

**AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
EXISTENTIAL MEANING-IN-LIFE AND RACIAL PREJUDICE**

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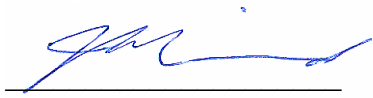
**Thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts (Psychology) at the University of Stellenbosch.**

Supervisor: Dr. H.M. de Vos

December 2006

**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.



Signature

21 November 2006

Date



## ABSTRACT

This study had two main objectives: Firstly, to investigate the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice amongst students at Stellenbosch University; secondly to investigate how quantifiable aspects of existential meaning-in-life relate to each other to determine existential meaning-in-life in a clear, quantifiable way. The study was conducted on an ad hoc-sample of 149 students from Stellenbosch University.

Relevant existential theories were reviewed in order to extract quantifiable aspects of existential meaning-in-life. The following Scales were used to measure these aspects: The Self-Transcendence Scale of the Temperament and Character Inventory; the Conformity Scale; the Self-Reflectivity subscale of the Self-Consciousness Scale; the Interpersonal Reactivity Index; the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values; and the Purpose in Life Test. A principal components analysis revealed that conformity did not relate adequately to the other variables. The following underlying dimensions of existential meaning-in-life emerged: Self-Absolution, Life Appreciation and Existential Self-Transcendence. These dimensions were entered into multiple regression analyses to predict the respective subscales of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (COBRAS), which was used to measure racial prejudice. Regression analyses showed Self-Absolution to predict scores on Subscale A of the COBRAS, Life Appreciation predicted scores on Subscale B, and all the dimensions predicted scores on Subscale C. Gender differences in the relationship between predictor variables and outcome variables emerged. It was found that this relationship was considerably weaker in women, if not absent: Only Self-Absolution was found to predict scores on Subscale C, while none of the underlying dimensions could predict scores on any of the other subscales. Gender differences on other variables also emerged, suggesting that the underlying dimensions of existential meaning-in-life may differ between genders.

The results of this study, as well as its limitations are discussed, as are recommendations for further study.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het twee hoofdoelstellings gehad: Eerstens, om die verband tussen eksistensiële betekenis-in-die-lewe en rassevooroordeel te ondersoek; tweedens, om die verhoudings tussen kwantifiseerbare aspekte van eksistensiële betekenis-in-die-lewe te ondersoek. Die studie is uitgevoer op 'n ad hoc-steekproef van 149 studente aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch.

Die relevante eksistensiële teorieë is ondersoek ten einde kwantifiseerbare aspekte van eksistensiële betekenis-in-die-lewe aan die lig te bring. Die volgende meetinstrumente is gebruik om hierdie aspekte te meet: “The Self-Transcendence Scale of the Temperament and Character Inventory; the Conformity Scale; the Self-Reflectivity subscale of the Self-Consciousness Scale; the Interpersonal Reactivity Index; the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values; the Purpose in Life Test.” Prinsipiële komponente analise het aan die lig gebring dat konformiteit nie genoegsaam met die ander veranderlikes verband gehou het om dit in te sluit in die analise nie. Die volgende onderliggende dimensies van eksistensiële betekenis-in-die-lewe het vorendag gekom: Self-Absolusie, Lewenswaardering, en Eksistensiële Self-Transendensie. Hierdie dimensies is in veelvoudige regressie-analises gebruik om die onderskeie subskale van die Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (COBRAS), 'n meetinstrument vir rassevooroordeel, te voorspel. Die regressie-analises het aangetoon dat Self-Absolusie tellings of Subskaal A van die COBRAS voorspel; dat Lewenswaardering tellings op Subskaal B voorspel, en dat al die dimensies tellings op Subskaal C voorspel. Geslagsverskille het ook aan die lig gekom. Daar is gevind dat die verhoudings tussen die dimensies van eksistensiële betekenis-in-die-lewe en die subskale van die COBRAS aansienlik swakker was onder vroue, indien nie afwesig nie: Slegs Self-Absolusie het tellings op Subskaal C voorspel, en geen onderliggende dimensie kon tellings op enigeen van die oorblywende subskale voorspel nie. Geslagsverskille op ander veranderlikes het ook vorendag gekom, wat suggereer dat die onderliggende dimensies van eksistensiële betekenis-in-die-lewe moontlik verskil volgens geslag.

Die resultate van die studie, asook die beperkinge daarvan, word bespreek saam met voorstelle vir verdere navorsing in dié verband.

