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Hobbes and the Early Modern Ordinary Language of Will and Liberty

Giovanni Gellera

In the famous debate on liberty and necessity with Bishop Bramhall, Thomas Hobbes claimed to be following the «common use» of the «common people». Was Hobbes justified to invoke seventeenth-century ordinary language in support of his view on will and liberty? This paper investigates the definitions and semantic ranges of *will* and *liberty* in Latin-English and English dictionaries between 1538 and 1684. The dictionaries show affinities with Hobbes on will as desire and liberty as absence of impediments. This paper contributes to the understanding of the development of a philosophical English vocabulary prior to the end of Latin as the transnational philosophical language.

Introduction[1]

In *The Questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance* (1656), paragraph 8, Hobbes contends that his own concept of will as desire or appetite follows ordinary language use, unlike Bramhall's:

> I desire the reader to take notice that the common people, on whose arbitration depends the signification of words in common use, among the Latins and the Greeks, did call all actions and motions whereof they did perceive no cause, spontaneous.[2]

Hobbes argues that will and appetite are the same thing but that «not every appetite, but the last, is esteemed in the public judgment for the will […] For every man in himself knows that what he desires or has an appetite to, the same he has a will to.»[3] Arguably, Hobbes had in mind the lack of an explicit discussion of free will in Aristotle who spoke of *ekousion* and *akousion* actions, usually translated in English as voluntary, willing, acting of free will, and its opposite.[4] In the *Castigations of Mr Hobbes* (1658), Bramhall replied that Hobbes's interpretation of Aristotle is wrong, and that «free will is a thing that […]

1 This paper was first conceived during the Swiss National Science Foundation 'Scientific Exchanges' project *Philosophy and Theology in Renaissance Scotland*, at IASH, University of Edinburgh. I warmly thank the friendly staff there. I am grateful to Sarah Jane Brazil, Alexander Broadie, Donna Delacoste, Hélène Leblanc, Christian Maurer and the *Studia Philosophica* anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

2 Vere Chappell (ed.): Hobbes and Bramhall on Liberty and Necessity (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) 74.

3 Ibid., 75. Questions, §8.

4 Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, 1109b30–34. H.G. Liddle; R. Scott: Greek-English Lexicon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1843), entry *ἑκούσι-ος*.

was never mentioned by them *in English*, by the name of 'free will'; but he may find 'αὐτεξούσιον' and 'προαίρεσιν'. Let him read Aristotle alone.»[5] Besides Aristotle, Hobbes might have had another reference in mind: with the expressions «the reader» and «in the public judgment» he appealed «to the reader's own experience to confirm his teachings», quite a characteristic strategy of his.[6]

This paper investigates Hobbes's claim that his use of liberty and will, unlike Bramhall's, was in keeping with the «common use» of «the common people.» It does so by analysing the semantic ranges of the concepts of will and liberty in the early modern non-philosophical dictionaries (mostly Latin-English and English) published in England for the English-speaking readers, between Thomas Elyot's *The Dictionary* (1538) and Adam Littleton's *A Latine Dictionary* (1684). The notion of ordinary language is notoriously complicated to pinpoint, even more so in the case of past language. For the purpose of this paper, I take 'ordinary language' to mean the definitions and semantic ranges indicated in the non-philosophical dictionaries.[7] They are uniquely helpful because of an empirical approach to language guided by practical aims. They were not meant to contribute to philosophical debates but they were written by authors sensitive to philosophical views, especially moral and political, such as ministers, lawyers and academics. The paper will show that while the dictionaries are silent on central aspects of the Hobbes-Bramhall debate they reveal, however, some affinities with Hobbes in the semantic ranges of will and liberty, and share some conceptual distance from scholasticism. Hobbes could, to an extent, appeal to ordinary language because, parallel to the philosophical language of will and liberty, there existed an ordinary language of will and liberty.[8]

Appeals to common use as the source of meaning are a trope in early modern philosophy. As Hannah Dawson has written, «common use, certain grammarians and rhetoricians had reluctantly admitted, is forged not by the learned,

5 John Bramhall: The Works of Archbishop Bramhall, vol. IV (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1844) 216. My emphasis.

6 Kody W. Cooper: Reason and Desire After the Fall of Man: A Rereading of Hobbes's Two Postulates of Human Nature, in: Hobbes Studies 26 (2013) 107–129, 108.

7 See Risto Saarinen, Weakness of the Will in Renaissance and Reformation Thought (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) for case studies from literature, like Petrarch and Shakespeare.

