

An aerial, painterly illustration of a coastal town with a red-tiled roof and a harbor. A pilot in a dark jacket and goggles is seen from behind, flying a biplane. The pilot is holding a bouquet of yellow and red roses in his right hand, which is raised. The town below is detailed with buildings and a winding road. The sky is a mix of blue and white, suggesting a bright day.

ROBERT LOCKIE

# FREE WILL AND EPISTEMOLOGY

A DEFENCE  
OF THE  
TRANSCENDENTAL  
ARGUMENT FOR  
FREEDOM

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**ROBERT LOCKIE** is Senior Lecturer in the School of Human and Social Sciences at the University of West London, UK.

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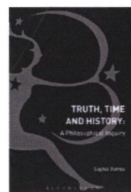
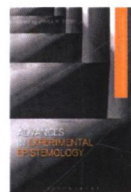


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# Free Will and Epistemology

## A Defence of the Transcendental Argument for Freedom

Robert Lockie

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*Dedicated to the memory of my mother and father*

*Mathilde Katherine Lockie (née Cahn), 1925–1999*

*John Andrew Robert Burns Lockie, 1922–2005*

*With love, gratitude and respect*





## Preface

This book is the product of more than two decades of thought about some of the most difficult issues in philosophy. It may not be adequate to the severity of the tasks it undertakes, but it is the best that I can do. I have attempted to argue to conclusions I believed once to be true, and I believe now to be both defensible and in need of strong and clear representation – in the face of views I think less likely to be true, and less clearly defensible.

We are at a strange late stage in the history of analytic philosophy. Our discipline is highly professionalized, specialized, focussed. It prizes precision, deference to various (exceedingly developed) literatures and a certain conception of methodological rigour – seemingly rather above many other things that might be valued. Philosophy has always needed rigour, and analytic philosophy, in its early and middle periods, represented a signal advance in this: embracing an admirable ethic of clarity. Increasingly, however, an arch, gruelling, house-style conception of ‘rigour’ seems at odds with clarity; and especially with the aspiration for a bigger picture. A kind of neo-scholasticism prevails. Stylistic brutalism is widespread. Analytic cleverness is prized, but commonly situated within a largely undefended and often restrictive body of assumption. Any research question now drags behind it a vast and not always enlightening recent literature, often located within a contrived (and concealed) framework of presupposition and methodological commitment, frequently written in a wilfully harsh ‘analyticalese’ – with each such paper usually offering the return of very small gains, if indeed gains are to be found at all. Deference to said literature (and we are not here talking of the great works of philosophical history) is a requirement for those who wish to contribute to it and, more regrettably, for those who attempt to supersede it or finesse its framework of presupposition. The small proportion of graduate students who, after years of sacrifice in the increasingly soul-destroying major PhD programmes, eventually are permitted to enter the profession, in turn become highly professionalized, publish-or-perish, status-orientated gatekeepers to the discipline. They have a stake in its continuance in something like its present form. Only a handful of major figures are permitted the status of luminaries, the right to a more sweeping view and disruptive role – and these figures are hardly major when judged by the standards

even of our discipline's fairly recent history, much less by any longer view. The rest of us are permitted to plough the furrows of what, in natural philosophy, Kuhn called 'normal science' – puzzle-solving.

What has been lost in the cumulative, concentrative, individually understandable changes that have led us to this point is a consideration of our discipline itself – its nature, what it is. This is not organic chemistry or computer science. Philosophy must of course be rigorous (this, to include some larger sense of 'rigour'), but philosophy must also, in at least much of its ambit, involve the search for a bigger picture, an overview. And, as regards this talk of a 'larger sense of rigour': philosophy must also scrutinize critically, searchingly, its own methodological and metaphilosophical framework. It cannot be that we permit only the geniuses to seek after said bigger picture, or to radically and reflexively scrutinize our discipline; for any such figure we may be waiting a long time, and even a genius may struggle to prevail in the discipline we bequeath them. In terms of the reflexive epistemology/methodology/metaphilosophy of our discipline, we cannot build a philosophy (whether a philosophy or philosophy *per se*) only by placing brick upon brick. There must be some effort to develop a top-down view, and this not only for the Kants, the Descartes, and the Wittgensteins: a top-down view even for thee and me.

This work articulates my view of the nature of epistemic justification and free will, and the relationship between these. I have endeavoured to make it as plain and accessible as the difficult nature of these topics permits. Of course, this may mean my deficiencies in addressing these questions are all the more plainly visible. Although a research monograph, it is my hope that upper-level undergraduates may benefit from reading it. It is certainly my hope that graduate students and professional philosophers working in epistemology and free will should become aware of the positions being defended – and thereby that those working in these areas should seek to take account of said positions. I hope this aspiration is realistic, inasmuch as the positions I defend are not unique to myself, and historically have been very important; though they have, for the most part, wanted quite badly for recent defences.

