as “this was merely a freak accident in an otherwise solid company,” showing that such points are not beyond amendment.

That said, comic counterfactuals are sometimes lost on immediate audiences. At a catastrophic loss conference, The Yes Men posed as representatives of Halliburton selling a new “survivaball” product—a silly looking inflatable suit that would allow survivors of a nuclear apocalypse to jump out of tall buildings, procure milk from cows, and link with other survivors to form rafts.⁷⁸ The Yes Men presented a *PowerPoint* covering Noah’s flood and the Black Plague to point out how past entrepreneurs also used disasters to make profits. Instead of remaining horrified at these statements, the audience clapped at the end, with one member even remarking “this clearly plays also into the terrorist attacks.” Although the “comic” part would not be lost on many viewers, The Yes Men drew a line that was simply too close to the world in

which the immediate audience was enmeshed: historical actors did indeed attempt to capitalize on disaster, and terrorism and post-apocalyptic futures were all part of the audience's imaginary. Perspectives adhering too closely to audience expectations may forgo the exaggerations needed for the comic leap toward the counterfactual.

Present Mystifications

Comic counterfactuals can critique present mystifications. Applying counterfactuals to the present is an important move, since objections to counterfactual history have mostly centered on how such thought exercises can do little to change the past. Mystifications have been defined as the use of symbols to gloss over important facts, stories, social relations, or other forms of power. They are used by authorities to maintain the status quo through representations of society that differ substantially from how power actually works.⁷⁹ With performative inflections, Barthes described mystifications in terms of any act that “transforms petit-bourgeois culture into a universal nature.”⁸⁰ Mystifications thus tend to have a determined quality where, say, a food company's labor practices in another country are glossed over by advertising touting its transnational activities as an inexorable, natural process rather than as a product of particular shareholder interests.

Comic counterfactuals invite citizens to compare mystified and counterfactual worlds. The Yes Men distributed their own version of the tabloid *New York Post* throughout the New York area with the headline, “We're Screwed,” documenting underreported findings about climate change from scientists and the government. The Yes Men emphasized that “although the 32-page *Post* is a fake, everything in it is 100% true, with all facts carefully checked by a team of editors and climate change experts.”⁸¹ The *New York Post* might normally mystify this news by attending to trivial celebrity stories, or create a “manufactured scientific controversy” presenting

the issue as a battle between equally competing sides.⁸² Yet the counterfactual newspaper presents the *New York Post's* mystifications as more counterfactual than The Yes Men's new construction. In essence, The Yes Men present "what *should* happen as normal and [let] the reaction against it demonstrate the point that the world we have is actually what's out of whack."⁸³

Comic counterfactuals can also target policy mystifications. To highlight an incongruity in U.S. Attorney General Laura Duffy's efforts to shut down local medical marijuana dispensaries in California, The Yes Men and other advocacy groups sent out press releases in Duffy's name saying that she would also be closing down local pharmacies for the abuses caused by *legal* drugs on communities.⁸⁴ That the U.S. government permits many mind-altering drugs to be legally available reveals mystifications about the present policymaking climate: that pharmaceutical companies and public figures can use the term "legal" to gloss over other forms of mistreatment beckoning greater public accountability.

Mystifying, deterministic discourse can come in both propositional and embodied forms. The very tone and gestures of powerful people occlude alternate ways of thinking and acting. Bergson characterized the art of the comic as about rigidity versus malleability.⁸⁵ It can be funny to watch a comedian act out an uptight character whose unidimensional behavior seems like the only way of operating to that person, with the comedy teaching that such narrow behaviors forgo more flexibility. Comic counterfactuals show how the stiff form in which elites present information can mystify political problems or injustices. Rand notes how "certain styles of argument and embodiment and certain affective orientations are naturalized, such that particular cultural values and privileges are viewed as the grounds for—rather than the products of—

deliberation.”⁸⁶ In this light, the comic counterfactual figures The Yes Men create highlight what alternate, more civic identities might look like.