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## CONTENT

<b>Declaration</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>Opsomming</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Bedankings</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Theoretical overview	4
2.1.1. Existentialism	4
2.1.1.1. Søren Kierkegaard	6
2.1.1.2. Martin Heidegger	7
2.1.1.3. Jean-Paul Sartre	9
2.1.1.4. Rollo May	11
2.1.1.5. Victor Frankl	13
2.1.1.6. Brief summary of existential thought	15
2.1.2. Post-structuralism and Derrida	15
2.1.3. Definition of concepts	19
2.1.3.1 Existential meaning-in-life	19
2.1.3.1.1. Self-transcendence	21
2.1.3.1.2. Non-conformity	22
2.1.3.1.3. Self-reflectivity	23
2.1.3.1.4. Empathetic relationships	24
2.1.3.1.5. Values	26
2.1.3.1.6. Experience of meaning-in-life	27
2.1.3.2. Racial prejudice	29
2.1.4. Theoretical arguments for the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice	30
2.1.4.1. The argument from a synthesis between the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Derrida	30
2.1.4.2. The argument from the theories of May and Frankl	38

2.2. Empirical findings	39
2.2.1. The relationship between self-transcendence and racial prejudice	40
2.2.2. The relationship between non-conformity and racial prejudice	41
2.2.3. The relationship between self-reflectivity and racial prejudice	41
2.2.4. The relationship between empathy and racial prejudice	42
2.2.5. The relationship between values and racial prejudice	43
2.2.6. The relationship between experience of meaning-in-life and racial prejudice	44
2.2.7. Empirical evidence for structure of existential meaning-in-life	45
2.2.8. Gender differences	48
2.2.9. Summary of empirical findings	49
2.3. Research hypotheses	49
<b>CHAPTER 3: METHOD</b>	<b>50</b>
3.1. Participants	50
3.2. Measuring instruments	50
3.2.1. The Self Transcendence Scale of the Temperament and Character Inventory	50
3.2.2. Conformity Scale	52
3.2.3. The Self-Reflectivity Scale of the Self-Consciousness Scale	52
3.2.4. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index	53
3.2.5. The Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	54
3.2.6. The Purpose in Life Test	55



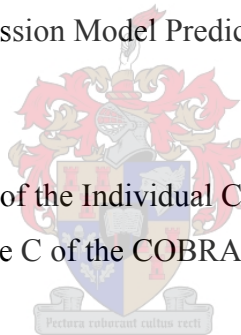
3.2.7. Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale	56
3.2.8. Biographical questionnaire	57
3.3. Procedure	57
3.4. Statistical procedures	57
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESULTS</b>	<b>59</b>
4.1. Preliminary analysis of data	60
4.2. Extraction, rotation and interpretation of components	62
4.3. Regression analyses	65
4.4. Gender differences	68
<b>CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS</b>	<b>71</b>
5.1. Discussion of results of the principal components analysis	71
5.2. Discussion of the regression analyses	73
5.3. Discussion of gender differences	76
5.4. Limitations and recommendations	78
5.5. Conclusions	79
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>ADDENDA</b>	<b>96</b>
Addendum A: The Self Transcendence Scale of the Temperament and Character Inventory	97
Addendum B: The Conformity Scale	99
Addendum C: The Self-Reflectivity Scale of the Self-Consciousness Scale	101
Addendum D: The Interpersonal Reactivity Index	102
Addendum E: The Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	105
Addendum F: The Purpose in Life Test	109
Addendum G: Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale	112
Addendum H: Biographical questionnaire	115



## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Abbreviations for Scales and Subscales Used	59
<b>Table 2:</b> Shapiro-Wilkes Statistics of Normally Distributed Scales	60
<b>Table 3:</b> Kendell's Tau Correlation Between Scales and Subscales Included in Principal Components Analysis	61
<b>Table 4:</b> Component Transformation Matrix for Orthogonal Rotation	62
<b>Table 5:</b> Component Correlation Matrix for Oblique Rotation	62
<b>Table 6:</b> Three-Component Solution after Oblique Rotation	63
<b>Table 7:</b> Communalities after extraction	63
<b>Table 8:</b> Abbreviations for the Extracted Components	64
<b>Table 9:</b> Zero-Order, Part and Partial Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Subscale A of the COBRAS	66
<b>Table 10:</b> Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale A of the COBRAS	66
<b>Table 11:</b> Zero-Order, Part and Partial Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Subscale B of the COBRAS	66
<b>Table 12:</b> Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale B of the COBRAS	67
<b>Table 13:</b> Summary of Statistics of the Individual Contributions of Predictor Variables of Subscale C of the COBRAS	67

<b>Table 14:</b> Summary of Regression Model Predicting Subscale C of the COBRAS	67
<b>Table 15:</b> Mann-Whitney Statistics of Gender Differences	68
<b>Table 16:</b> Summary of Statistics for Men of the Individual Contributions of Predictor Variables of Subscale A of the COBRAS	69
<b>Table 17:</b> Summary of Regression Model for Men Predicting Subscale A of the COBRAS	69
<b>Table 18:</b> Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale B of the COBRAS for Men	69
<b>Table 19:</b> Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale C of the COBRAS for Women	69
<b>Table 20:</b> Summary of Statistics of the Individual Contributions of Predictor Variables of Subscale C of the COBRAS for Men	70
<b>Table 21:</b> Summary of Regression Model for Men Predicting Subscale C of the COBRAS	70



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND MOTIVATION

In spite of 10 years of democracy, racial prejudice still plays a big role in the South African context. Racial stereotypes are still present in all racial groups (Slabbert, 2001). Studies by Smith and Stones (1999), and Smith, Stones and Naidoo (2003) show that tolerance is making progress in South Africa. However, this progress is slow. Furthermore, Hytton and Warren (2003) found that students still participate in discourses that effectively serve to preserve racial inequality.

