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Introduction

Historically, dialectic has taken two general forms in relation to rhetoric, both sometimes existing side by side. First, dialectic has been the topical development of opposed arguments on controversial issues and the judgment of their relative strengths and weaknesses. This form of dialectic was the counterpart of rhetorics in which verbal battles over competing probabilities in public institutions (primarily politics and law) revealed distinct winners and losers. Second, dialectic has been the logical development of linear propositions leading to necessary conclusions, usually in scientific and academic contexts. This form of dialectic was the counterpart of rhetorics in which philosophical, metaphysical, and scientific truths were conveyed with as little cognitive interference from language as possible.[1] These oppositional and linear dialectics and rhetorics are useful in many communication contexts, yet they can also (like any creative art) lead to certain abuses.

I argue that rhetoric and composition is on the brink of developing a third relationship between dialectic and rhetoric, one in which dialectics and rhetorics mediate and negotiate the different arguments and orientations engaged in any rhetorical situation. This process of mediation and its negotiated results form a hybrid art called *dialectical rhetoric*. Here dialectic and rhetoric join forces equally in a single mediative practice.

Rhetoric is a dimensional art, and the nature of rhetoric's dimensionality is based on the number and functions of orientations engaged in any rhetorical act. In *Permanence and Change*, Kenneth Burke (1954) describes orientations as socialized terministic screens through which we experience the objects and events in the world around us. *Orientation* is a general term that encompasses the meanings of more specialized terms like *perspective, attitude, world view*, and *ideology*. I borrow the notion of dimensionality from Herbert Marcuse, who argues that societies have dimensional qualities. Although I discuss orientations and the dimensions of rhetoric more thoroughly in chapter 3, a preliminary sense of rhetoric's dimensionality will help contextualize the argument of this book.

In *One-Dimensional Man*, Marcuse (1964) describes modern technological society as one dimensional, operating under the unifying power of a dominant ideology that denies or co-opts contradictions in both material and social realms, thus reducing the possibility for critical discourse. Two-dimensional societies recognize that all material and social realms are inherently contradictory and that two primary ideologies compete for common attention. Dialectical tension "permeates the two-dimensional universe of discourse" in which the "two dimensions are antagonistic to each other" and "dialectical concepts develop the real contradictions" (97). Marcuse's own preferred treatment of language and ideology in society is itself two dimensional, that is, critical and oppositional. He believes that one-dimensional societies co-opt critical discourse and reduce the possibility for social progress and democracy.

It is possible to extend Marcuse's framework into yet another dimension (not mentioned by Marcuse), a third dimension in which dialectical concepts and contradictions (or, more generally, *differences*) are mediated and negotiated, though not always resolved, constructing alternative orientations upon which new social relationships can be built. This third dimension of society emerged, according to Mark C. Taylor, between the late 1960s and the late 1980s (Taylor 2001, 14) after Marcuse wrote *One-Dimensional Man*, and this third dimension of society is marked by a proliferation of complex differences (not necessarily oppositions) conveyed through digital, networked technologies (138).

Marcuse's notion of social dimensionality (and my extension of it into a third dimension) is also useful as a heuristic for describing dimensionality in rhetoric. However, in my own adaptation of Marcuse's concept, I set aside his obvious two-dimensional bias and value each rhetorical dimension equally, though for different reasons. Diane Davis (2010) argues that one important prior condition for an art of rhetoric is "affectability, persuadability, responsivity," and affectability is a "prerequisite for belonging" (2). Each dimension of rhetoric requires a different sense of belonging and affectability. One-dimensional and two-dimensional rhetorics, with orientations based on rationality or opposition, protect their imagined sovereignty by suppressing affectability once belonging is secured. Three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics encourage, and may even require, a much fuller sense of affectability from writers and audiences, an affectability that is never suppressed but is always open and ongoing.