At a textiles industry conference, Bichlbaum and Bonnano impersonated WTO representatives closely in clothing, language, and manner.⁸⁷ Discussing the problems of worker-management issues to an audience of corporate leaders, they unveiled a “manager’s leisure suit,” complete with a giant, phallic-shaped inflatable device and television screen that could be used to manage sweatshops remotely. The Yes Men asserted that this suit could create “rapport with one’s workforce” abroad and help managers and executives have more leisure time, to which the immediate audience reacted with applause. The comic counterfactual revealed that, so long as horrendous information is presented in the formal trappings of commerce, any idea will do. The example spotlights the “somatic conditions of emergence,” of repeated, performative utterances that activate or bring into being the very problems called forth.⁸⁸ Whether activated by phrases like “rapport with one’s work force” or the social inductions of years of sitting in rooms full of mostly men in suits, comedy can still have a hard time nudging selves to move beyond embedded mystifications.

Comic counterfactuals consequently show that mystifying, deterministic rhetoric can be fueled as much by political apathy as ideological fervor. To undo the mystifications of market logics and target indifference, counterfactuals attempt to create unease by offering an involving, enthymematic kind of communication in which comic performances shift responsibility for resolutions to viewers.⁸⁹ This strategy played out in The Yes Men’s visit to a college class on globalization and economics, where they acted as WTO representatives. They presented an international food initiative called the “reburger” that addressed both third world starvation and businesses’ concerns for efficient production. Complete with a video demonstration, and built

from an idea that half the nutrients assimilated from food are wastefully eliminated by the body, the reburger program would involve “the recycling of post-consumer waste into hamburgers and fast food.”⁹⁰ When the students realized the proposal was for a product that turns human waste from food in the first world into food for people in the third world, they reacted with horror, objecting to the idea as offensive and misguided. Bonanno retorted, “this isn’t unusual, we do this for oil, we could do this for food as well,” while Bichlbaum stated that “the reality is we already treat people in the third world far worse than we treat our domestic animals.”

The comic counterfactual forced the students into a parallel world to confront mystifications: that the savvy marketing of food products can hide corporate labor practices and that people in the first world live with striking contradictions. Comedy from the performance (at least to film viewers) proceeds from the incongruities created by the official actions of the presenters (e.g. in heralding terms like “efficiency”) and an exaggerated market logic that would let poor people eat feces. Perhaps due to the educational rather than corporate nature of the setting and the disgust provoked by defecation, the students become accountable global citizens. Bodily boundaries and feelings can play a more important part than political ideology in challenging people—after all, “how often do people doubt their feelings of repulsion?”⁹¹ A comic rhetoric designed to evoke visceral reactions of disgust breaks these bounds, provokes critical thought, and—as a goal of rhetorical criticism in general—“makes facile gestures difficult.”⁹²

Future Possibilities

Although counterfactuals use past or present references, they also point toward future possibilities. Philosophers of history have sometimes been deeply deterministic in promoting a teleological sense that abstractions like divinity, fortune, market forces, class conflict, nature,

science, or reason have had a providential hand in the direction and writing of certain histories. At times, disciplines like anthropology and sociology have further advanced determinism by focusing on structures rather than processes of change.⁹³

Counterfactual theorists have turned to the natural sciences and warrants like the “uncertainty principle,” “anthropic principle,” “chaos theory” and the “Butterfly Effect” to highlight the role that chance plays in the past, present, and future.⁹⁴ Psychological counterfactuals about the past are also “associated with envisioning ways to change things for the better in the future.”⁹⁵ These premises resemble the contingency, agency, and possibilities for excess that theorists have found in comedy, especially in parody that “not only rewrites another work, but suggests another one within itself, reminding the reader of the relativism of any work of art, and also of the richness of creative possibilities in an allegedly limited single source.”⁹⁶ Different from radical relativism, however, comic counterfactuals underscore a probabilistic relativism about the future.

