

What's Love got to do with it? The Epistemic Marriage of Philosophical Counseling and Psychology

Bruce W. Fraser

Bruce W. Fraser holds a Ph.D. from Boston University and is currently an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Indian River Community College, Fort Pierce, Florida.

ABSTRACT: This paper argues for an intrinsic connection between Logic-Based Therapy (LBT) and empirical psychology, a connection that suggests the need to employ both philosophical and psychological theories in the clinical setting. This link is established by arguing that LBT is conceptually grounded in naturalized epistemology, the view introduced and defended by W. V. O. Quine in the aftermath of his attack on the Analytic-Synthetic distinction. Naturalized epistemology places empirical psychology and logic on the same epistemic foundation, and, it is argued, it is this foundation that both supports the application of logic in the clinical setting and connects logic to empirical psychology. One consequence of this view is that LBT should be understood as providing a theoretical framework for other forms of philosophical counseling, an idea that establishes the logic-based approach to therapy as the sine qua non of the counseling enterprise.

In a paper detailing the theoretical and practical differences between the American Society for Philosophy, Counseling, and Psychotherapy (ASPCP) and The American Philosophical Practitioners Association (APPA), Elliot Cohen argues that philosophical counseling should be viewed as "... a hybrid discipline, a form of counseling that uses philosophical methods and theories..." in addition to the methods and theories of clinical psychology.¹ This view contrasts with the vision of philosophical counseling presented by the APPA, Cohen claims, as only the former is predicated on the conceptual compatibility between philosophical and psychological approaches to counseling. What this compatibility amounts to, and in what sense they are compatible, Cohen does not say, and one is left wondering what epistemological assumptions are at play in the debate. The purpose of this paper is to examine

¹ . Cohen, E. "Philosophy with Teeth: The Be Wedding of Philosophical and Psychological Practices," IJPP, Vol. 2.2, Fall 2004. p. 5

these epistemological assumptions in detail, and to contextualize Cohen's observations in terms of the connection between Logic-Based Therapy (LBT) and naturalized epistemology, i.e. the view introduced and defended by W. V. Quine that places logic and psychology on the same epistemic foundation.² Specifically, this paper defends the idea that logic-oriented approaches to therapy such as LBT have an *intrinsic* connection to psychology as a result of epistemological status of logic, and, moreover, that alternatives to the logic-based therapies are ultimately committed to empirical assumptions that must be evaluated against the findings of psychology. One consequence of this view is that logic-based therapies become the cornerstone of philosophical counseling, and that other forms of philosophical interventions are either derivative or fall within the scope of empirical psychology.

In principle, a distinction between philosophical and psychological approaches to counseling appears justified. Philosophical theories are prescriptive in nature, identifying the ends of human activity in terms of moral and political obligations, and in terms of the nature of human happiness. Because of the descriptive nature of psychology – accounting for what is rather than what ought to be – philosophy appears to outstrip psychology in terms of its ability to specify the appropriate ends of action, and the appropriate objects of belief and intention. *Ipso facto*, philosophical counseling provides a dimension to therapy that psychology is unable to realize, though this dimension is inevitably predicated on some conception of the good. The divide between the ideal and the actual thus appears to uphold a distinction between philosophical and psychological counseling, as only the former can be said to provide the conceptual framework necessary for grasping the appropriate ends of human action.

². W. V. O. Quine "Two Dogmas of Empiricism" in *From a Logical Point of View*, Second Edition, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980).

Where logic is concerned, however, matters are more complex. Traditionally, philosophical accounts of rational thought --accounts grounded in categorical and first-order logics -- have been viewed as neutral on questions regarding human ends and interests.³ The prescriptive force of logic derives not from a conception of the Good, but from the concept of *truth* and the accompanying notions of validity and soundness; those inferences that preserve truth are constitutive of human reason, while the various formal and informal fallacies are symptomatic of the tendency for rational judgment to give way to the psychological errors and impulses. To the extent that truth can be defined independent of any psychological theory or view of human nature, rational thought, on this view, can be studied without reference to the underlying mechanisms that instantiate or inhibit the reasoning process. A fortiori, the methods associated with correcting faulty reasoning can be pursued without concern for the psychological mechanisms underlying the thinking process, an idea whose legacy is evident in the functionalist tradition in cognitive science and the philosophy of mind. In the arena of applied philosophy, it is an idea that also suggests a distinction in kind between logic-based therapies and those grounded in psychology.