One-dimensional rhetorics articulate the values and promote the interests of a single (rational) orientation with little or no consideration of different, therefore irrational, orientations. Argumentative

challenges to one-dimensional claims do not originate from different orientations (which would be irrational) but are simply negations of the original claims; these negations become the source of rebuttals that reinforce the strength of the rational orientation. With only one legitimate orientation (rationality) considered in any rhetorical situation, one-dimensional rhetorics are never dialectical. If one-dimensional rhetorics acknowledge a separate art of dialectic, it is itself one dimensional, driven by linear logic and rational thought. In one-dimensional rhetorics, once an argument is determined to be irrational, the audience affected by the argument becomes irrational as well. To belong among rational people means to be affected by rational arguments and to be unaffected by irrational arguments. The primary function of one-dimensional rhetorics is social unification and coherence by means of logical argumentation.

Two-dimensional rhetorics articulate the values and promote the interests of a single orientation in direct relationship to one or more opposed orientations, with each orientation engaged in a power struggle against the other(s). The primary function of two-dimensional rhetorics is to reinforce the values of one orientation by critiquing the nature of power imposed by other orientations and dismantling the institutional structures (economic, political, social, cultural) that legitimate such power. Two-dimensional rhetorics are usually dialectical, though only in a simplistic way, because every argument in every rhetorical situation is shaped in opposition to competing orientations; thus, every argument in two-dimensional rhetorics is in some way influenced by another (or an "Other"), though this influence is only negative in effect. When two-dimensional rhetorics acknowledge a counterpart art of dialectic, it is usually itself two-dimensional and functions oppositionally as the exploration of two irreconcilable sides of a controversial issue in order to understand an opponent's case and to avoid contradictions in one's own. Once arguments are determined to be oppositional, they become implicated in a larger structure of hegemonic practices that oppress individuals, and the audiences affected by these oppositional arguments are misguided (duped) at best and traitorous (implicated) at worst. To belong to a community that is defined oppositionally means to be affected by arguments originating within that community and to be unaffected by arguments originating within opposed communities. Although many two-dimensional rhetorics often include a sense of dialectic as a counterpart art, these two-dimensional rhetorics are not themselves dialectical in a positive or powerful enough way to be considered a single hybrid art.

In both one-dimensional and two-dimensional rhetorics, all other orientations are inferior (cognitively irrational, politically oppressive) to the orientation that gives rise to the rhetorical performance in question. When alternative orientations are viewed as inferior, there is no clear rhetorical path to affectability in any complete sense. Dialectic thus assumes no role in one-dimensional rhetorics (unless it is a misnomer for logic) and only a minor role in two-dimensional rhetorics, relegated often to the invention of oppositional arguments.

Three-dimensional rhetorics mediate among the values and interests of *different* (neither irrational nor opposed) orientations competing for public attention, thus creating new orientations in the process. Three-dimensional rhetorics, then, are *always* dialectical because the processes of mediation and negotiation require all orientations in any rhetorical situation to be flexible and malleable, and they require all speakers and writers in these same situations to be affectable. Davis's notion of affectability is particularly relevant to three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics because these rhetorics assume different orientations relatively (or at least potentially) equal in status, and there can be no mediation or negotiation among orientations if participants in rhetorical situations are unwilling to be affected by arguments originating from different orientations. The primary function of three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics is to mediate and negotiate the engagement of orientations in productive relationships that transcend the limiting constraints of unifying or oppositional discourses. These processes of mediation and negotiation make dialectic so integral to the whole process of communication that it is no longer distinguishable from rhetorical performances themselves, resulting in a hybrid art, dialectical rhetoric.