One noteworthy aspect of comic counterfactuals is their connection with the subjunctive mood. Different than forms like the indicative mood, which enact statements, facts, and direct representations, the subjunctive mood highlights wants, hopes, and imaginary hypotheticals, takes place in a “deontic modality,” and is becoming less common in modern English.⁹⁷ At the same time, the subjunctive mood moves beyond the imaginary to forward realistic possibilities, since they are a class that includes counterfactuals and “fundamentally have the force of affirming the existence of warrants for predictions. They are not then literally or directly affirming what is true or false; they indirectly affirm what can be expected.”⁹⁸

Using such warrants, comic counterfactuals can move beyond stating what should happen in the future to actually performing policy changes, making potential futures more accessible and

immediate. Acting as representatives of the WTO at a gathering of accountants in Australia, The Yes Men told their audience that the WTO would be dissolved and refounded “along different lines,” with the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its new charter.⁹⁹ To amplify the comic counterfactual, The Yes Men interviewed several conference attendees after, who were surprised but thought the news was positive for developing countries. The activists used facts in support of their performance, such as “out of 22,000 patents applied for in Africa in 2001, only 31 were from residents of Africa,” deepening a sense that the WTO’s disbanding could happen.

Expanding the comic counterfactual outward, The Yes Men sent 25,000 press releases to worldwide media on the WTO’s dissolution, which Canadian leader John Duncan cited as news within his country’s parliament. Once others start performing the counterfactual policy change, the future-oriented texts made an alternate future even more viable. Where the comic methods emphasize the need for a counterfactual, the use of evidence for the new offering compounds the construct’s feasibility. This separates the comic counterfactual from assertions that are unaccountable to broader, credible data supporting an argument for change.

Comedy is typically characterized as a form of discourse whose main quality is critical “distance” from selected targets.¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, forward-looking comic counterfactuals directly intervene into public affairs, constructing optimistic calls to action. The Yes Men blanketed Manhattan with 100,000 copies of their own version of *The New York Times* set six months in the future, a counterfactual artifact outlining what a better world could look like (e.g. with headlines about the cessation of wars). Where the front page of a regular newspaper may lend itself to tragic, deterministic overtones in covering the planet’s problems, the comic version asked audiences to become advocates for the possible.

Yet comic counterfactuals may risk becoming unmoored from perceptions of what is or can be possible. The Yes Men consciously adjust their projects when performances become too nonsensical,¹⁰¹ often providing direct signals to this effect: “In conclusion, I’d like to ask, is this a science fiction scenario, um, the answer is no, everything we’ve seen here and everything we’ve been talking about is entirely possible.”¹⁰² Counterfactuals are “not mere fantasy: they are simulations based on calculations about the relative probability of plausible outcomes in a chaotic world.”¹⁰³ Differentiating The Yes Men’s discourses from more cartoonish efforts, then, the comic counterfactual simulates plausible social changes.

Limitations in the Political Economy of Media

While comic counterfactuals attempt a critical, civic task, they are not always successful in the larger political economy of media. As much as the “comic” modifier may bring attention to a counterfactual, it could also be the source of its limitations. Audiences may discount the counterfactual if they fixate on the nonsensical or fantastical aspects of the comic methods. The Yes Men frequently struggle to redefine media reactions to their actions as a “hoax,” telling reporters that using this label diverts from the important issue being highlighted.¹⁰⁴ Other comics have faced similar challenges, such as Russell Brand, who had to move beyond the comedy genre to perform his changed political views.¹⁰⁵

Comedy carries an ambivalence that often involves “no commitment to anything except the act of levity.”¹⁰⁶ In a culture jamming episode with a Bulgarian monument, for example, Ivanova notes how “the comic movement of the composition also suggest[s] that whatever may (or may not) come next will also be just another particular universal.”¹⁰⁷ Similarly, both the “comic” and “counterfactual” have an ambivalence about commitments to *any* construction built into their pluralistic architectures, which may be problematic for creating solid political footing

or structures for governance. Rhetorical scholars have stressed that the polyvalence and unpredictability of ironic satire can limit the rhetorical potential in such forms.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, the attention to plausibility, closeness, and other cues between an original event and a comic counterfactual try to stabilize what might have been more unpredictable in other forms of comedy.

An equally difficult tension for comedy as social protest involves leaving the counterfactual too implicit. Since the effect of laughter is the *sine qua non* for comic methods, the comedy may come to matter more for audiences than the counterfactual. Comedy also cannot be so preachy that it becomes indistinguishable from a serious sermon or policy speech. For laughter's sake, moving to indirect, enthymematic space could undermine the clear and direct rhetoric about change that's needed. In either case, the counterfactual can be constrained.