It is this sense of a difference in kind between normative and descriptive disciplines that, one suspects, is at the heart of the debate over the possible interdependence of philosophical and psychological approaches to counseling. In contrast to the traditional view presented above, the approach advocated by Cohen recognizes an intrinsic connection between the logic of belief and the structure and experience of emotional states. As Cohen notes, “LBT treats cognitions that are deduced from premises (rules and reports filed under them) as internal aspects of an emotional

³ . This view comes through most clearly in Frege’s distinction between the logical and psychological, a distinction that is more compelling in light of the reduction of the synthetic a priori propositions to purely analytic ones in Frege’s reduction of Arithmetic to logic. See Frege, *The Foundations of Arithmetic* Second Revised Edition, translated by J. L. Austin, (Evanston, IL.: Northwestern University Press, 1994), § 26.

experience,”⁴ thereby linking the logic of belief statements with emotional states in terms of inferential structures. More to the point:

LBT accepts the theory that all emotions – including depression, anger, guilt, and anxiety – have or tend to have *intentional objects*, that is, they are *about* some event or state of affairs. Further, it holds that, by reporting the content of this object, the client can expose the report(s) from which, in conjunction with a rule(s), the emotion has been deduced.⁵

The connection between the logic of belief and the psychology of a client’s intentional state lies in the relationship between the client’s report of an experience and the logical relationship between that report and a general rule. The general rule is typically a suppressed premise in an argument from which the event-report is derived, and the purpose of LBT is to make this general rule explicit and to weigh its legitimacy against the prescriptive laws of logic. Faulty thinking, and the emotional consequences that follow, is the result of adopting a maladaptive general rule by which the event-report is classified, a mischaracterization of the event itself, or both. LBT thus links the prescriptive force of logic to the management of emotional states, and hence to psychology, by recognizing the intimate connection between how a client feels and how they think.⁶

The central issue in evaluating the connection between LBT and psychology is just how to understand the interface between a system of prescriptive rules and the emotional content of experience. As characterized by Cohen, LBT stands to benefit from the insights of empirical

⁴. Cohen, “Philosophical Principle of Logic-Based Therapy” *Practical Philosophy*, Volume 6, No. 1, 2003, 27-35. p 31.

⁵. *Ibid.* p. 28.

⁶. See also, Cohen, *What Would Aristotle Do? Self-Control Through the Power of Reason* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2003).

psychology precisely because a client's report of a particular event functions as a premise in an argument from which emotional states are deduced. Such reports reflect more than a mere statement of fact; they reflect the client's *interpretation* of events, their subjective experience of the world. Consequently, empirical data regarding how a client arrives at a particular interpretation, how certain concepts are framed and understood, is relevant to task of recasting that interpretation in order to facilitate reclassification of the event under a different general rule. Moreover, displacing a maladaptive general rule may in some cases require the subject's awareness of the origins of that rule (i.e., metacognitive evaluation), at least to the extent that this awareness serves as the rationale for accepting a new, logically justifiable rule. Knowing how one arrived at a misconception, being aware of the gap between one's beliefs and the facts, is often a strong incentive to change those beliefs. Clearly, the findings of empirical psychology are relevant in this domain and can serve to buttress the clinician's efforts to promote a rational approach to belief-management. Consequently, the most effective approach to LBT is one that embraces the insights of therapeutic psychology in the interest of bridging the gap between the rules for correct thinking and the client's subjective interpretation of events.

In the same vein, insights into how a person conceptualizes and integrates new information into existing belief systems, as well as how metacognitive evaluation is facilitated, will help the LBT practitioner imbed new rules in the client's conceptual framework (i.e. help the new ideas take root and propagate across their web of beliefs). In the clinical setting, as in the classroom, inculcating the rules for correct thinking involves much more than an introduction to truth-preserving inferences; getting a client or student to apply those rules (and to appreciate their justification, their significance, and their generality) requires the utilization of a variety of techniques and methodologies that go well beyond philosophical analysis. Indeed, the

psychology of learning is not only relevant to the inculcation of logic, it is essential to effective communication. To ignore the insights of psychological counseling and learning theory is to effectively strip logic-based approaches of their value; it is to divorce logic from a client's *noetic* experience and from those practices that facilitate substantive, enduring changes in one's belief system.