Historically, rhetorics have been one dimensional or two dimensional. Three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics have emerged only recently in the history of rhetoric and composition. Thus, the hybrid art, dialectical rhetoric, which requires a mediative attitude and a willingness to be fully affected, is also a relatively recent development in the discipline. The emergence of three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics is related to the evolution of digital communication technologies, which foster the dialectical engagement of different orientations and enable mediative communication through new rhetorical strategies based on linking. In fact, in "Hypertext as Collage-Writing," George P. Landow (1999) argues that "by permitting one to make connections between texts and text and images so easily, the electronic link encourages one to think in terms of connections" (159). With the advent of Web 2.0, these connections have become more social in their structure and purpose. Nevertheless,

like Burke's notion of identification, these connections, these links, also imply division. Landow writes, "Those linkable items not only must have some qualities that make the writer want to connect them, they also must exist in separation, apart, divided. . . . This double effect of linking appears in the way it inevitably produces juxtaposition, concatenation, and assemblage" (159). Linking and dividing are critical functions of three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics, and they are especially enabled in digital communication technologies and emphasized in the social media platforms of Web 2.0.

As I was writing this book, I kept in mind three primary goals: first, to historicize dialectic, rhetoric, and their relationship together, highlighting points of convergence and departure; second, to mediate and negotiate the differences between dialectic and rhetoric, integrating them into a hybrid three-dimensional art called *dialectical rhetoric*; and third, to operationalize three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric by reconnecting it methodologically to its classical function as a topical art.

In chapter 1, "Historical Trajectories of Dialectic and Rhetoric," I describe the history of dialectic and rhetoric and their relationship together, emphasizing points of intersection and divergence. Historical awareness is critical because it gives a sense of how theories have been used for different purposes and how they have been adapted to different social and material situations. Such awareness also serves a heuristic function for modern uses of classic(al) ideas. During the classical period, in both Greece and Rome, two-dimensional dialectics and rhetorics were generally used in tandem as pragmatic counterparts. The Protagorean *Dissoi Logoi*, for example, describes two sources of arguments for every issue, nature and culture. Nature and culture are inherently opposed to each other, and the arguments derived from them are irreconcilable. In *The Gorgias*, Callicles accuses Socrates of playing silly games with this nature/culture distinction by refuting arguments based on nature with oppositional arguments based on culture, and vice versa. Socrates does not deny the accusation. Aristotle's dialectic shifts away from the earlier obsession with the nature/culture opposition and takes a more technical approach to argumentative opposition, thus turning a previously haphazard practice into a powerful topical art. For Aristotle, dialectic uses topics to invent and develop two-dimensional argumentative oppositions and to judge which side is the strongest. Rhetoric is the counterpart of dialectic because orators cannot make a persuasive case for one side of an issue unless they understand the case against them and can avoid internal contradictions in their own arguments. Since ancient Roman rhetorics emphasized legal debate in which one

side accuses and another defends, many Roman rhetoricians continued the commitment to two-dimensional rhetorics that began in Greece. Cicero's sense of dialectic is characteristically Aristotelian, and the doctrine of stasis (finding the issue at hand), which was practiced by many Roman rhetoricians, also attests to the use of two-dimensional dialectics as preparation for two-dimensional rhetorics.

From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, dialectic and rhetoric enjoyed pride of place as two of the seven liberal arts, a curricular structure that guided (but did not determine) education for many centuries. During this time, dialectic shifted from the classical sense of the conversational development of opposed arguments to a more systematized sense of formal debate, which of course remained two dimensional. Although dialectic retained its two-dimensional qualities throughout the Middle Ages in some places and some works, it was also during this time that dialectic began to acquire one-dimensional qualities, thus losing most of its dialectical qualities (all except for the name) and becoming logic. Boethius, for example, rejected the two-dimensional sense of dialectic as the exploration of opposed arguments, describing dialectic instead as the one-dimensional development of abstract linear arguments, and rhetoric as the one-dimensional development of concrete linear arguments. For Boethius, only one argument is true, and any method (dialectic or rhetoric) that develops false arguments, even in the service of invention, is itself false. Martianus Capella (1977), whose book *The Marriage of Philology and Mercury* helped structure liberal education for nearly a millennium, considered both dialectic and rhetoric to be one-dimensional arts of linear logic and true argumentation. As the Renaissance approached, Scholastic logicians continued the tradition of viewing dialectic as one dimensional and linear, while the Italian humanists returned to Aristotle's two-dimensional sense of dialectic as the development of opposed arguments and their relative evaluation. Toward the end of the Renaissance, Peter Ramus (2010), rejecting the humanist recovery of ancient dialectic and rhetoric, shifted invention and judgment into one-dimensional logic (which he, too, called *dialectic*) and relegated rhetoric to style.

