I. Introduction

Thanks to Prof. Martinich's translation of Hobbes’s *Logica* and the excellent introductory essay by Profs. Hungerland and Vick, the study of Hobbes’s logic and its relation to the larger body of his work has been significantly advanced. Correcting Hobbes’s own errors of translation to English, and focusing on his distinction between marks and signs, signing and referring, these scholars make it possible more carefully to compare his achievement to other reformers of logic in his time. That comparison suggests a logical quandary: we now have a good understanding of Hobbes’s theory of signs and signification, including how that theory differs from and relates to his theories of names and of reference.¹ We also have some new understanding of his treatment of the syllogism, and of what his new treatment of the two tasks of ‘method’ does for natural and civil philosophy. We have new work on Hobbes’s rhetoric, such as that by Schoneveld, Sacksteder, Johnston, Louis Roux, Paul J. Johnson and John Harwood, among others, concerning the *Briefe* on Aristotle, *Leviathan* as a masterpiece of persuasion, and concerning the logic and rhetoric of his ‘science of natural justice’ as a foundation for peace-making to be used by sovereigns and magistrates.²


quandary is, is the Hobbes of the *Logica* logically consistent with Hobbes as philosophical persuader, or does he use a double standard, one for philosophers and one for wider communication?

Because of the recent growth of standards and productivity in Hobbes scholarship, our understanding of Hobbes is far more complicated, and our ability to take the overview far more difficult than it would have been even fifteen years ago. Therefore new attention is being paid to the context of Hobbes’s time, what was being done in logic and rhetoric, and in the disputed area between the two (where some intrepid reformers chose to hold the most dangerous ground). Seeing the Sage of Malmesbury anew, as reformer of the syllogism, innovator in semiotics, creator of a new position between rationalism and empiricism, rhetorical genius and Socratic ironist, as well as a somewhat Pyrrhonian sceptic, now might seem the least likely time to try to put him back together again. The new lines of research are only beginning, the word is barely out, the textbooks have not yet changed, and though scholarly meetings are beginning to awaken the natives, the old happy clichés and stereotypes slumber on, from undergraduate classes to textbooks to academic meetings. Hobbes-bashing is at least as popular as ever it was. In all practicality it would be unrealistic to expect things to get caught up soon. A higher standard plus years of discussion will be needed before Hobbes is widely interpreted in close accord with recent philological and philosophical work on his logic and rhetoric as they underpin language-and concept-formation and argumentation in the larger body of his works.


116