It is this connection between the subjective interpretation of events and the laws of logic that poses a challenge to advocates of a strict separation of psychological and philosophical approaches to counseling. For the very idea of utilizing the insights of logic as a corrective to maladaptive thinking and emotions presupposes a connection between how a person experiences the world at an emotional level and how they reason about it. In other words, the concept of philosophical counseling depends *essentially* on this link, since the separation of logic from a client's interpretation of the world eliminates the incentive to change one's thinking in a meaningful way. While the principles of logical systems can be studied for their intellectual interest and without concern for their application, the use of logic as a therapeutic tool requires imbedding those rules in the psychological domain. Consequently, insisting on circumscribing logic-based approaches to counseling in such a way that psychology is irrelevant is to make the very notion of counseling incoherent.

It is important to recognize that the issue of how logic and psychology are related in the domain of applied philosophy is the analogue of the theoretical debate among Analytic philosophers regarding the status of logic as a framework for rational thought. Wittgenstein's dialectical ruminations on the issue notwithstanding,⁷ the central figures in that debate are Rudolf Carnap and W. V. O. Quine, philosophers who sparred continuously over the status and nature of

⁷ . For an interesting, dialectical treatment of this issue, see Wittgenstein's discussion of following a rule, §172 ff., in *Philosophical Investigations*, Third Edition, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1958).

the analytic-synthetic distinction. For both Carnap and Quine, logic was central to understanding the language and science, and to the interpretation of empiricist epistemology more generally, but for Quine logic must be analyzed *within* the framework of modern science, not along side it. The relevance of this debate to applied philosophy lies in the implications of Quine's attack on Carnap's notion of analyticity, and in the emphasis on a naturalized approach to epistemology that results from that attack.

The source of Quine's animus toward the notion of analyticity is the idea that logic somehow maintains a privileged epistemic status vis-à-vis the truths of science – that the truths of logic are somehow independent of the world and provide the conceptual framework through which to diagnose and adjudicate disputes in the sciences.⁸ Carnap's various attempts to circumscribe logic and isolate its unique character reveal the pitfalls of trying to uphold this separation, and Quine's attack on analyticity reveals the inherent lack of clarity regarding the boundaries between the truths of logic and matters of fact.⁹ This is the point of Quine's famous critique of the attempt to capture the concept of analyticity purely formally in *Two Dogmas*: “From the point of view of the problem of analyticity,” Quine states, “the notion of an artificial language with semantical rules is a *feu follet par excellence*. Semantical rules determining the analytic statements of an artificial language are of interest *only in so far as we already*

⁸ . See Ricketts, T. “Rationality, Translation, and Epistemology Naturalized” *The Journal of Philosophy*, Vol 1, 29, No. 3: 1982, 117-136.

⁹ . “The lore of our fathers is a fabric of sentences. In our hands it develops and changes, through more or less arbitrary and deliberate revisions and additions of our own, more or less directly occasioned by the continuing stimulation of our sense organs. It is a pale gray lore, black with fact and white with convention. But I have found no substantial reason for concluding that there are any quite black threads in it, or any white ones.” W. V. O. Quine “Carnap and Logical Truth,” in P. A. Schilpp (ed.) *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1963) p. 132.

understand the notion of analyticity; they are of no help in gaining this understanding.”¹⁰ He goes on to note:

Appeal to hypothetical languages of an artificially simple kind could conceivably be useful in clarifying analyticity, *if the mental or behavioral or cultural factors relevant to analyticity – whatever they may be – were somehow sketched into the simplified model.* But a model which takes analyticity merely as an irreducible character is unlikely to throw light on the problem of explicating analyticity.[emphasis added]¹¹

The significance of Quine’s critique stems from his insistence that the value of logic as an analytical tool hinges on grounding that logic in the behavioral or mental life of the language user. For Quine, to divorce logic from natural language, to circumscribe logic by means of a special standard of truth, is to empty it of content. This is the message of his notorious thesis of the indeterminacy of translation: Once logic outstrips the ‘behavioral or mental or cultural factors’ relevant to its meaning, there simply is no matter of fact to questions about what counts as the ‘correct’ analysis of the logic of language.¹² Far from being a troubling thesis about the nature of translation, Quinean indeterminacy is an affirmation of the role language and behavior *must* play in grounding logic – in making it relevant to our systems of belief, and to our behavior. Quine’s appeal to behaviorism as a framework for this analysis, though long out of fashion, is no barrier to generalizing this idea: Logic, if it is to provide the basis for the analysis of belief statements and a corrective to faulty thinking, must stand on the same empirical footing as

¹⁰. W. V. O. Quine “Two Dogmas of Empiricism” in *From a Logical Point of View*, Second Edition, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1980). p. 36.