8 I would like to address here the *Studia Philosophica* anonymous reviewers' remark that this paper does not discuss which dictionaries were materially available to Hobbes. I acknowledge the importance of archival sources available to Hobbes, as argued in Richard A. Talaska, The Hardwick Library and Hobbes's Early Intellectual Development (www.pdcnet.org). For example, one item on Talaska's list, 'Coopers Dictionary. fol.' (Thomas Cooper's Thesaurus, London: 1565) is not discussed in my paper, so I intend to do more research in the future from this complementary, more historical perspective. Here I have sought to make a different claim: that there is a conceptual affinity between Hobbes and this collection of different dictionaries in general, arguably based on their respective reference to ordinary language. I did not intend here to prove that Hobbes had specific dictionaries available and, further, whether he was in fact influenced by them.

but by the masses.»[9] Bramhall did not seem to find any merit in this: in the same passage cited above he warned the reader that while «[he] desire[s] to retain the proper terms of the Schools; Mr. Hobbes flies to the common conceptions of the vulgar.»[10] Hobbes was no exception in approaching ordinary language with an agenda. John Wallis wrote to Robert Boyle that «Mr Hobs» had a reputation to be «very dexterous in confuting others by putting a new sense on words rehearsed by himself».[11] The appeal to common language was part of Hobbes's strategy against the schoolmen like Bramhall, accused of using «a vocabulary of their own invention» to manipulate people, and of producing «insignificant speech» against «common use.»[12] Hobbes believed that the scholastic abuse of the concepts of liberty and will was not just a matter of bad science, because the abuse of language was at the heart of religious and political controversy.[13] A different way to put the question is whether Hobbes's appeal to ordinary language confronts us with «a new sense on words rehearsed by himself», as compared to coeval non-philosophical dictionaries.[14]

Therefore, the paper also addresses vernacular philosophy in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Hobbes's works were published around the end of a period of great development of the English language, soon to replace Latin as the scientific language in Britain. Philosophical English started to develop in technical texts as well as in translations, paraphrases and popularizations of classical texts. The question is what role, if any, English vernacular played in the appearance of new categories and ideas in early modern philosophy, prior to the end of Latin as the transnational language of philosophy.

1. Hobbes on will, liberty, and their language

In order to understand the dictionaries, it is important to recall Hobbes's views on will and liberty vis-à-vis the scholastics, especially Bishop Bramhall. Regarding the will, two aspects of Hobbes's materialism and determinism seem to be important: the breadth of the semantic range and the psychologization of will.

9 Hannah Dawson: Locke, Language and Early Modern Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) 199.

10 J. Bramhall: Works, op. cit., 209.

11 Philip Pettit: Made with Words. Hobbes on Language, Mind, and Politics (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008) 54.

12 Cees Leijenhorst: The Mechanisation of Aristotelianism. The Late Aristotelian Setting of Thomas Hobbes' Natural Philosophy (Leiden, Boston, London: Brill, 2002) 38, 51.

13 Frederick G. Whelan: Language and Its Abuses in Hobbes' Political Philosophy, in: The American Political Science Review 75 (1981) 59–75, 59–60.

14 To my knowledge, this question has been largely neglected. For the development of Hobbes's philosophical language vis-à-vis the philosophical tradition see Yves Charles Zarka (éd. par): Hobbes et son vocabulaire (Paris: Vrin, 1992).

Seventeenth-century critics of scholasticism tended to ascribe wholesale to 'the scholastics' any specific view they wished to reject. In the relationship of intellect and will, Bramhall took the libertarian side, arguing that the will has a radical power of «dominion …over itself […] and its own acts to will or nill without extrinsical necessitation.»[15] A champion of this view is John Duns Scotus, for whom the will is self-determined because is «always able, without any further determination (and in particular without input from some other psychological power), to determine necessiation».[16] Hobbes accused Bramhall that his libertarian philosophy was coming from the scholastics rather than from Scriptures,[17] and that he was ultimately closer to the Jesuits than to Protestant theology. Bramhall would have been so keen to distance himself from Hobbes as to get out of his (Protestant) way. However, a libertarian view of the will is not a *scholastic* view: while it was popular among Scotists and Jesuits, it was notably less so among Protestants and Thomists.[18] As Chappell rightly observed, the issue between Hobbes and scholasticism is not about the compatibilism of freedom and necessity,[19] but about the limits and type of natural necessity Hobbes invoked. A different scenario applies to the relationship of will and desire. Again with Chappell: «in the traditional psychology, maintained by the Scholastics and by Bramhall, desire and will are sharply differentiated from one another», whereas for Hobbes «will is not a distinctive kind of mental operation, different from a desire.»[20] For the scholastics desire is different from will because desire is sensitive, common to human beings and animals; will on the contrary is a rational power because it is of the rational soul. Aquinas had called it an «intellectual appetite» (*appetitus intellectivus*) and made the distinction between *voluntas* and *liberum arbitrium:* the former is about the end (the natural good, God), the latter, which includes the act of *electio*, is about the means to the end. Francisco Suárez echoed that «election [is] in our choice»,[21] not the final end.

Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall argued from equally powerful but opposite assumptions.[22] On the one hand, Bramhall's starting point is our inner experience as evidence of free will: we have the liberty to will and not to will at any given time, that is, to interrupt an action during its performance. He thinks of freedom as the opposite of necessity. On the other hand, for Hobbes the principles of universal causality and materialism argue for psychological determinism and compatibilism of freedom and necessity. Will is the last appetite for or

15 V. Chappell: Hobbes and Bramhall, op. cit., xv.

16 Alexander Broadie: The Scotist Thomas Reid, in: American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly 74 (2000) 385–407, 392.

17 Margarita Costa: Hobbes on Liberty and Necessity, in: Hobbes Studies 6 (1993) 29–42, 35.

18 V. Chappell: Hobbes and Bramhall, op. cit., xv fn. 6.

19 Ibid., xi.

20 Ibid., xii–xiii.

21 Francisco Suárez: Disputationes Metaphysicae, 19.2.13.

22 V. Chappell: Hobbes and Bramhall, op. cit., xxii–xxii.

desire of something, after it has prevailed over competing appetites and desires. Our introspection only reveals prior determining desires or appetites. Liberty is the power of doing what one wills, not the power of willing: no one is ever free 'to will or not to will', since when one wills, wills necessarily. He borrows the scholastic concept of *deliberatio* and freely glosses it in chapter 12 of the *Elements* as a process of *de*-liberation: «the taking away of our own freedom» following the choice of one course of action possible at any specific time.[23] The scholastics resisted psychological reductionism because it entailed the reduction of causality to efficient causality, and of the rational soul to its psychological processes. They also resisted determinism because it endangered human freedom, therefore responsibility. The scholastic will is not a sublimated version of desires, passions and instinct, but rather the motive principle of reason required for action since, following Aristotle, thought by itself moves nothing.[24] Therefore, Hobbes and Bramhall are not talking about the *same* will. I suggest that the first indicator in the dictionaries of proximity to scholastic or Hobbesian views is whether the will is described as a rational or as a psychological power: namely, whether will and desire are two entirely different mental acts, and whether the stress is on the rational or the emotional aspect.

The second central aspect is liberty, which can hardly be divorced from its political dimension in Hobbes. «Hobbes's epoch-making conclusion in *Leviathan* that liberty amounts to nothing more than the absence of external impediments to motion»[25] is also motivated by the fact that Hobbes «needs the doctrine that fear and liberty are consistent».[26] That is, that the liberty of the subject is compatible with subjection to the law, because the fulcrum of his theory of the Commonwealth is to insist on the rationality of giving up this freedom from any obligation to obey human laws.[27] Therefore, only necessity of coercion is incompatible with freedom, and subjects in a state are free insofar as they act willingly, of their own accord, without external impediments or, as Hobbes says in *Leviathan*, with «no stop in doing what he has the will, desire or inclination to do.»[28] Actions under the motive of fear or commandment are free because there is no such thing as internal coercion in the agent to do or not do. As noted above, Hobbes was sensitive to alleged abuses of language. In *Leviathan*, chapter 21, he contended that it is an «easy thing, for men to be deceived, by the spe-

23 Thomas Hobbes: Elements of Law: Natural and Politic, ed. by Ferdinand Tönnies (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1889) 61 [ch. 12 § 1].

24 Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics, 1139a25–26.

25 Quentin Skinner: On the Liberty of the Ancients and the Moderns: A Reply to my Critics, in: Journal of the History of Ideas 73 (2012) 127–146, 130.

26 Ibid., 136.

27 Quentin Skinner: Thomas Hobbes on the Proper Signification of Liberty: The Prothero Lecture, in: Transactions of the Royal Historical Society 40 (1990) 121–151, 133.

28 Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan, ed. by Noel Malcolm, vol. II (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2012) 324. I used the English version of 1651.

cious name of Libertie».[29] He intuited that he who succeeded at setting the language of a debate acquired an advantage. In chapter 29, he criticised the anti-royalists who «say not regicide, but tyrannicide» to make it morally acceptable.[30] Quentin Skinner discussed how Hobbes saw the seed of the political and religious in-fighting in England in precisely this (ab)use of language, influenced by the late sixteenth-century English translations of the Classical Roman texts by Cicero, Livy and Tacitus, and of Aristotle's *Politics*. These texts fuelled «radical thinking» with an ultimate «destabilising effect on the Stuart monarchy».[31] Hence, the English reader would learn from Cicero that «libertie» is «to lyve as men list», from Livy that free people should be «at libertie to doe what they will» and that the tyrannical monarchs take «their owne will and licentious lust in steede of law» and that they «dote upon their owne wills».[32]

Therefore, I suggest that the second indicator in the dictionaries of proximity to scholastic or Hobbesian views is whether liberty is mainly understood as lack of external impediments. This freedom from (external) impediments to action might find a political analogy in the «republican freedom» understood as not being subjected to someone else's will, namely the absolute monarch's.[33]