Comedy faces the additional problem of being saturated or co-opted by powerful interests that keep the structures The Yes Men and other groups target in place. Even the CIA jokes on *Twitter*.¹⁰⁹ Sometimes people understand all the problems around them, but they just move on anyways. In the most cynical rather than kynical of acts, "our civilization shrugs," since powerful institutions have little interest in equal speech rights, and sometimes citizen's minds are just too engaged with other matters, or attitudes, habits, and prejudices that are hard to overcome.¹¹⁰ Or, to take the argument further, perhaps people just cannot imagine any alternatives to neoliberalism despite such jolts.¹¹¹

What citizens bring to comic counterfactuals matters. Ott finds that films can evoke different affective responses, distinguishing between an "experiencing body" and the "body of experience" that form the background and perceptual sensations brought to these encounters (e.g. past experiences of repression).¹¹² People have different *senses* of humor that always carry the

potential for polysemic responses. Comic counterfactuals delivered through film, regardless of the potential for affective awakenings, constitute limited immersive experiences. They are not like museums in which successive “atmospheres” enlist bodies in their cause through controlled movements, interactivity, and simulation.¹¹³ Between brief comic shocks and longstanding somatic commitments, laughing at a film may not be enough to move viewers beyond the visceral experiences brought to comedic attempts at social change.

Furthermore, comic counterfactuals are exceptional events due to their risk. Satirists have generally been less successful when taking their performances outside of television programming to locations where politics is practiced, with exceptions like Michael Moore’s decades of public performances (stemming from a notoriety that both highlights and funds his efforts).¹¹⁴ Despite how many corporate and government efforts work to reduce citizens to “ironic spectators,”¹¹⁵ however, the comic counterfactual at least has value in its direct political interventions. Even Gladwell’s extended discussion of “the satire paradox”—or the ways that satire against the powerful often seems to have little effect—concludes that not all forms of political comedy are created equal.¹¹⁶ He offers the example of the Israeli television show *Eretz Nehederet* as one example of a truly courageous, risky, and pointed satire whose hard-to-miss messages critique the powerful without becoming overly complicit in their structures.

The larger challenges to comic political rhetoric remain high, yet comedy’s importance comes less from isolated, one shot efforts at persuasion than the incremental effects these and similar struggles generate over time.¹¹⁷ The Yes Men argue that the ethical repercussions of not engaging in what they are doing outweigh any objections to their work that foster inaction.¹¹⁸ They further document effects from their work. The Yes Men impersonated U.S. Chamber of Commerce representatives stating that the organization would not be countering climate change

legislation, which reaped media coverage and opposition to the Chamber's current policies, and eventually "led the Chamber to reverse their opposition to the cap-and-trade bill two weeks later."¹¹⁹ This rhetoric may not save the world, but does point toward a need for people to come together and do everything possible to fix it.¹²⁰

Conclusion

Comic counterfactuals invite citizens to critically reflect upon the consequences of historical events, consider different civic positionalities, and make new interventions into public culture. The construct focuses several implications for rhetorical research and practice. First, comic counterfactuals bring to the interdisciplinary study of counterfactuals unique emphases on the sensory and performative. Directed toward rhetorical and critical purposes, the comic part of the construct engages affective laughter in the service of civic newsense. The comic methods seek to propel audiences toward a counterfactual event, bringing a range of multimodal rhetoric to a reworlding of the past, present, or future. Affect has been characterized as "immediate modes of sensual responsiveness to the world characterized by an accompanying imaginative dimension."¹²¹ Comic counterfactuals demonstrate one means by which the latent, imaginative potentials of our bodies may be activated toward social change.

Comic counterfactuals remain close to their targets. Drawing on Lyotard, Ott says that "unlike discourse, which entails distance and separation, the figural involves immersion and immediacy, appealing directly to the senses."¹²² The comedy in comic counterfactuals tries to bring the figural dimensions of human experience to counterfactuals, which have, to this point, been theorized mostly through rationalistic terms. At the same time, the counterfactual works rhetorically to ground the fantastical comic elements in the service of a cause. This interaction between the comic and counterfactual is the source of both its distinction and tensions. The

architecture of comedic forms may leave an attempt to reworld too implicit, or carry an ambivalence that outweighs recommendations to land in new civic spaces.