It stands to reason that, in a country characterized by a rich diversity of racial groups and cultures, racial prejudice stands in the way of a peaceful, fair society. The study of racial prejudice, especially with the aim of preventing or combating it, is therefore a very necessary activity.

Studies of racial prejudice in South Africa are numerous (Duckitt, 1991, 1992; Durrheim, 2003; Heaven & Groenewald, 1977; Kinloch 1985; Orpen & Tsapogas, 1972, Pillay & Collings, 2004; Slabbert, 2001; Smith & Stones, 1999; Smith, Stones & Naidoo, 2003). However, to the present author's knowledge, racial prejudice has not been investigated from an existential paradigm.

An investigation of racial prejudice from an existential paradigm is promising. Currently much of the focus in studies of racism is on the discourses and ideologies that underlie racial prejudice (Solomos & Back, 2000). Insightful and valid as they may be, these studies do not discuss the role the individual plays in these discourses. This is where an existential approach can perhaps be of value. The nature of the existential paradigm is such that it invites a synthesis with the more post-structuralist approaches to racial prejudice (that focus on ideologies and discourses), as will be discussed in the literature review. According to this synthesis, the individual's concern to live authentically can be described in terms of how he/she relates to the discourses and ideologies he/she participates in. Therefore, by involving an existential paradigm, both the most individual and the broadest societal level is simultaneously brought into the analysis of racial prejudice. This potentially opens up new possibilities for the prevention of racial prejudice, as it calls for a double approach,

simultaneously on societal and individual level. On the individual level, approaches and techniques developed in the existential paradigm may be used with success in the prevention of racial prejudice.

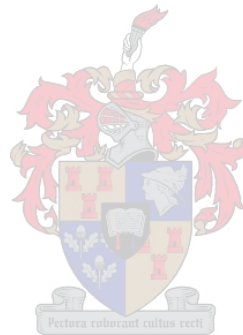
According to the present author, the applicability of an existential paradigm to the study of racial prejudice is not yet confirmed, and still needs to be investigated. The key question in this regard is how the individual who lives true to his own existence, approaches racial issues. This study sets out to answer this question. More specifically, this study's first objective is to investigate the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice amongst students at Stellenbosch University.

The second objective of this study relates to the measurement of existential meaning-in-life. Whether existential concepts can in fact be measured is a controversial issue (Van Wijk, 1995). In the present author's opinion, there is no need to avoid the measurement of existential constructs. It is true that most existential theories posit the individual's freedom to create or find meaning (Melchert, 1995; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003; Scruton, 1999). Most hold that there are no universal meanings or values to be found (Melchert, 1995; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003; Scruton, 1999). In this sense, it is not true to existential theory to try to objectively measure that which pertains to an individual's life. However, existential thinkers generally hold that *every* individual has to face this freedom and responsibility to find or create meaning. Similarly, other aspects that characterize existential meaning-in-life are also held to be applicable to every individual. As these aspects are associated with an individual's life, and thus to observable behaviour, they can be studied empirically. However, the construct existential meaning-in-life is very vague, and needs clarification in order to use it in an empirical study. The second objective of this study is therefore to investigate how quantifiable aspects of existential meaning-in-life relate to each other to determine existential meaning-in-life in a clear, quantifiable way.

In the following chapters the constructs of this study (existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice) will be defined with relevant theories as background. The existential theories of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, May and Frankl will be discussed in order to extract the aspects that define existential meaning-in-life. The post-structuralist

paradigm, with special reference to the philosophy of Derrida, will be discussed as background to the definition of racial prejudice. Furthermore, based on the theory that will be discussed, arguments for the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice will be made. Subsequently, empirical evidence for this relationship, as well as for the relationship between the aspects that define existential meaning-in-life, will be discussed.

Principal components analysis will be used to determine the dimensions of existential meaning-in-life that underlie its defining aspects. The dimensions will then be entered into regression analyses that attempt to predict different measures of racial prejudice. Gender differences on constructs and the prediction of racial prejudice will also be investigated. Finally, the results of the study and its limitations will be discussed, before some concluding remarks will be made.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will be divided into three main sections. The first is a theoretical overview, and the second an overview of relevant empirical findings. In the third section, the research hypotheses of this study will be stated on the basis of the literature review.

#### **2.1. Theoretical overview**

The purpose of this theoretical overview is twofold. Firstly, it serves as a base from which the constructs existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice can be defined. In an attempt to give a more precise definition of existential meaning-in-life, this study has aimed to bring to light themes or aspects of existential meaning-in-life that are present in existential theories, as they are interpreted by the present author. The construct existential meaning-in-life will therefore be defined in terms of these common themes.

Secondly, the theoretical overview serves as a base from which the present author can argue for the existence of a relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice.

To serve these purposes, the relevant theories will be discussed in an introductory fashion. Details of the theories will be discussed where they pertain to the definitions of the constructs relevant to this study, as well as to the arguments for the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice. The existential school of thought, and its different exponents, will be discussed first. Subsequently, the post-structural school of thought will be discussed, with special reference to Jacques Derrida.