2. Early Modern Non-philosophical Dictionaries

C.S. Lewis wrote in *Studies in Words* (1967) that «in determining what a word meant at any period in the past we may get some help from the dictionaries of that period; especially from bi-lingual dictionaries.» These are the most trustworthy «because their purpose was usually humble and practical» and because they were less influenced by the author's preconceptions about language, and more influenced by people's actual use.[34] Manfred Görlach wrote that «the Early Modern English period was exceptionally productive not only in the overall growth of lexemes but also in the increase in their semantic ranges».[35] Early Modern English was continuously shaped by new words and loanwords, and by the demands of precision in written language as well as in technical writing.[36] Evidence of this development was the increase in number and quality of bi- and

29 Hobbes: Leviathan, op. cit. 334; cited in: Q. Skinner: Proper Signification of Liberty, op. cit., 122.

30 Hobbes: Leviathan, op. cit, 508; cited in F.G. Whelan : Language and Its Abuses, op. cit., 60.

31 Quentin Skinner: Classical Liberty and the Coming of the English Civil War, in: Republicanism. A Shared European Heritage vol. II, ed. by Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) 1–28, 14.

32 Ibid., 11, 13, 23.

33 Q. Skinner: On the Liberty, op. cit., 130.

34 C.S. Lewis: Studies in Words (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967) 17.

35 Manfred Görlach: Introduction to Early Modern English (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 199.

36 Ibid., 207.

mono-lingual dictionaries. Consequently, «if two linguistic systems (whether dialects, sociolects or two different languages) are in contact in a more or less bilingual speaker, one system is likely to influence the other».[37] This is the backdrop of our investigation of will and liberty in the non-philosophical dictionaries.

The authors of the dictionaries were aware of the increasing ignorance of Latin. In 1684 Adam Littleton added an English preface to his *A Latine Dictionary* with the justification that: «I judg I cannot acquit my Duty only in a *Latine* address, wherein none but Scholars can be concerned; unless I do also in plain *English* give an account of my self, which may be understood by all.» Latin was arguably «less widespread in England»,[38] not least for the political will to distance England from Catholic Rome.[39] The authors of the dictionaries were also aware of semantic variance and of the difficulties of translation. John Bullokar wrote in the Preface to *An English Expositor* (London: 1616) that: «It is familiar among best writers to usurpe strange words, (and sometimes necessary by reason our speech is not sufficiently furnished with apt termes to expresse all meanings).» As a translator himself, Hobbes knew that translations were open to misunderstanding, whether intentional or not. In *Behemoth*, he makes the example of the Latin word 'iustitia' which is often rendered in the English translations of the Bible as «righteousness […] which few understand to signify the same, but take it rather for rightness of opinion».[40] In *Leviathan*, chapter 4, he writes that «For one man calleth *Wisdome*, what another calleth *feare*; and one *cruelty*, what another *justice*»:[41] names signify our conceptions and, as seventeenth-century philosophers realised, semantic variance and confusion due to passions and private opinions were strong in moral philosophy.

This development of the English language makes the case for its study from the perspective of early modern philosophy. Expansion of vocabulary and semantic precision were needed for the development of a philosophical language in English. My argument is that the dictionaries show that the ordinary semantic ranges of the English lexemes of will and liberty were broader than the corresponding technical Latin ones in a philosophically meaningful way, at least vis-à-vis Hobbes. The corpus of dictionaries investigated here is not unitary, and it has been assembled with the criteria of chronological and geographical proximity to Hobbes. Therefore, the period is 1538 to 1684, and publication place and target

37 Ibid., 154.

38 Lia Formigari: A History of Language Philosophies (Amsterdam, Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004) 93.

39 Umberto Eco: The Search for the Perfect Language (Oxford, UK, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1995) 209: «Although Latin was still the common language of scholars, to the English mind, it was associated with the Catholic church.»

40 Behemoth: Dialogue 2, cited in: F.G. Whelan : Language and Its Abuses, op. cit., 62.

41 Hobbes: Leviathan, op. cit., 62.

audience are England. It is important to analyse the semantic changes from Latin to English because the Latin-English dictionaries, being more elaborate, «exercised considerable influence on the English dictionaries».[42] As well as to Latin-English dictionaries, mono-lingual dictionaries also generally owe to earlier ones, especially Thomas Elyot's *Dictionary*.[43] For ease of read and irrespective of the original, I present non-English words (Latin, Italian, and Saxon) in italic and English words in normal. If a term is not listed, it is not present in the dictionary. Spelling is original.