¹¹. Ibid.

¹². See W. V. O. Quine *Word and Object* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960), Chapter 2.

psychology, whether psychology means the behaviorism of the last century or the cognitivism of the present one. This is the lesson of naturalizing epistemology, and it is a lesson one would do well to accept.

These remarks raise several important questions. First, how can logic be grounded in empirical psychology without the descriptive nature of psychology threatening the prescriptive character of logic? Second, how can logic be *neutral* on the issue of what psychological theory to adopt, as the above reflection about Quine's behaviorism suggests? How can its prescriptive force remain constant when it is 'embedded' in a domain that is subject to variation and development? Such questions might be taken to suggest a fatal flaw in the naturalist's attempt to put science and logic on the same epistemological footing, but such thoughts misjudge the significance of this tension. The prescriptive character of logic appears difficult to reconcile with the descriptive and explanatory nature of psychology, to be sure, but that tension is no less troubling if one embraces a *metaphysical* distinction between the analytic and synthetic – between statements true in virtue of meaning, and those true in virtue of fact. If anything, reverting to the metaphysics of the analytic-synthetic distinction makes the relation between logic and psychology more opaque rather than less so, and one might just as well bite the bullet and face this problem, as Quine does, in an empirical spirit.

Fortunately, concerns over this tension are assuaged considerably by recognizing that the concepts of *truth* and *inference* are definable without reference to psychological states. Truth is a property of *sentences*, where sentences are understood as sequences of phonemes. Adopting the disquotation paradigm introduced by Alfred Tarski, the truth-predicate is defined contextually in the following way:

“*Snow is white*” is true if and only if *snow is white*.¹³

Defined thus, truth is free of psychological assumptions and hence free of any particular psychological theory about how the mind grasps the truths of logic. Moreover, by defining truth contextually, philosophical quandaries regarding its nature are relegated to the empirical domain: The naturalist’s answer to questions about the truth of the definiens (the truth of the *judgment* as opposed to the truth of the *sentence*) is the result of empirical inquiry rather than philosophical speculation, and theories that introduce *correspondence*, *coherence*, or an ontology of *propositions* must square with the methods and ontological commitments of science. For Quine, the truth of the definiens is a function of *use* (analyzed behaviorally in terms of stimulus meaning), an idea that reflects the influence of the Pragmatist tradition on his thinking, but other alternatives are possible. Quine’s appeal to Tarskian disquotation is meant to deflate philosophical controversy and bring truth into the realm of the pragmatic and the psychological. To indict naturalized epistemology on the basis of this appeal, and with it LBT, is simply to miss the point of Quine’s analysis.

It is this pragmatic approach to truth that inspires Quine’s rather pedestrian characterization in his treatise on mathematical logic:

...[T]he general notion of truth, central as it is to baffling problems of philosophy, may appear rather too big a thing to take for granted. Repudiation of “truth with a capital ‘T’” is a favorite way, indeed, of professing alignment with the hard-headed. But in point of fact there is no denying that we know what it means to say that a given statement is true –

¹³. Tarski, A. (1969) Truth and Proof, in *L’age de la Science*, vol. 1, pp. 279-301

absolutely True – just as clearly as we understand the given statement itself. The circumstances under which the statement *Jones smokes* would be said to be true, e.g., are precisely the circumstances under which Jones himself would be said to smoke. Truth of the statement is no more mysterious than the notions of Jones and smoking.¹⁴