##### **2.1.1. Existentialism**

The existential paradigm has its origins in philosophy. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) is considered to be the father of existential philosophy (De

Vos, 1987). Kierkegaard's philosophy can be seen as a reaction against the then prevalent German Idealism, of which Hegel was the most outstanding exponent (Scruton, 1999). This opposition to Idealism, as initiated by Kierkegaard, would to a certain extent broadly define and characterize all subsequent existentialist thought. Although German Idealism itself was not at its height at the time when the existentialist movement developed significantly (roughly 75 years after Kierkegaard's death), certain rationalist and deterministic elements inherent to it has been adopted by other paradigms that still have much influence in psychology (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003).

Against the Idealist focus on the universal (where in fact the individual is subsumed under the universal), existentialist thought focuses on the individual, specifically the manner of existence in the world, or *how* the individual lives (Scruton, 1999). Furthermore, existentialist thinkers question the role reason can play in human existence. This does not entail a full rejection of reason. However, existentialist thinkers place limits on the value and applicability of reason to human existence. Human beings are seen as ultimately free, and therefore also ultimately responsible for their lives. Therefore, existentialism rejects any ideas that apply determinism to human beings, such as positivism (Van Wijk, 1995).



This characterization of existential thought can by no means pretend to be complete. However, as these characteristics are most relevant to this study, some of the existential thinkers (philosophers as well as psychologists) most pertinent to this study will be discussed with reference to their respective positions on these common themes: Individual existence (and how it should be led) as primary focus; the limited applicability of reason or abstract concepts to human existence; the absolute freedom and responsibility of human beings. The thinkers discussed in this study are widely considered to be the most important exponents of existential thought (Melchert, 1995; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003; Scruton, 1999) They are: Søren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Rollo May and Victor Frankl.



### 2.1.1.1. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

Kierkegaard's work is characterized by a focus on individual human existence, not as a phenomenon or an object, but as a self whose life is a fact (De Vos, 1987). In this regard, Kierkegaard's view on the nature of the self is important. According to Kierkegaard (1849/1989) the self refers to the relationship between body and mind, that is, the relationship between factuality and potentiality (Shmueli, 1971), that relates to itself. The self is a relation relating to itself (Kierkegaard, 1849/1989). The factuality and potentiality referred to here is seen as two aspects of human existence. The factual reality of a human being continually strives to become what it can be, its potentiality (De Vos, 1987). That this relation between body and mind relates to itself, implies the possibility of self-consciousness, the possibility of reflection, and the possibility of self-transcendence. The self, by being able to relate to itself, can reflect on itself, and is then always more than what it already simply is. For Kierkegaard, it is man's chief concern to be a self (Kierkegaard, 1849/1989).

However, the individual's awareness of his limitless potentiality is accompanied by anxiety. The individual is anxious in the face of the responsibility that is implied by the freedom he/she has regarding what he/she can become (De Vos, 1987). How man reacts to this anxiety has profound implications for his self, and failure to become one's self is the ultimate loss. In "The Sickness unto Death", Kierkegaard (1849/1989) describes this failure to be one's self as despair. In this regard, he distinguishes three different forms of existence, the Aesthetic, Ethic, and the Religious, which he discusses in *Either/Or* (1843/1946) and *Fear and Trembling* (1843/1985). In the Aesthetic mode of existence, the individual wants to avoid consciousness of his/her own existence (Melchert, 1995). Rather, he/she wants merely to experience and enjoy life as much as possible, seeking pleasure and avoiding boredom. This mode of existence, however, has no continuity and coherence, as set out by Judge William (as pseudonym for Kierkegaard, 1843/1946). In contrast to the hedonism of the character A in *Either/Or*, Judge William advocates the Ethical mode of existence. "The ethical life requires the development of the self" (Melchert, 1995, p. 447), and to develop the self, a choice has to be made, and one has to make a commitment to those choices (Kierkegaard, 1843/1946). However, this is not yet enough to avoid despair. The task of maintaining the tension between factuality and potentiality is an almost impossible task: To grasp one aspect is invariably to neglect

the other, resulting in despair. The only way to overcome this dilemma is through the religious mode of existence, as set out in “Fear and Trembling” (1843/1985). The religious person lives the paradox of renouncing the world while continuing to live engaged in the world. In this mode, the individual realizes that he/she is guilty of despair, but believes in the forgiveness of God, and so grounds his existence in God. By abnegating himself, the individual gains his self. Kierkegaard (1843/1941) refers to this laying down of the self in order to regain the self with the term repetition. Repetition is done by being in a relation of faith to God (Kierkegaard, 1843/1985).