Both dialectic and rhetoric suffered unfortunate fates from the Enlightenment to the nineteenth century. The Enlightenment's emphasis on empirical, scientific inquiry left little room for creative arts like dialectic and rhetoric. During this time, dialectic fell out of favor as absurdly impractical academic debate, though it retained some influence as the production of linear logical proofs, and rhetoric also acquired a new commitment to the one-dimensional articulation of scientific truths. For

important scholars such as John Locke, however, both dialectic and rhetoric were merely arts of deception. During the eighteenth century, dialectic was recovered from its Enlightenment disparagement by philosophers who were interested in explaining the progress of human history (though they ignored rhetoric), and rhetoric was recovered by teachers and theologians who were interested in rhetoric's role in epistemology, delivery, and style (though they ignored dialectic). During the nineteenth century, influential educator Richard Whately grounded much of his students' training in language on a foundation of one-dimensional logic, which by this time had lost all of its dialectical content, though his rhetoric (to be studied after logic) was characteristically Aristotelian and thus two dimensional. Despite their constantly shifting meanings and values from the classical period through the nineteenth century, dialectic and rhetoric nevertheless remained, for the most part at least, important subjects of advanced academic studies.

Chapter 2, "Dialectic in (and out of) Rhetoric and Composition," examines the emergence of rhetoric and composition within English studies during the late nineteenth century and its vexed relationship with dialectic from that time through the present. Unfortunately, during the late nineteenth century, when first-year composition emerged as a required course at universities across the country, the textbooks used in these classes were either abridged versions of longer belletristic and elocutionary rhetorical treatises or original handbooks emphasizing grammar, five-paragraph themes, and modal structures. Most of these texts considered communication (both speaking and writing) to be one dimensional, and they did not consider dialectic at all. As English composition courses began to emphasize written over oral communication, teachers committed to speech education began to split from English departments and form their own departments of speech communication. Without speech communication's emphasis on rhetorical theory and history, composition studies evolved into an absurdly formalist practice. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, although rhetoric never completely disappeared from composition studies, the teaching of writing was indeed grounded more in grammar, modes (especially exposition), and five-paragraph themes than it was in dialectic or rhetoric.

During the 1960s, the New Rhetoric movement challenged composition's obsession with formalist (usually one-dimensional) methods, recovering a stronger commitment to two-dimensional rhetorics. However, as Anne E. Berthoff (1982) points out, this (then) new movement did not recover rhetoric's traditional counterpart dialectic.

By the 1970s and 1980s, though, Berthoff and others had begun to reconnect two-dimensional dialectic to its counterpart rhetoric, viewing dialectic sometimes as a kind of dialogic interaction, other times as a means to expand a writer's perspectives, and still other times as a metaphor for the progress of human history. Berthoff remains the composition scholar most committed to harnessing the complementary power of dialectic and rhetoric in the writing class. However, as Andrew Low (1997) points out, Berthoff's internal-dialogic sense of dialectic lost its potential for influence in the field when the fast-approaching social turn devalued anything internal as individual and thus naïve. The most forceful proponents of what came to be known as social-epistemic rhetoric (such as James A. Berlin and Alan W. France) recovered dialectic (again) for composition studies. But they did not recover Berthoff's dialogic dialectic, nor did they recover the dialectic that was the counterpart of classical rhetoric. Instead, proponents of social-epistemic rhetoric, throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, recovered the nineteenth-century philosophical sense of dialectic, especially Karl Marx's materialist version of it.