For Quine, truth and logic are tied not to a particular theory of mind, but to language and the world (though unlike Carnap, Quine believes there is no ultimate divide between these domains). Theories of mind address the issue of how to explain language, making the prescriptive force of logic part of the *explanandum* rather than part of the *explanans*;¹⁵ Theories of world are part and parcel of the sciences themselves, the ontological commitments of the sciences usurping the traditional, a priori study of *Being-As-Such*. Language straddles a middle ground, its objectivity and prescriptive dimensions separating it from the purely psychological, its connection with judgment and belief distinguishing it as a peculiarly psychological phenomenon. As a predicate of English, “is true” is definable relative to English – within English – never universally for language as such. Whatever prescriptive force logic has is also integral to the language we use, and the empirical theories we use to explain the nature of logic must take prescriptivity as a basic datum.¹⁶ Understood in this way, language is a phenomenon to be studied and explained not only by empirical psychology, but by those sciences that have a

¹⁴ . W. V. O. Quine *Mathematical Logic, Revised Edition*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), pp. 3-4

¹⁵ . Thus, the prescriptive nature of logic becomes part of what a psychological theory must explain and serves as a condition of adequacy for any theory dealing the relationship between logic and thought. Similarly, psychological judgments about Jones and smoking e.g., are to be studied as psychological phenomena.

¹⁶ . This idea is hardly novel. Noam Chomsky’s work in linguistics is predicated on the notion that judgments of grammaticalness – judgments regarding what counts as a well-formed sentence – are to be taken as primitive in linguistic theory, i.e. part of the data set that linguists attempt to explain. How to explain this ability, i.e. how to explain the prescriptive force of grammar, is subject to considerable debate, evidenced by the variety of approaches to studying a speaker’s linguistic competence. See Chomsky *Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975). p. 135

bearing on the nature and origins of human intelligence (e.g. evolutionary biology, genetics, and neuroscience), and there can be significant disagreement over the theoretical approaches that will go farthest in providing a bona fide explanation of logic. Thus, defining truth in terms of language creates the conceptual latitude for psychological assumptions to vary without threatening the normative character of logic.

Yet the assumptions of empirical psychology cannot vary too widely, nor can they vary arbitrarily. What is most interesting about the relation of logic to psychology (or perhaps the most troubling), is the fact that the laws of logic are essential to empirical theories generally, and hence are presupposed in the investigation of logic. This is the point of Quine's early critique of the idea of truth by convention, and it is a point that inspires the move to a naturalistic approach to epistemology: As logic is ubiquitous, as it is presupposed in discourses political, moral, and scientific, there is no vantage point from which one can characterize logic without recourse to logic (and without recourse to the resources of a language rich with empirical assumptions, the lore of our forefathers, and the vestiges of innumerable dialects and cultures). In short, there is no principled way of separating out logic from language that does not smack of artifice or metaphysical retreat; logic is presupposed in our explanations of the world and of ourselves. One consequence of this view is that logic itself provides a framework in which debates over the adequacy of theories takes shape; it provides metalevel constraints on our theorizing, even our theorizing about logic.

Does such a view involve a problem of vicious circularity or regress? Fortunately not. To say that logic is presupposed in one's inquiry does not entail that an empirical inquiry into character of logic is impossible. To the contrary, the prescriptive character of logic, and its ubiquity in human thought and language, can be linked empirically to its centrality to our

conceptual scheme. There is nothing circular or logically incoherent, for example, about the hypothesis that the Law of Noncontradiction is fundamental to the way the human brain represents the world, even if that law is presupposed in the statement of our hypothesis. To fear vicious circularity is to confuse the object-level hypothesis with the meta-level analysis of its logic; it is to confuse how one *uses* a statement with what one says about it. Theoretical statements presuppose logic, to be sure, but their truth is a matter of their fit with the rest of our theory and with the real world. There is a sense of circularity here, to the extent that one's empirical hypotheses about logic must explain the presupposition of logic in the theory itself, but that sense is better cast in terms of the idea of the *mutual containment* of epistemology and science – epistemology must account for the possibility of science, while science is used in the process of developing one's epistemology. In any event, this reciprocal relationship between epistemology and science -- between *logic* and science -- is unavoidable even if circular and one might just as well accept it and get on with the business at hand.