Kierkegaard contrasts faith with knowledge. No amount of knowledge can fight off despair. Only through faith can the self be apprehended, and faith is exactly a leap over an abyss, a groundlessness that reason cannot bridge (Kierkegaard, 1844/1974). Therefore, the individual does not apprehend himself through an abstract understanding of himself: Concepts are static; they refer to the universal and unchanging. This is exactly what existence is not: It is that which always transcends what it already is, and can therefore never be static. The self’s existence is dynamic, and can only be grasped by *living* in faith. In accordance with this, Kierkegaard posits that “truth is subjectivity” (Kierkegaard, 1846/1992, p.171). By saying this, Kierkegaard shows that the only way of grasping reality (that is, existence) is to *live* in a certain manner, and not to merely understand or know something. Moreover, since truth is subjectivity, the truth cannot be conferred to an individual by direct communication. Indirect communication is needed, where the individual is lead in an oblique manner to discover this truth for himself. For this reason, Kierkegaard often wrote under pseudonyms, so that readers can identify with the different characters that represented different modes of existence. By identification, the reader is brought to self-awareness of his existence, and ultimately to choosing how s/he wants to exist (Melchert, 1995). Therefore, in this regard, Kierkegaard’s philosophy stands in a close relationship with his unique way of communicating it.

#### **2.1.1.2. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)**

As Kierkegaard reacted against German Idealism, Heidegger took issue with the whole of Western metaphysics. He believed that the entire history of metaphysics had obscured what was the original question for philosophy, namely: Why is there something and not nothing? (Kearney, 1986). Trained in phenomenology under

Edmund Husserl, he followed the phenomenological method to argue that the fundamental and original way of conducting an ontological study is to study the individual's concrete existence.

Heidegger referred to this existence as *Dasein*, literally "being-there". According to Heidegger the individual's original being is "being-in-the-world" (Melchert, 1995). The individual does not stand in relation to the world as subject to object: The individual's original mode of existence is engaged in the world, the world and the individual cannot be thought of separately. Although it sometimes seems as if Heidegger proposes a way of living that is very self-involved and solipsistic, it is important to note that Heidegger's philosophy was also in reaction to the prevalent intellectual mood that focused on technical mastery and ultimately dehumanized humans in their relations with the world and with others (Kearney, 1986). The strict split between subject and object that had been advocated by philosophy had left the door open for people to be described and treated in theories as if they were objects, and had alienated man from his world and his being. For Heidegger, the individual in his original, human existence is continuously reaching out beyond himself to the world. In doing this, the individual is perpetually interpreting his world, whereby he/she discovers possibilities for being (Kearney, 1986). In this regard, the concepts *thrownness* and *facticity* are important. *Thrownness* refers to the fact that humans are brought into the world without having chosen it. They are brought into the world, into certain circumstances (gender, family and culture, for instance) they had no choice over (Melchert, 1995). Furthermore, the individual's *thrownness* makes out part of his *facticity* (Melchert, 1995). *Facticity* refers to the fact that the individual, being a being-in-the-world, always finds himself in a given situation. This given situation conditions his self-understanding and interpretation of the world. However, the individual is still fundamentally free to interpret the world. Even the individual's own *facticity* can be interpreted in terms of possibilities of being (Kearney, 1986). As will be discussed in the section on May (p. 12), May's existential psychology owes much to Heidegger's concepts (such as *thrownness*), and adopts them to understand the individual in psychological terms.

The ideas of freedom, responsibility, guilt and death play a significant role in Heidegger's discussion of the authentic individual. The individual is always free to

interpret the world, and in the process, to give meaning to his world. With this freedom comes the fundamental responsibility for the decisions made in this regard. For Heidegger this freedom is related to the individual's finite temporal existence (Scruton, 1999). Confronted with his/her own death, that is, the end of his/her being, the individual no longer takes being for granted. He/she realizes that meaning can only be found in time (in other words, in his life) and that he/she alone has the freedom and responsibility to be-in-the-world in a meaningful manner (Scruton, 1999). However, these realizations create considerable anxiety in the individual. This can cause the individual to flee away from this awareness of freedom, responsibility and death. Such an individual avoids freedom, and rather takes refuge in the *Dasman* (literally: "they"), that dictates how an individual should live (Kearney, 1986). Therefore, he/she trades freedom for conformity. To do so, according to Heidegger, is to live inauthentically. To live authentically, on the other hand, is not to take the world for granted, and to live in the world in an engaged manner. The authentic individual is aware of his/her freedom, responsibility and death (Kearney, 1986). Therefore it is evident that authenticity corresponds to an open, receptive awareness and self-consciousness, while inauthenticity corresponds to a self-awareness that is decisively restricted.

### 2.1.1.3. Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980)

In many respects, Sartre's philosophy shows many broad similarities to Heidegger's. Like Heidegger, Sartre was convinced that there is no meaning independent of the individual (Kearney, 1986). Insofar as the individuals are self-conscious, they set themselves up as subjects as opposed to the objective world. The result is that the original unity between subject and object is breached, and nothingness, an abyss, now separates the subject from his world. The individual now desires to fill this void in order to once again be truly part of his world. The original familiarity with the world has been lost, and the individual desires to know what he/she is supposed to do, or to put it differently, how to live his/her life.

Yet life and the world are absurd, they have no inherent meaning. Instead, the individuals themselves must create their own meaning. Once again similar to Heidegger, Sartre sees the human being as absolutely free, and thus absolutely responsible for who he/she is. Along the same lines as Kierkegaard's statement that

truth is subjectivity, Sartre affirms that truth cannot be grounded anywhere else than in the individual's existence. It lies rather in the way the individual lives his life by way of freely chosen actions (Kearney, 1986).