One position I defend permits me to acknowledge my first intellectual debt: to Richard Foley. Foley was my first teacher in epistemology – on the Rutgers Graduate Program in the early 1990s – and I was lucky to have such a teacher. Something close to his deeply subjective, perspectivist, deontically internalist conception of rationality/justification ('Foley rationality' – for me, 'thin deontic internalism') I defend in the first part of this work and rely upon in the second. His influence on my work has been profound.

The next intellectual debt I wish to record is to Michael Morris. More years ago than I care to remember, Michael supervised both my first Masters and my eventual Doctorate. A precursor to much of what I say here he will have helped to shape, at least in some inchoate form. His impact on my philosophical development was very considerable; his influence leavens much of this work.

My next intellectual debt is to an academic community, a community presently and deplorably under threat. In 2010, I had the great privilege to participate in the last of three legendary summer schools in philosophy at the Central European University (CEU) – namely, the ‘Aspects of Responsibility’ summer school. CEU – the best University in Hungary, and one of the best in central Europe, situated in the wonderful city of Budapest – is now under targeted, existential threat from malign political forces playing to ancient prejudices. I pray that it survives, and enjoin all who read this to play their part in fighting for its survival; this ought to be a beacon issue for the academy in our times. I should like to thank the organizers of and fellow participants in this summer school for one of the best and most stimulating intellectual experiences of my life. In particular, I should like to thank Derk Pereboom, Mark Balaguer, Dana Nelkin, Tim O’Connor and András Szigeti. The latter three have read and commented upon versions of several of the later chapters in this book. I am hugely grateful to them; and subsequently to András for helping to coordinate an Erasmus teaching fellowship for me at Linköping University in the summer of 2016. Others who have commented on individual chapters at various stages of this book’s development include Matthew Elton, Nikolaj Nottelmann, Carlos Moya, Tony Booth, Simon Langford, Lucy Allais and Elisa Galgut. This generosity is greatly appreciated. Others who have read or commented on earlier drafts or discussion presentations of overlapping or related work include Murali Ramachandran, Richard Gaskin, Craig Callender, Alex Barber, Nadja Rosental, Corine Besson, Michele Friend, Duncan Pritchard and Heather Battaly. Others who have assisted in the development of these ideas include Andy Clark, Mike Wheeler, Paul Davies, Pepa Toribio, Dan Haas, Gunnar Björnsson, Paul Russell, Brandon Warmke, Philip Robichaud, Zac Cogley, Jean-Baptiste Guillon and Susanne Uusitalo. I want further to mention David Hanney, Jef Mullins, James Pycock, Mark Hulbert, Hamid Vahid, Rick Peels, Shira Elqayam, Jonathan Evans, Ken Levy, Aaron Meskin and Mahon O’Brien. I have given presentations of some of this work at colloquia, conference talks and workshops over the last twenty years – too many to mention, but my thanks to all. Chapter 2 is a partial reworking of my ‘The regulative and the theoretical in epistemology’, *Abstracta*, 8(1): 3–14 (2014c). My thanks to the journal editors and referees.



I wish to record here my appreciation for the work done by all the good people at Bloomsbury Academic, particularly my editor Colleen Coalter; and to Bloomsbury's anonymous referees and reviewers. I should also like to record my thanks to Andrew Wardell, Liza Thomson, Helen Saunders and James Tupper. The book involves the use of several copyright figures and tables, reused by permission of the authors and publishers. Acknowledgement for these is indicated in text; my thanks to all.

In terms of academic institutions, I should like to record my various affiliations with, and indebtedness to, the psychology departments at the University of West London and the University of Bedfordshire; and the philosophy departments at the University of Sussex, Rutgers University and McGill University. My greatest debt remains to the philosophy and especially psychology departments at Hatfield Polytechnic (now the University of Hertfordshire), a wonderful institution that permitted me to embark upon the first leg of this intellectual voyage and remains my paradigm of all that a university should be.

Finally, and more personally, there are those *Philosophes* without whom, not: Mark Roberts, my oldest and greatest friend – philosophy with an Ealing curry and a pint of Pride; Ole Holm Jensen and all my Viking shipmates on *Den Vilde Jagt*; Vince Hunt (my dear, great-hearted friend: *in memoriam*); Spencer Wicks; Jana Jacobson; Claire Blake; and Deepak Chaudhry. And to my family: Judy Manderioli, Emanuele Manderioli and Giovanni Manderioli. Thanks to one and all.



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