1) Thomas Elyot, *The Dictionary* (London: 1538): *Arbitrium:* will, arbytrement / *Voluntas:* will / *Voluntarius:* voluntary, willynge / *Liber:* free, at lybertie, not bounden / *Libertas:* lybertie, taken always in the good parte.
2) John Rider, *Bibliotheca scholastica* (Oxford: 1589): Arbitrement: *arbitrium*, *arbitrarius* / Judgment: *arbitrium*, *sententia*, *existimatio*, *opinio* / The Will: *voluntas*, *animus*, *mens* / Will, or pleasure: *libido*, *ingenium*, *arbitrium* / A will, minde, meaning: *intentio* / Will, appetite, desire: *studium* / Willingly and wittingly: *sciens prudensque* / Willingly: *sponte*, *libenter*, *voluntarie*, *lubenti animo, jucunde* / Free: *liber*, *immunis*, *licentior.*
3) Thomas Thomas, *Dictionarium* (London: 1619): *Arbitrarium:* arbitrement, advise, opinion, will, pleasure, fancie, judgment / *Arbitrarius:* that wee may change at pleasure, left to the discretion of the judge / *Voluntas:* will, good will, affection, heart, minde, consent, desire.
4) Francis Holyoke, *Dictionarium Etymologicum* (Oxford: 1627): *Arbitrium:* arbitrement, judgment, will, opinion, advice, fancie, pleasure / *Voluntas:* will, affection / *Voluntarie:* of the owne free will, willingly, readily / *Volens:* willing, readie, glad.
5) Thomas Blount, *Glossographia* (London: 1656): Arbitrary: that which is voluntary or left to our own will or censure / belonging to arbitrement; Voluntary: one that serves or does any thing, without pay or compulsion, of his own accord or will.
6) Edward Phillips, *New World of English Wordes* (London: 1658): *Libertas:* a priviledge held by grant or prescription / Voluntary: done willingly, without force, or constraint.
7) Francis Holyoke, *Riders Dictionary* (London: 1659): *Arbitrium:* judgment, will, opinion, will or testament / *Arbitrarius:* that which is voluntary, or left to our own choice, arbitrary / *Voluntarius:* willing, that is of ones own accord, voluntary / *Voluntas (ex volo):* will, affection, consent, desire, love,

42 De Witt T. Starnes; Gertrude E. Noyes: The English Dictionary from Cawdrey to Johnson 1604–1755 (Amsterdam, Philadelphia John Benjamins, 1991) 9. See also chapter V, page 42.

43 Gabriele Stein: Sir Thomas Elyot as Lexicographer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) chapter 10.

good will / *Voluntas homini* [*sic*]: *id est ejus vis atque sententia* [of human being's power and decision / opinion. My translation].

8) Francis Gouldman, *Copious Dictionary* (Cambridge: 1669): *Arbitrium:* arbitrement, award, judgment, will, pleasure, fancy, opinion / *Arbitrarius – voluntarius, quod est nostri arbitrii:* that which is voluntary, or left to our own choice, arbitrary / *Arbitrario – pro arbitrio vel voluntate:* in question, doubtful, as he will, uncertainly / *Libertas – est potestas vivendi ut velit vel libet, nisi vi aut jure prohibeatur:* freedom, liberty, boldness in speech / *Liber – cui quod libet licet:* free, at liberty, not restrained or limited, not bounded, not subject, exempt from, bold or frank / *Libere:* frankly, freely, without constrains, at his pleasure / *Volo:* to be willing, to wish, to mean, to desire or covet, to think or judge / *Voluntarius:* voluntary, willing, that is of ones own accord, coming of itself / *Voluntas:* will, love, good will, affection, mind, meaning, consent, desire, heart / *Voluntas homini* [sic]– *ejus vis atque sententia* [of human being's power and opinion. My translation] / The Will: *voluntas*, *animus*, *mens*, *arbitrium* / Will or pleasure: *libido*, *arbitrium* / Will, mind or meaning: *intentio* / Will, appetite, desire: *studium*, *votum* / Willingly: spontaneous.

9) Edward Coles, *English Dictionary* (London: 1677): Free: *liber*, *immunis* / Free will: *liberum arbitrium* / Will: *voluntas* / Will as desire: *studium* / Will as pleasure: *libido*, *arbitrium* / Willingly and Wittingly: *sciens prudensque.*

10) Adam Littleton, *Latine Dictionary* (London: 1684): Arbitrarily: *ex arbitrio*, *pro libitu* / Free: *liber*, *immunis*, *solutus*, *vacuus*, *carens* / To Will: *volo* / Will or desire: *cupio* / Will or command: *jubeo* / Whether thou will or not: *velis, nolis* / To be willing: *assentio* / Willingly: *libenter* / Willingly or of his own accord: *sponte* / The Will: *voluntas* / Will or pleasure: *libido*, *arbitrium* / Will or minde: *intentio* / Will or desire: *studium* / Free will: *liberum arbitrium* /*Arbitrium: sententia* /*Arbitrement:* opinion, judgment, will, fancy, advice, pleasure. Eccl[esiastical]: free will / *Liber – cui quod libet licet:* free, at libertie, void of, not bound or subject. exempt from, bold or frank / *Liberum arbitrium:* free will / *Voluntas:* will, desire, inclination, purpose, affection, minde, meaning.

I now present what I believe are general patterns.