The 1990s witnessed a shift in dialectic's relationship to rhetoric in composition studies. First, the term *dialectic* generally dropped out of consistent use in scholarship on rhetoric and writing; then, by the late 1990s and into the new millennium, there emerged three critiques of dialectic. The first critique, represented most fully in Victor J. Vitanza's (1997) *Negation, Subjectivity, and the History of Rhetoric*, argues that histories of rhetoric have constructed (or followed) a Hegelian grand narrative of dialectical negation that eliminates the sub/versive middle position ("threes") marked by desire, not opposition. Second, John Muckelbauer's (2009) *The Future of Invention* critiques dialectic from a broadly postmodern view. In place of the negation and loss caused by reliance on Hegelian dialectic, Muckelbauer offers instead affirmative invention marked by repetition and what he calls "singular rhythms." The third critique of dialectic emerges from the application of complexity theory in composition studies, especially by Byron Hawk (2007) in *A Counter-History of Composition*. Complexity itself moves beyond opposition and negation toward an integration of chaos and system, where action implies a response to an environment but actors are not always aware of the full range of ecological forces at work. I end this chapter with the observation that these three critiques of dialectic are, in fact, only critiques of one particular form of dialectic, the thesis-antithesis-synthesis model in which negation is requisite for progress. This nineteenth-century philosophical model of dialectic, however, is

not the counterpart of rhetoric. Other models of dialectic have little to do with the negative movement of Hegelian and Marxist dialectics, and my own recovery of dialectic for rhetoric and composition emphasizes its three-dimensional mediative uses. Interestingly, although Vitanza, Muckelbauer, and Hawk all critique philosophical dialectic for its tendency to negate and simplify, their positive articulations of threes, singular rhythms, and complexity actually play strongly into a three-dimensional notion of dialectical rhetoric.

In chapter 3, "The Dimensions of Rhetoric," I explore in greater depth rhetoric's dimensionality, which is determined by the number and functions of orientations engaged in any rhetorical situation. Orientations are socially structured belief systems that guide action in new situations, and each orientation is reinforced by forces of opposition that divide and categorize ideas and arguments. One-dimensional rhetorics serve a unifying function, articulating the values and promoting the interests of a single orientation. Since one-dimensional rhetorics do not consider the values and interests of other (irrational) orientations, they are not dialectical. When proponents of one-dimensional rhetorics invoke dialectic, it usually takes the form of linear logic, which is also not dialectical. Two-dimensional rhetorics often rely on two-dimensional dialectics to understand an opponent's case or avoid internal contradictions. In two-dimensional rhetorics, orientations are always engaged in power struggles, and the function of rhetoric is critical: to support one orientation by dismantling the institutional foundations of power imposed against it by other orientations. The practice of two-dimensional dialectics as a tool for invention and judgment usually precedes the practice of two-dimensional rhetorics, and two-dimensional dialectics and rhetorics are best described as *counterpart arts*. Three-dimensional rhetorics are always inherently dialectical because they mediate the values and interests of competing orientations, seeking not to unify or critique but to negotiate among them, constructing new orientations in the process. Three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric is a single hybrid art in which dialectic and rhetoric are performed simultaneously, not as separate counterpart arts.

Each dimension of rhetoric (unifying, critical, mediative) has its uses and abuses, as does any creative art. The best functional uses of each dialectical/rhetorical dimension are conditioned by the nature of the situations and contexts in which rhetorical acts are performed and orientations are engaged. Thus, the determination of a rhetoric (or an aspect of a rhetoric) as one dimensional, two dimensional, or three dimensional is not itself a value judgment. When the internal

structures of social groups lose coherence and their very existence becomes threatened, one-dimensional unifying rhetorics can reestablish core values among group members, strengthening communities and enabling progress. When one social group is threatened by another group (or groups) in some way, perhaps with a loss of power or a loss of rights, two-dimensional oppositional rhetorics can call into question the basis of threatening power structures and create a space for resistance. When social groups enter their ideas into a public arena of competing discourses, each with its own claims to power and knowledge, three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics can enable negotiation among groups and discourses, creating new orientations that ground future communication. Yet all three dimensions of rhetoric, when used by unethical people for unethical purposes, can oppress individuals or groups and co-opt critical discourses in the service of hegemonic power structures.