Getting on with the business at hand, then, one can reason from the conceptual centrality of logic to an empirical hypothesis that, at least in general terms, gives some indication of why this is the case. If human intelligence is the product of extended evolutionary pressures, and logic is central to human intelligence, then the ubiquity of logic as well as its prescriptive force should be tied to the evolutionary response of the brain to its environment.¹⁷ Some reasoning patterns are better than others at promoting survival, and presumably those are the patterns that lead to true conclusions and predictions. On such a view, the prescriptive force of logic emerges with its survival value, and the centrality of logic to our conceptual scheme, as well as its applicability to the natural world, follows as a matter of course. Confirmation of this position must come from

¹⁷ . See, for example, Leda Cosmides and John Tooby "Consider the Source: The Evolution of Adaptations for Decoupling and Metarepresentation," in D. Sperber (ed.), *Metarepresentation, a Multidisciplinary Perspective*, (*Vancouver Studies in Cognitive Science*, Vol. 10. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

evolutionary biology, cognitive science, and a host of other disciplines bearing on the matter of how the human brain learns and represents information, all of which embrace the very logic they are attempting to explain. And to the extent that such explanations are adequate, they will also explain how logic is presupposed in the explanation of logic. Such is the nature of the mutual containment noted above.

These reflections bring us back, at long last, to the central issue of the paper, viz. the relation between logic and psychology in the clinical setting. If the foregoing analysis is correct, then there is a strong theoretical case for embracing a logic-based approach to therapy, and to utilizing the findings of empirical psychology where applicable. For if logic derives its prescriptive force from its value in promoting the successful navigation of a complex world (this idea being captured abstractly in the concept of *truth*), then the rationale for utilizing logic in the clinical setting becomes clear: Logic is the system by which maladaptive thinking and behavior is corrected in the interest of psychological health and happiness. Moreover, the role of logic as a corrective to faulty thinking also grounds it firmly in the realm of psychology, since logic is now understood as part of the representational framework that interacts with belief systems, emotion, and the world. (The scientific characterization of logic, the placing of logic on the same epistemological footing as psychology, also connects it intrinsically to the study of emotion and behavior). Thus, Cohen's LBT is not only consistent with the mandate linking logic to psychology, it reflects the central insights of philosophical naturalism. By linking the practical syllogism to the descriptive event-report of the client, LBT establishes the relevance of logic to the client's beliefs and behavior. Moreover, as the relation between an event report and a prescriptive rule is a function of the client's interpretation of the event, the psychological mechanisms underlying that interpretation must be understood if belief and behavior are to be

adjusted systematically. In other words, if the methodology of philosophical counseling neglects those mechanisms, the approach to counseling will be purely *ad hoc*.

Such reflections on the intersection of psychology and logic in the clinical environment converge with our earlier reflections about the role of logic as a metatheoretical constraint on science. Not only does neglecting the psychological basis for belief and behavior threaten to make philosophical counseling *ad hoc*, neglecting the *metatheoretic* role of logic in theory pushes philosophical counseling in the same direction. While logic, *qua* logic, remains neutral with respect to what psychological theory is chosen to explain its prescriptive character, one's psychological theory cannot be neutral with respect to the laws of logic. Consequently, theorists themselves must strive to meet the conceptual demands of logic just as LBT practitioners seek to cultivate the awareness of these demands in their clients. In particular, the demand for consistency in the methods used and assumptions introduced in the clinical setting are of paramount importance, as the introduction of inconsistencies can jeopardize the effectiveness of philosophical counseling.

What, then, is the lesson for those who would advocate a form of philosophical counseling that makes use of a variety of philosophical positions? What of those who address the crises and conflicts of a client by introducing the philosophical nomenclature that best empowers the subject? While looking at a particular crisis from the standpoint of phenomenology or existentialism may provide a client with a sense of understanding and control, the danger is that this approach violates the standards of adequacy for a belief system generally, standards inherent in the logical framework we use to evaluate our beliefs. As noted earlier, to tie philosophical counseling to a theoretical framework that derives its normative force from a particular philosophical perspective, *vis-a-vis* logic, is to commit oneself to a concept of the good, to some

vision of human nature, or at least a position on the human condition. Not only must these assumptions be measured against the guiding assumptions and findings of empirical psychology (at least if one takes naturalized epistemology seriously), but they must be weighed against other, competing assumptions of rival philosophical theories introduced in the clinical setting. The danger is that introducing a client to different philosophical perspectives may lay the foundation for conflict by building contradictory assumptions into the clinical tools used to address maladaptive thinking and behavior.