Therefore, similar to Heidegger, Sartre discusses the authentic life in terms of freedom and responsibility. The freedom is not a total freedom of constraints and circumstances, but lies in how one chooses to live within a given situation. To live in an authentic manner is to transcend the given existence and to continually invent or create new ways of being. In this regard Sartre discusses imagination as the transcendent aspect of the individual that enables him to free himself of his current situation, in order to envision new possibilities for being (Kearney, 1986). Freedom and responsibility are, however, a burden to bear, and can provoke anxiety (Sartre in Van Wijk, 1995). People in general try to avoid this, and in doing so, live inauthentically. Therefore, as in Heidegger, the authentic existence is characterized by awareness of ultimate freedom, while inauthentic existence is characterized by an avoidance of this realization. Sartre describes this as acting in bad faith (Van Wijk, 1995). In this regard Sartre criticises theology and the philosophy of the Enlightenment. Both attempt to posit pre-existing orders and values, which the individual should then merely follow. For Sartre, these are examples of acting in bad faith (Kearney, 1986). Individuals should create their own meaning, their own values, to which they must then commit themselves (Scruton, 1999).

An aspect on which Sartre elaborates more than Heidegger, is the individual's relations with other individuals. In Sartre's view, these relationships are problematic. According to Sartre, to love someone is not to love that person as object, but to be in search of that person as subject. Such subjectivity, according to Sartre, cannot be apprehended by another: It is that individual's own, the other individual cannot have any access to it (Scruton, 1999). Therefore relations of love come before a dilemma that does not seem to have a solution.

This pessimistic view of human relations is an implication of the view of existence, shared by Sartre and Heidegger, which emphasizes the loneliness of the individual in his very own life-world. However, many existential psychologists have based their theories on these respective philosophies, such as Yalom (1980) and May (in Yalom,

1980). Yalom (1980) points out that, although no relationship can eradicate this loneliness, meaningful relationships can exist where the individual is living authentically, for then the other person is not *used* to give meaning to his life in an inauthentic manner. Although not explicit, it is the present author's opinion that elements of an approach such as Yalom's is discernible in Sartre's philosophy: Sartre's exposition was in the context of a person wanting to be in a relationship so the other person, in his/her subjectivity, could add confirmation and validation of the individual's life world. Thus, in the authentic individual, this is not the agenda. Yet the individual still fails in truly knowing the other individual as subject, but, significantly, if he/she lives authentically, *wants* to know the other person as subject in his/her freedom, but does not *need* to do so. Furthermore, the individual has the capacity of imagination that enables him/her to envision that which is not present to him/her, in this case the other person's subjectivity. In this case, the dilemma of interpersonal relations does not seem so problematic any longer.

#### **2.1.1.4. Rollo May (1909-1994)**

Rollo May, more properly a psychologist than a philosopher, was instrumental in introducing existential philosophy to the field of psychology, especially in America (Yalom, 1980). In this regard, his work is influenced heavily by existential philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Heidegger. He agrees with Kierkegaard in his characterization of the individual as a tension between object (corresponding to Kierkegaard's *factuality*) and subject (Kierkegaard's *potentiality*). Also, like Kierkegaard, he emphasized the significance of the individual's ability to relate to himself (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003). This self-relatedness enables the individual to be free. He shares the existential philosophers' focus on freedom and responsibility. For May (1958), just as for Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre, the individual is absolutely free. In this regard, he discusses the concepts will and wish in relation to the individual's intentionality, that is, his way of being in the world and relating to it. The individual has the capacity to wish, that is, to imagine new possibilities of acting and being. He/she then has the capacity to will to fulfil the goals for his/her life that were thus set (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003) The individual, being free, therefore is also ultimately responsible for his/her life.



May draws heavily on the work of Heidegger, and adopts many of the latter's constructs to analyse and describe human existence, such as *Dasein*, authenticity, alienation, thrownness and death (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003). Following the work of Ludwig Binswanger, he analyses the individual as *Dasein* in terms of the three categories of existence: the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt* and *Eigenwelt* (De Vos, 1987).

The *Umwelt* refers to the natural world around us. It is the world of phenomena, that are governed by the laws of nature. The *Mitwelt* refers to the world we share with human beings. The individual does not stand in relation to others in the same way as he/she does to objects: While individuals adapt to the *Umwelt*, they live in relationship with others in the *Mitwelt*. The *Eigenwelt* is the individual's own world. In the *Eigenwelt* he/she is confronted with the fact of his/her existence (De Vos, 1987). The individual has to be understood in his totality, in terms of all these categories, *Eigenwelt*, *Mitwelt* and *Umwelt*. Thus alienation from being is understood in terms of alienation from the *Umwelt*, *Mitwelt*, and *Eigenwelt* respectively (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003).