Chapter 4, "Three-Dimensional Dialectical Rhetorics," more closely examines three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics, not because they are better than one-dimensional and two-dimensional rhetorics, but because they have received less attention in rhetoric and composition scholarship. I begin this chapter by revisiting three scholars I discuss in chapter 2 as opposing the simple and negative functions of philosophical dialectic: Muckelbauer, Vitanza, and Hawk. These three scholars reject only a very narrow method of dialectic, and not the dialectic that is the counterpart of rhetoric (and certainly not three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric). In particular, I revisit these scholars to demonstrate that their respective antidialectical theories actually support a theory and method of three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric, with the mediation of different orientations as its primary function. My ultimate goal in this chapter is to reconnect three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric with its classical function as a strategic and topical art, an art based on the exploration of argument categories characteristic of three-dimensional rhetoric's central purpose, namely mediation. These three-dimensional topics include deconstruction, dialogue, identification, critique, and juxtaposition.

In order to illustrate each of these topics for three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric, I describe five students' essays that use these topics to develop their arguments. These five essays demonstrate that the first task of three-dimensional dialectical rhetoric is to understand the orientations and forces of opposition performed in any rhetorical situation. For writers, orientations and forces of opposition are generative contexts for the application of specific topical strategies, including deconstruction, dialogue, identification, critique, and juxtaposition. Johndan

Johnson-Eilola (1998) reminds us that composition students in the twenty-first century must learn to connect with different people and different texts, not just produce monological, one-dimensional discourse, and these students' essays represent the three-dimensional effort to connect orientations through dialectical rhetoric. As audiences, our task is to understand not only the orientations and forces of opposition as they are presented in each rhetorical performance (print or digital) but also to participate in the production of three-dimensional mediation. Dialectical rhetoric is a creative process, whether we are writing, reading, speaking, or navigating a series of related websites.

In chapter 5, "Three-Dimensional Dialectical Rhetorics in Digital Contexts," I conclude my argument by examining the role of three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics in the context of digital communication technologies. Digital technologies, especially those associated with Web 2.0, highlight the sense of difference within and among discourses and communities through a variety of interactive communication media, such as web pages, blogs, wikis, hypertext, Facebook, MySpace, Instagram, and Twitter, among many others. These "cool" technologies, as Jeff Rice calls them, enable the development and use of certain rhetorical strategies not imaginable during rhetoric and composition's print-specific past, before the rise of electronic communication (Rice 2007, 21). Digital technologies, most of which are relatively new in the overall communication landscape, condition human communication and social interaction in interesting ways, encouraging a decentering of information, favoring nonlinear structures, and increasing the speed of interaction, all of which can have positive and negative effects. The decentering of information increases access but decreases coherence and continuity. Nonlinear document structures increase flexibility but decrease control of purpose and intent. The high speed of interaction increases efficiency but decreases the need for face-to-face communication. A heightened sense of difference in discourse and a decreased reliance on linear structures, among other things, intensify the need for three-dimensional dialectical rhetorics emphasizing mediation.

Many effects of digital technologies on our communication landscape are not necessarily new (Plato complained that writing decentered information from the living memory to the dead text), but they are certainly intensifying, and digital technologies are a rich context for that intensification. Certain rhetorical strategies (deconstruction, dialogue, identification, critique, and juxtaposition, for example), some of which have been around for a long time, have become critical to success in digital contexts. Since digital technologies have irreversibly changed the

general communication landscape, these strategies are now also critical for success in all rhetorical contexts, including traditional media such as the plain print of academic essays.

Note

1. There is another sense of dialectic not mentioned here, the nineteenth-century philosophical dialectic of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. This dialectic is a later development in the history of ideas and ultimately has little direct relation to rhetoric. I discuss this philosophical trajectory of dialectic more thoroughly in chapter 1.