The Latin *arbitrium* is translated as 'will, judgment, sentence, opinion', in the semantic range of a rational decision. It is distinguished from the English word 'arbitrement', the unappealable decision of an arbiter, with more discretional power than an ordinary judge. The other semantic range is that of 'one's own opinion', as in the subjective character of the decision. Hence, the meaning of arbitrary as in «that we may change at pleasure» and «left to the discretion of the judge» as in Thomas's *Dictionarium* (1619): *arbitrium* as subjective rather than objective judgment. Littleton translates 'arbitrarily' as 'pro libitu': at one's

own fancy, pleasure, will. Closer to *arbitrium* as 'decision' are Gouldman's *Copious Dictionary* (1669) and Littleton's *Latine Dictionary* (1684), which lists 'free will' in its ecclesiastical sense under the entry *Arbitrement.*

Freedom (or liberty) is typically understood negatively as freedom from impediment or constraint. Prominent is the political sense of freedom as «not subject», «exempt», «enfranchised», as the meaning of *libertas* in Phillips's *New World* (1658): a «priviledge». Reminiscent of the translations studied by Skinner is the sense of *libertas* as to live as one wants, as in Gouldman's *Copious Dictionary* (1669). Interestingly, without reference to the dictionaries C.S. Lewis recollected similar meanings in Cicero, Aristotle and Plato. *Liber* is «not a slave; or […] used of an inanimate object, in the sense of unconfined, unopposed.» «Free like Greek and Latin words […] originally refers to legal status. […] It also means 'free' in the physical sense, free to move.» Hobbes's controversial remark about the «free movement» of water, in chapter 9 of *De Cive* is confirmed by Ovid's use of «freer (*liberioris*) water» of the sea.[44]

The semantic range of will/*voluntas* is quite large, and arguably the most important feature of the dictionaries for our discussion. *Voluntas* is translated as will, affection, consent, desire, mind, heart. Later dictionaries typically qualify 'will' as pleasure (*libido*, *arbitrium*), appetite/desire (*studium*), mind (*intentio*), or command (*iubeo*). The dominant semantic range seems to be that of doing what ones likes or wishes to do. 'Willing' either appears in the expression «willingly and wittingly», which translates *sciens prudensque*, or in the sense of «spontaneous, readily, coming of itself», something done «without force or constraint». Occasionally, willingly means «with pleasure» (*jucunde*) and «gladly», as in Bullokar's address «to the Courteous Reader», in which the dictionary is said to be offered to the reader «willingly». There seems to be no explicit distinction between 'spontaneous' and 'voluntary'. «Free will» translates *liberum arbitrium* only in Coles's *Dictionary* (1679) and Littleton's *Latine Dictionary* (1684), with the qualification of being in the «ecclesiastical sense». Littleton seems to translate related words somewhat inconsistently. Whereas the English «free will» translates the Latin *liberum arbitrium*, *arbitrium* does not translate as 'will' but as 'opinion, judgement', possibly referring to the «minde» and «meaning». 'Free will' is used here in a technical way, like *liberum arbitrium.* Holyoke's *Riders Dictionary* (1659) and Gouldman's *Copious Dictionary* (1669), which arguably copies this point, omit the qualification 'free': *voluntas homini* [sic] is said to be the human power and decision (*vis* and *sententia*) to do something. Perhaps the authors of the other dictionaries did not use the ecclesiastically-laden expression because they thought, like Holyoke's *Riders Dictionary* (1659), that the latitude of the concept of will described (moral) agency sufficiently well. However, if one adds the negative sense of *liber* as «unrestrained», «free from»,

44 C.S. Lewis: Studies in Words, op. cit., 113–114.

in *Riders Dictionary* the *libera voluntas hominis* would translate as «the unrestrained power and decision to act».[45]

What are the consequences with respect to the Hobbes-Bramhall debate? As argued above, the first indicator of proximity to Hobbes is the psychological/emotional sense of the will. In the dictionaries, the concept of will seems to be mainly (but not exclusively) understood as pleasure, desire, fancy. There seems to be a tendency to associate will and a positive emotional attitude towards the willed thing or action. The Latin scholastic *voluntas* seems to have a more precise meaning and use than the English will.[46] The second indicator was a negative and political sense of freedom. In the dictionaries, the concept of freedom seems to be mainly (but not exclusively) associated with lack of constraints and impediments. This suggests an emphasis on 'freedom from' rather than 'freedom of'. The political connotation is central: the free man is he who is not specifically restrained by some prohibiting laws, who is enfranchised.