May's interpretation of Freud is perhaps one of his most original contributions. He incorporates Freudian constructs in his work by interpreting them in terms of the existential paradigm. One such construct is repression. In contrast with the Freudian construct, May holds that repression should be understood not as merely the repression of biological drives. It is rather the awareness of new potentialities for being that is anxiety provoking and that is subsequently repressed (Yalom, 1980). In this regard, May distinguishes between normal anxiety and neurotic anxiety, as well as between normal guilt and neurotic guilt. Normal anxiety occurs when the individual, in order to grow as a person, challenges his/her existing structures of meaning. However, when this anxiety is repressed or avoided by seeking security in conformity, the result is neurotic anxiety, which is unhealthy and leads to pathology. Similarly, normal guilt refers to the guilt felt when individuals are aware that they are not living up to their potential as human beings. May regards this guilt as healthy, as it is a wake up call to live more authentically. On the other hand, neurotic guilt is associated with avoiding authentic living (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003).

May also re-interprets the Oedipus conflict, as proposed by Freud. May does not regard this conflict as resulting from an attraction to one parent and a feeling of hostility to the other: It is a struggle for independence from the parents, in spite of the security the individual has received and valued in his/her life. This highlights important aspects of May's view of values. To avoid alienation from the world, that is, to live authentically, it is essential that the individual develops adequate values. This entails being able to change the values one has grown accustomed to if they are no longer adequate for the life and world of the individual (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003).

Regarding interpersonal relationships, May also takes issue with Freud's view on love. Against Freud's biological model of love, May asserts that biological drive is but one aspect of love. He calls this aspect *sex*. He distinguishes three other aspects: *Eros*, *philia* and *agapé*. *Eros* refers to the desire for unity with another person, which is not motivated by the gratification of biological tension. *Philia* entails the true acceptance of the other person's being, and is commonly referred to as "brotherly love". Lastly, *agapé* refers to unconditional love. May argues that all four of these aspects are present in authentic love.

#### 2.1.1.5. Victor Frankl (1905-1997)

Of all the existential thinkers discussed, Victor Frankl is perhaps the most widely read. Furthermore, the relevance of his work to psychology and psychiatry is acknowledged increasingly (Van Wijk, 1995).

Frankl's view of the individual shows strong similarities to that of Kierkegaard. "For Frankl, there is a tension between what an individual is and what he can become" (De Vos, 1987, p. 245). According to Frankl, individuals have the ability to transcend themselves. This is a spiritual ability that lies at the core of existence and it is this ability that makes the individual authentically human. Indeed, Frankl often sees spirituality, self-transcendence and existence as synonymous terms (De Vos, 1987). Therefore, individuals have to transcend themselves (their factuality) in order to become themselves. Thus, like Kierkegaard, Frankl believes the individual can only live authentically by relinquishing his/her self in order to regain it (De Vos, 1987). In this ability to transcend lies the individual's freedom and responsibility. Frankl,



however, extends the Kierkegaardian philosophy in order to include meaning. Following the Kierkegaardian view of transcendence, where the individuals reach out to something other than themselves, Frankl proposes that meaning is that to which an individual reaches out (Frankl, 1987). For Frankl, each individual has the will-to-meaning. This is the most fundamental motivating factor in the individual (Frankl, 1969). Furthermore, he agrees with other existential philosophers that there is no universal meaning, just as there is no universal best chess move: A different meaning is to be found for each situation for each different individual (1987). In this regard, however, Frankl differs from other existential philosophers such as Heidegger and Sartre: Meaning is to be *found*, it cannot be created or invented by the individual (Frankl, 1987).

Frankl describes four different ways in which meaning may be found: In work, through love, in suffering and in death. Meaning can be found in work by fully committing to tasks. Through the tasks an individual performs, he/she can live out his/her uniqueness. Put differently: An individual finds meaning in his/her work through performing it in such a manner that he/she is making a contribution that only he/she is making (Frankl, 1965). Meaning can also be found through love. "Love is living the experience of another person in all his uniqueness and singularity" (Frankl, 1965, p.132). On the one hand, the person being loved so experiences his/her uniqueness through the eyes of the other person. On the other hand, the person who loves, experiences the world in a different manner; life and the world are perceived in their fullest value (Frankl, 1965). The third way to meaning is in suffering. When the individual faces an unavoidable fate, he/she is required to come to terms with the suffering in a meaningful way. Therefore, the person's attitude to the suffering is of crucial importance, for herein lies his/her ultimate freedom and responsibility: Even in the worst situations, the individual is still in control of the meaning he/she attributes to it. The ability to suffer meaningfully, according to Frankl (1987), is the ability to always live meaningfully, no matter what the circumstances are. Finally, the individual can find meaning in death. The finitude of life compels the individual to use his/her time fruitfully and live his/her life meaningfully. "The transience of life reinforces *responsibility* and the realisation that it is up to the individual to realise possibilities" (De Vos, 1987, p. 248).

In Frankl's thought, there is a close relationship between meanings and values. Although meanings differ from situation to situation, some situations share attributes. Consequently, meanings are also shared. Values, according to Frankl (1969) refer to these shared meanings. In the light of the four pathways to meaning in life, Frankl describes three different types of values, namely creative, experiential and attitude values. Creative values refer to the values the individual realises by making and doing things. Experiential values are values realised by being receptive to the world. Attitude values refer to the values realised by adopting certain attitudes to situations that cannot be remedied (De Vos, 1987). Insofar as these values refer to shared meanings, reaching out and striving towards these values can enhance the individual's meaning in life.