Yet engaging in a somatic, sensory form of rhetoric targeting cognitive change still shows that what is and can be intelligible only gains traction from being repeatedly performed. Even “citizenship” is “intimately tied to and regulated by collective affects that could foreclose alternative and more inclusive articulations of membership.”¹²³ Many of the comic counterfactuals examined in this analysis sought to break these boundaries with new repetitions, if only for short periods. These forms may not save the world, but they do craft counter-performatives that take seriously the extent to which repeated sensorial and contextual tonalities hold material and symbolic worlds in place.

Second, comic counterfactuals underscore the connections between rhetoric and temporal choices. The capacity for counterfactuals to work with memories, mystifications, and policy possibilities parallels forensic, epideictic, and deliberative discourses,¹²⁴ which have respective emphases upon shaping views of the past, present, and future.¹²⁵ Western traditions have tended to make time a linear matter,¹²⁶ promoting narrative determinisms in thought and behavior. Comic counterfactuals attempt to overcome such performatives, focusing on temporal matters that can be (re)fashioned through rhetoric. In this regard, there is a “connection between counterfactual contrast and historical action: people act on the basis of their perceptions, notions and convictions.”¹²⁷ Ultimately, comic counterfactuals aim to de-universalize that which insists on apathy or inaction, testing political ideas and heeding closely to extant events in making any comic leaps about the past, present, or future.

Comic counterfactuals are a reminder that language and “humorous appeals in the form of jokes,” are “always already interrupted by [their] future instantiations and can never fully be

contained in a given context.”¹²⁸ Although comedy can serve to reproduce the status quo, when wedded to a counterfactual rhetors forward a pluralistic rhetoric. Similar to how Rand de-essentializes definitions of queerness as “the undecidability from which rhetorical agency is actualized,”¹²⁹ comic counterfactuals position imaginative space with an inventive politics, without letting either side of the equation (comic or counterfactual) overly determine what’s possible.

Where people or institutions may insist on inevitability in public discourse, comic counterfactuals show that the status quo is as much an amalgamation of chance, circumstance, and human effort as counterfactuals. As television studies have noted, “producing and consuming fantasies allows for a play with reality. . . . In the play of fantasy we can adopt positions and ‘try out’ these positions.”¹³⁰ Through jokes and other methods, comics can invite audiences into counterfactual worlds as a brief respite from the creeping determinisms all around. In counterfactual cases, determinisms often take the form of allegiances to particular creeds or behaviors. Comedy targets such “over-identifications” by spotlighting the investments people have in certain practices or quirks.¹³¹ Similarly, the comic and the counterfactual mutually enact more flexibility than the structures of the social world often afford.

Last, although the problems of public life may lead to angst and despair, comic counterfactuals constitute one strategy for finding some joy and purpose in civic engagement. Rhetoric scholars have been asked to find ways of making serious argument and advocacy playful, especially in motivating difficult political work.¹³² In theorizing the construct, researchers have underestimated how comedy can be a natural ally to counterfactuals. Falling back on a popular warrant that the silly and serious have little to do with each other, Ferguson even advised against using comedy in creating counterfactuals, since “the funnier they are, the

less plausible they are.”¹³³ This should remain a valid concern, but this analysis suggests that comedy and counterfactuals can serve political ends. Writing about the mockumentary *Confederate States of America*, a counterfactual in which the south won the civil war, Prash too finds both plausibility and utility in the filmmaker’s fight against “a historical memory that tends to forget and forgive, that prefers to evade the uncomfortable facts of slavery and postwar Jim Crow wherever possible, that would rather mention all this in passing before returning to the traditional triumphalist tone that has dominated in American historical narrative.”¹³⁴

Comic counterfactuals are not completely free-wheeling forms of fun. They bring the weight of facts, good reasons, and evidence to their operations, forwarding a probable relativism distinguished from parodic or satirical efforts unmoored from civic concerns. They retain some bases in extant events, with the pluralistic, ambivalent comic modifier acting as a check against the counterfactual moving forward with absolutist overtones. In doing so, comic counterfactuals ultimately challenge the taken for granted, promote alternative choices, and make clear what rhetorical purposes comedy can serve in public affairs.

Notes

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