In light of the Hobbes-Bramhall debate, the dictionaries seem to be compatible with the following views: a) the association of freedom and spontaneity/voluntariness; b) freedom as the absence of external impediments; c) will as pleasure; d) will as desire; or, the tendency to stress the emotional over the rational in the practical judgment. This seems to give some credit to Hobbes's claim that his views, especially of the «will as the last appetite» or the «will as desire» (as in *De homine* 11.2), come closer than Bramhall's libertarian view to common uses, at least from what one can gather from the dictionaries. It might be helpful to recall how different these dictionaries are from philosophical lexica. In his celebrated philosophical dictionary, Rodolphus Goclenius defined *voluntas* as the «appetite of the rational soul […] or the inclination by which we are said to perform that which is conceived or known by the intellect.» *Volitio* is the «rational appetite of a known good, born out of its approbation».[47] Unlike Goclenius, the non-philosophical dictionaries do not actively engage in philosophical debates, and are, therefore, silent on crucial aspects of the Hobbes-Bramhall debate, especially Hobbes's materialism and the view that antecedent

45 These general patterns seem to apply also to an influential Italian-English dictionary and a trilingual Saxon-Latin-English dictionary. For example the following definitions in John Florio: Worlde of Wordes (London: 1598): *Arbitrio:* an arbitrement, a judgment, a sentence / *Libertà:* freedome, liberty, free choice / *Libero:* free, enfranchised, not bound, not subject / *Volontà:* will, good will, affection, mind, consent, desire. And in William Somner: Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum (Oxford: 1659): *Willa:* votum, voluntas, mens, voluptas, arbitrium: wish, will, pleasure, mind, delight, desire / *Willan:* velle: will-be willing, wish, desire / *Wilnunge:* desiderium, voluntas, voluptas, concupiscentia, appetitus: desire, will, pleasure, delight, concupiscence, appetite.

46 Perhaps the same tendency is in the *King James Version* translation of *Philippians* 2:13. In the *Vulgate* it reads «Deus est enim, qui operatur in vobis et velle, et perficere pro bona *voluntate*» while in the *KJV* it reads «For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good *pleasure.*» My emphasis.

47 Rodolphus Goclenius: Lexicon Philosophicum (Frankfurt: Thomae Berthleti, 1613) 329, entry *Voluntas.* My translation.

states logically necessitate later ones in moral agency (psychological determinism). While it is very unlikely that the authors of the dictionaries consciously endorsed versions of materialism, it is possible that they endorsed versions of psychological determinism.

Another distance from scholasticism seems to be the absence of teleological, perfectionist, deontological and nomological dimensions of will and freedom. The positive sense of freedom is framed as «to do what one wants», rather than to follow god's law or to seek the (ultimate) good. Also absent is any talk of the will as a faculty. The intellect is, however, described as a faculty in Holyoke's *Riders Dictionary* (1659) and Gouldman's *Copious Dictionary* (1669) as:

> […] the most noble part of the rational soul, also called mind and intelligence; in virtue of which the human being alone surpasses all other animals, and in virtue of which the human being is the only one able to apprehend things incorporeal and separated from all matter, concepts and forms.[48]

Perhaps unsurprisingly by now, *voluntas* is not called the less noble (or sinful) part of the soul, and it is rather something that one does/feels: *voluntas* (from *volo*): affection, consent, desire, love, good will, as in Holyoke's *Riders Dictionary* (1659). This brings us, again, to the relationship with scholasticism.

3. Between Scholastic Latin and English Vernacular

The views of will and liberty in the early modern non-philosophical dictionaries seem to be independent from the centuries-old scholastic tradition. In the long process of the abandonment of scholasticism, scholastic distinctions became unintelligible or superfluous outside the scholastic context. The dictionaries seem to have dispensed with the rich scholastic theory of faculties, and with the distinctions between *liberum* and *voluntarium*, *spontaneum*, *naturale*, *rationale*; between *studium*, *voluntas*, *electio*, *deliberatio*, *intentio*; between *intellectus* and *voluntas*, and *arbitrium*, *judicium*, *syllogismus.* A scholastic philosopher could not dismiss distinctions in the way Hobbes assimilated will, desire, volition, appetite into one psychological act.[49] Contemporary linguists would perhaps talk of scholastic Latin as a 'sociolect': a variety of language spoken by a specific group of people, in this case a technical academic jargon. C.S. Lewis spoke of the

48 Entry *Intellectus:* «Nobilissima animae rationalis pars quae & mens & intelligentia dicitur, qua praeditus homo, unus caeteris animantibus antecellit, cujusque opera, res incorporeas & et ab omni materia sejunctas, notiones atque formas solus apprehendit.» My translation.

49 I shall leave aside whether Hobbes's «attempt to abide by ordinary usage sometimes resulted in a trivialization of philosophical problems.» Bernard Gert: Hobbes's Psychology, in: The Cambridge Companion to Hobbes, ed. by Tom Sorell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 157–174, 173–174.