As a diagnostic sally, consider the potential conflict between an existential analysis of free agency and one that is broadly Aristotelian. The existential characterization of agency emphasizes the free choice of the subject – of free will – and this freedom is axiomatic in the analysis of the self. Sartre’s proclamation that existence precedes essence makes this point clear: the self is a construction, a product of free choice and hence subject to adjustment and control. Such a reflection is potentially liberating as it empowers the subject to reconstruct the self where necessary or desirable, but it also conflicts fundamentally with the idea that *essence precedes existence*, that free choice is constrained by horizons beyond our control, and that subjectivity is conditioned by an obdurate, independent world. The two models of the self are logically incompatible: one affirms the ontological primacy of free will and the other denies it. To utilize these reflections willy-nilly in the clinical setting is to introduce inconsistent frameworks for the interpretation and management of the client’s belief systems and has the potential to foster deeper, and potentially more damaging incongruities than those the practitioner is attempting to rectify.

The lesson here is not novel, but it is imminently useful. Logic is the system by which one evaluates the merits of beliefs, their inferential relations to other beliefs and to actions.

Grounding this system in a naturalistic framework – putting it on the same epistemological footing as science – does not diminish its capacity to function as a prescriptive body of laws and principles, though it does require a theoretical adjustment with respect to our philosophy of logic. To a significant degree, LBT is a consequence of the move to a naturalistic interpretation of logic, as it makes the reciprocal relationship between logic and psychology of which Quine speaks the foundation of the therapeutic enterprise. More importantly, however, is the fact that LBT’s emphasis on logic as a therapeutic tool derives from the *generality* of logic as well as its prescriptive character. Not only does logic allow us to consider the merits of a local set of beliefs, but it can help the clinician evaluate the extent to which false or inconsistent ideas propagate through a client’s global system of ideas. Thus, the emphasis on logic serves as a corrective to the ad hoc introduction of philosophical ideas that can lead to a patchwork of incompatible perspectives on the self.¹⁸

If the forgoing analysis is correct, then Logic-Based Therapy is not merely one approach among many; it is the *sine qua non* for philosophical counseling. The logical analysis of beliefs prescribed by LBT is essential not only to the task of rooting out existing faulty assumptions and inferences, but to the introduction of philosophical perspectives that are to serve a therapeutic function. Thus, LBT provides a framework in which other forms of philosophical counseling can flourish as well as a benchmark for measuring the conceptual adequacy of those approaches. Consequently, LBT takes on a dual role as an objective-level corrective to a client’s faulty thinking and as a metalevel corrective to the conceptual indulgences of the practitioner.

Where does this leave the issue of the role of psychology in philosophical counseling? As noted above, Cohen’s characterization of LBT suggests an intersection between psychology and

¹⁸ . The generality of logic is not tied to philosophical naturalism; like the prescriptive character of logic, the generality of logic is taken as a datum to be explained by empirical psychology. Consequently, an indictment of Quinean naturalism does not undermine the point about LBT under consideration here.

philosophical counseling at a pragmatic level, where identifying the causal factors that influence a client's beliefs and the psychological mechanisms that govern changes in belief are relevant to clinical objectives. All event-reports involve a psychological component, and understanding that component is necessary for effective counseling. To ignore the psychological is to disconnect the client's subjective experience from the prescriptive standards of logic, and hence to undermine Logic-Based Therapy itself. But our most recent reflections suggest a deeper, more theoretical connection between LBT and psychology, a connection that arises as a consequence of embedding LBT in the naturalist tradition. As Quine rightly understood, putting logic and psychology on the same epistemic footing entails the explanation of the connection between logic and belief in empirical, hence *psychological*, terms. What such an explanation will ultimately look like remains to be seen,¹⁹ but the data from the therapeutic setting is certainly relevant to this enterprise and will help clarify the relationship between LBT and psychology. As for approaches to philosophical counseling that are based on a philosophical view of the human condition, or embrace a multiplicity of philosophies, they remain beholden to the principles of logic and must be measured against the standards for correct thinking set out in LBT. In a very real sense, then, LBT is cornerstone of the counseling enterprise, and its connection with psychology is the inevitable consequence of grounding philosophical counseling in naturalized epistemology.

¹⁹ . Connectionism looks to be very promising in this regard. See, for example, Bechtel, W. "Natural Deduction in Connectionist Systems" *Synthese*, 101, 1994, 433-463.