both his philosophy and appearance: 'His thin legs – one longer than the other – in their uneven trousers' (p 193). He hated being seen, he was only too aware of his unbalanced gait and strange appearance. He complained 'in this life his trousers have received too much attention, and his authorship too little' (p 201). He was wounded by these attacks but could not resist the fight and always returned to the fray armed with his mischievous, satirical wit. Yet when he met people, even his enemies, in the street he was reportedly always calm, funny and affable. He was at odds with his world all his life but was liked and admired by many.

At times I felt irritated by this man and even some dislike – he led a very privileged life with no need to earn a living and as a young man enjoyed all the finer things in life, while his bad-tempered attacks on his fellow citizens were at times quite petulant. He could dole out trenchant criticism but did not like what came back…how all too human! Re-reading the preface it was a relief to learn that Carlisle had at times also felt dislike and been pained by this. She suggests it arises from the unvarnished exposure of all the feelings, his anger and petty resentments that poured into his journals, more so maybe because he lived alone and did not have a wife to complain to. He could be a bit of a joyless prig but he realised this and knew some thought him proud and vain, saying on his death bed that it was not so 'I am absolutely no better than other people' (p 248).

His father, who was from peasant stock but grew to become a wealthy merchant by the time of Kierkegaard's birth, was dominant, austere and prone to severe depressions. Reflecting on his own disposition, he wrote of 'the dark background of my life…the anxiety with which my father filled my soul' (p 67) and how this had cut a path through his own life. Yet he had always felt loved by him and in return loved his father fearfully, defiantly and eager to please. As Carlisle says, this early form of loving was 'a formation, replete with repetition;…that…he would retrace long after leaving home' (p 72). In 1855, he collapsed in the street and died soon after at the age of forty-two, possibly from a spinal problem. Asked at the end if there was anything he still wanted to say, he answered 'Greet everyone for me, I have liked them all very much' (p 247).

Diana Pringle

Neo-Existentialism

Markus Gabriel. 2018. Cambridge: Polity Press.

German philosopher Markus Gabriel is a rising star in academic philosophy. In his previous book *Why the World Does Not Exist*, he attacked the overconfidence of natural science (Gabriel, 2017a). He thought that it was arrogant of natural science to suppose that it could one day provide

a rational explanation for the world in its entirety.

Gabriel makes a distinction between the world and the universe: the world contains all perspectives on reality, whereas the perspective of the scientific method is limited to the universe. The universe is being governed by the laws of nature, but science fails to see that the laws of nature do not cover everything. Thus, natural science cannot explain all perspectives on the world, because this would require that natural science could see the world from what Thomas Nagel (1989) called a 'view from nowhere'. However, according to Gabriel, a fully detached and objective perspective on the world does not exist. Why? He says that assertions about existence tell us something about a given field or domain, but since the world contains a multiplicity of perspectives it does not have existence. Accordingly, we are not able to look at the totality of perspectives from the outside because all world views depend on specific fields of experiences. This is what he means by stating that the world does not exist.

This could look like Kant's (1999) assertion in *Critique of Pure Reason* that we are not able to grasp things-in-themselves but only the thing as it appears to us. However, in his book *Fields of Sense: A New Realist Ontology* (2015) Gabriel defends a position known as 'New Realism' and states that reality does not depend on us for its existence. Yet, Gabriel also rejects scientific realism that holds that reality consists of the material objects that are available to the physical senses. His ontology is based on the concept of fields of sense, which means that there are real things in themselves but also an infinite number of perspectives, each of which has its own domain defined as a field of sense. The social and political domains, as well as cultural and individual perspectives, are not governed by natural laws, but this does not mean that they do not exist. It is only the world in its entirety that does not exist, because it is not related to a specific kind of experience.