«insulating power of context».[50] The authors of the dictionaries arguably thought outside the Latin scholastic context because they were not philosophers addressing other philosophers and, not secondarily, they conceived their dictionaries in English for an English-speaking readership. Whereas Latin and scholasticism are mutually independent, historically they were almost inextricably bound up together.[51]

A further question concerns about the relationship of scholastic philosophy and broader culture. Fallon has criticised Lovejoy's view that «the ideas in serious reflective literature are, of course, in great part philosophical ideas in dilution», and are «derivative from academic philosophy.» Non-philosophical high culture would then be a «packing and popularization of the ideas of the philosophers».[52] Fallon argued, instead, that John Milton, for one, contributed to philosophical debates by means other than philosophical treatises. It seems that the cultural landscape of an early modern educated English reader would include a plurality of sources in which the technical philosophical concept of *liberum arbitrium* and free will would never appear in mutual isolation, and where literary sources influenced language as freely as philosophy did. In this scenario, Milton certainly resonated more than Bramhall.

As we have seen, while Hobbes claimed to follow the common use «of the Latins and the Greeks», he was not a naive follower of common sense uses. He maintained that ordinary language was «inherently subject to ambiguity and confusion»,[53] and that scientific language was the result of the clarification of ordinary language. The dictionaries are good candidates to show aspects of the «pre-scientific consensus ordinary language is based on».[54] Therefore, the ordinary uses of will and liberty would not be the «packing and popularization» or the «dilution» of philosophical ideas – certainly not of Hobbes's ideas. Rather, they could be regarded as reflecting the ordinary language on which Hobbes applied his own systematic philosophical treatment in order to elaborate a meaningful scientific language: an example of how «the lexicon of common speech and special jargons continuously affect each other.»[55] Hobbes developed these insights from ordinary language in the direction of a specific epistemology behind his language,[56] of a language coherent with materialism,[57] and with psy-

50 C.S. Lewis: Studies in Words, op. cit., 11–12.

51 U. Eco: Perfect language, op. cit., 36 describes medieval scholastic Latin as «an *artificial* idiom» which had «ossified into the international language of church and university.»

52 Stephen M. Fallon: Milton among the Philosophers (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1991) 14.

53 C. Leijenhorst: The Mechanisation, op. cit., 51.

54 Ibid., 51.

55 M. Görlach: Introduction to Early Modern English, op. cit., 201.

56 C. Leijenhorst: The Mechanisation, op. cit., 41.

57 Philip Pettit: Response to Commentaries on *Made with Words*, in: Hobbes Studies 22 (2009) 209–218, 209.

chological determinism and compatibilism – all views which I would not ascribe to the dictionaries, individually or collectively taken. Hobbes's use of ordinary language was also selective: I believe that Pettit's view that the compatibility of fear and voluntariness «is a revision of ordinary language, on Hobbes's part» remains valid.[58]

A final consideration is about seventeenth-century philosophical interest in language. John Locke thought that we can learn philosophical content by considering what is «proper to say» and what «sounds harsh» is ordinary language (*Essay* III.X.15). Bacon concurred that confusion can be avoided by paying attention to distinctions in ordinary language. If the argument about the proximity of ordinary language and Hobbes is correct, then Hobbes did not take notice of distinctions in ordinary language but, on the contrary, of the *absence* of certain distinctions: namely, between will, desire, appetite. In the observation of ordinary language uses Hobbes would have seen something much closer to everyday experience and (his own) 'true philosophy', as well as additional evidence that most scholastic distinctions were not anymore informative about human nature and moral agency.

Conclusion

Hobbes's views of will and liberty show affinities with the language of the early modern non-philosophical English dictionaries. Hobbes could remind the reader to listen to ordinary language because some ordinary language was out there. A seventeenth-century English reader could think about the question of free will in different ways, whether one was doing it in scholastic Latin or in «plain English». Although language is neither the only nor the main perspective, the comparison of scholastic Latin and English vernacular brings to the fore, however, some philosophically relevant developments which were taking place in non-scholastic culture, in different contexts and linguistic registers. The Latin technical language used by Bramhall was shaped by centuries of scholastic philosophy, while the fast-developing English ordinary vocabulary was less tied to this specific philosophical legacy. In turn, novel philosophical meanings could appear in the English vernacular milieu.

I would like to conclude with a passage by Thomas Reid. Long after English had established itself as Britain's philosophical language Reid, as a university professor, was still sensitive to Latin. On 27 January 1766 in a section entitled *Of the Culture of Imagination* Reid wrote:

> I think it therefore most expedient and usefull that a man should accustom himself as far as possible while he conceives things, to conceive at the same time the words

58 Ibid., 67.

> or language by which he may have occasion to express his thoughts. In this way a man will commonly think in his mother tongue … However if a man has occasion to speak or write in a forreign or in a dead language he ought for the same reason to think in that language what he shall have occasion to express in it. […] What a man would compose in Latin let him think & conceive in latin.[59]

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59 Thomas Reid: Thomas Reid on Logic, Rhetoric and the Fine Arts. Papers on the Culture of the Mind, ed. by Alexander Broadie (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) 21. I thank Alexander Broadie for this reference.