What would it look like if rhetoric and dialectic were once again to become counterparts?, McComiskey (Univ. of Alabama at Birmingham) asks. His answer is three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric. The book comprises five chapters, the first three of which set up the presentation. In the first, the author offers summaries of selected texts from the history of rhetoric. In the second, he analyzes theoretical moves of 20th-century composition scholars, and in the third, he describes the (limited) uses and shortcomings of one- and two-dimensional rhetorics. McComiskey argues that his third dimension of dialectical rhetoric is a necessary antidote to both the coercive imposition of authority and the incessant opposition of one- and two-dimensional rhetorics. Assembling and refining five techniques—deconstruction, dialogue, identification, critique, and juxtaposition—McComiskey demonstrates their functionality as interpretive devices on five student-generated essays from an advanced composition class. A final chapter explores the applicability of three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric to communication using digital media and posits that the field of composition studies needs to account for current students’ familiarity with and preferences for communicating in this arena. Ultimately, McComiskey hopes, his rhetorical model will be widely adopted, serving as a means for producing constructive knowledge. Though that remains to be seen, his approach is interesting.

--J. M. McGurk, Mercyhurst University

Summing Up: Recommended. Graduate students, researchers, faculty.