Even though Gabriel understands ontology as an investigation into existence, we might then ask ourselves what his ideas have to do with traditional existential theory and practice? This question has become highly relevant, because the title of his most recent book is *Neo-Existentialism*. Gabriel's position develops his rejection of scientific realism and he defines neo-existentialism as:

> *...the view that there is no single phenomenon or reality corresponding to the ultimately very messy umbrella term 'the mind'*
>
> (2018: 9)

Just as Sartre rejected the reduction of existence to essence, Gabriel especially refuses the reduction of the mind to the brain. Thus, his definition

of neo-existentialism follows his book *I am Not a Brain: Philosophy of mind for the 21st century* (2017b), identifying current naturalism as a significant challenge. Therefore, the main enemy of neo-existentialism is the assumption that the mind is caused by the brain, being governed by natural laws. Basically, the problem with this kind of naturalism is that it reduces human being and the human self to neural networks. If we accept this neuro-reductionism, we risk ending up as brain dead creatures who have lost our understanding of the deep value of art, philosophy, literature, spirituality and religion.

However, according to Gabriel, we should not accept naturalism, simply because it fails to understand the human mind. It might not be possible to understand the mind without making any references to the brain. However, the mind is not the brain. The relationship between the mind and the brain should rather be understood like the relationship between cycling and the bike. The mind and the brain are linked together, but the brain is more like a tool for the mind than being the cause of it. Thus, the naturalistic world view fails, because it is not possible to explain the mind as a natural entity.

In order to understand the mind, we should not be referring to material entities at all. According to Gabriel, it makes more sense to understand the mind from the German concept of '*Geist*', which could be translated into English as 'spirit', implying the English terms of spirit and humanities. Basically, Gabriel intends to show that we cannot reduce our cultural, social and subjective world views to neural networks, because our collective and individual interpretations of the world have a life and a history of their own. Thus, if we want to know what is for something to be a human mind, we need to understand how our consciousness relates to the fact that we are intelligent beings who have intentions and make active interpretations of the world in which we live. Our social, historical and political worlds are built on these capacities and they cannot be explained as the cause of a non-conscious and material level of the natural order.

What is the relevance of all this to existential therapy? Basically, Gabriel is an academic philosopher who does not have any significant interest in practice. Nevertheless, neo-existentialism is relevant to existential therapy. In our current age of neuroscience, Gabriel gives a good argument why it is important to maintain an existential mindset without reducing it to some kind of neuro-existentialism. Neuroscience might be able to increase our understanding of the purely physical or material function of the brain but it will never be able to raise our understanding of what it really means to be a human being, how we experience the world or what purpose there is to our lives. In this sense, existential therapy is just as relevant in the twenty-first century as it was in the previous century.

There is no need to bring the current research of the brain into clinical practice, nor is there a need for the therapist to articulate an invisible level

of the nervous system, the nerve cells or arousal regulation. Following Gabriel, therapy enables two different world perspectives to meet and these should be understood from what it means for the client and the therapist to be human. Gabriel (2018: 39) says: 'Humans live their lives in light of a conception of what a human being is', from which follows that a therapist should not interpret the client's way of being as identical to a certain animal species or some biological machine. Even though human beings have a physical body, clients fundamentally depend on their own conception of how their body is in the world, who they take themselves to be as individuals living in a culture, and what their existential or spiritual goals are in life.

Anders Draeby Sorensen

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Nietzsche and Psychotherapy

Manu Bazzano. 2019. London: Routledge.

Some years ago I gave a talk on Nietzsche's usage of psychology which began by showing some fifty or so photographs and pictures of him to the accompaniment of one of his piano pieces – yes he was also a composer and, yes, you can get recordings of his work. The purpose of this exercise was to remind the audience that there are many views of his philosophy, and that what they were about to hear was 'my' Nietzsche. This thought came back to me on reading Bazzano's introduction to his book, in which he noted that innumerable volumes had been written entitled 'Nietzsche and…'. And indeed, they are, and though he offers a slight apology as to his choice of title, it is far from needed. His '*Nietzsche and*' is an impressive and much-needed addition to the literature which places the philosopher's work firmly and squarely into the therapeutic frame, where it raises many challenging questions about fundamental practices and assumptions.

Certainly aspects of Nietzsche's ideas have been covered before, particularly