#### **2.1.1.6. Brief summary of existential thought**

The thoughts of the selected existential thinkers can be summarized as follows: All the thinkers' primary focus is on individual existence and how it should be led. Furthermore, all the thinkers are critical of the applicability of abstract concepts, reason or universal meanings to human existence. Rather, the concrete uniqueness of each individual existence is affirmed.

On the question of individual existence (and how it should be led) some common themes are discernible in the present author's opinion. They are: Self-transcendence, non-conformity, self-reflectivity, empathetic relationships, values and experience of meaning-in-life. The aim of the preceding discussion of existential thinkers has been to lay the foundation for the definition of the concept existential meaning-in-life. In the section on the definitions of concepts (pp. 19-29), it will be demonstrated how these common themes have been extracted from the different philosophies of the existential thinkers.

#### **2.1.2. Post-structuralism and Derrida**

In this section, post-structuralist philosophy will be discussed mainly with reference to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida. Although there are many other noted post-structuralist, like Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan and Roland Barthes, it is useful to discuss Derrida as a general introduction to post-structuralism, especially in its

relation to the structuralism that was put forward by Ferdinand de Saussure, whose linguistic theory will also be discussed shortly (Painter & Theron, 2001).

The main thrust of De Saussure's theory is the departure from a referential model of language, where the meaning of words are determined by the object they refer to. Instead, De Saussure proposes that signs only have meaning in a system of differences. He distinguishes between the signifier and the signified (that to which the signifier refers) that are united in the sign. In other words, in the case of (for instance) a dog, the signifier is the actual word "dog", that then refers to the dog itself (the signified). Not only is the relationship between signifier and signified arbitrary (the word for dog does not need to be specifically "dog", it could be anything else), but the signified itself is in a certain sense arbitrary. A concept is not a given that can merely be referred to by a signifier: Its meaning is determined by the difference and distinction from other signifieds, therefore in a system of signs (Painter & Theron, 2001).

Following the linguistic theory of De Saussure (Painter & Theron, 2001) Derrida holds that the meaning of signs (or words) are to be found in their differences from other signs. However, and in this regard he departs from De Saussure, the meaning can never be fixed. Where De Saussure still posits a distinction between the signifier and the signified of a sign, thereby leaving meaning to be simply present to be found, Derrida deconstructs the De Saussurean distinction between the signifier and the signified. "...(N)othing escapes the movement of the signifier and ..., in the last instance, the difference between signified and signifier *is nothing*" (Derrida, 1976, p. 23). If meaning is to be found in a system of differences, if even the signified derives its meaning from its differences with other signifieds, then the signified itself is another signifier, referring to something other than itself for its meaning. Furthermore, meaning can then never be fixed: It is always deferred to another sign, always constituted by differences between signs whose meanings are in turn also constituted by differences. Derrida uses the word *différance* to describe the way in which language as system is "constituted... as a weave of differences" (Derrida, 1982, p. 12). It refers to the way in which differences are constituted by the act of differing, but also to how differing is constituted through difference. It refers also to the deferring, the postponement of meaning, because it is always referred to another sign. For

instance, if the meaning of “yellow” was to be defined in terms of how it is different from all the other colours, the meaning of the sign is deferred to the signs for those other colours. In turn, they are defined by their differences from other signs. Thus the meaning is always postponed further. As such, *différance* does not function as a concept, since a concept designates simple presence. As Derrida says: “Such a play, *différance*, is thus no longer simply a concept, but rather the possibility of conceptuality, of a conceptual process and system in general” (1982, p. 11).

One of the key differences with De Saussure is that, according to Derrida, meaning cannot be found in the context: Meaning cannot be totally fixed by investigating the whole system within which the sign functions. An important concept in this regard is “iterability”. Iterability refers to necessary repeatability of a sign as a condition of its meaningfulness. Iterability refers to the ability of the sign to be recognised as a sign, as specifically that sign which it is. This does not mean that each sign has a fixed meaning: Its meaning is still constituted, although not in a fixed and wholly determined way, within context. Although a sign’s meaning is only constituted in a system of differences, in other words within a context, the sign has the ability to break with context, to carry its previous meanings over from one context to the next. This is a necessary ability, a condition of the meaningfulness of language (Derrida, 1988). For instance, in speaking of a specific type of sign, the signature, Derrida says: “In order to function, that is, in order to be readable, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to be detached from the singular intention of its production” (Derrida, 1988, p. 20).

The conclusion to be drawn from Derrida’s view on language, is that meaning is not naturally fixed. To a certain extent, meaning has to be imposed on a sign: One has to *draw the line* concerning what falls under a certain category, and what does not (Derrida, 1988). This action of drawing the line is an ethical action (Derrida, 1988). When meaning is fixed in this manner, certain conceptual hierarchies are formed, whereby the meaning of a certain sign is fixed, and other signs gain their meaning from that sign. The concepts “man” and “women” in a patriarchal context, for instance, demonstrate such a hierarchy: “woman” is defined in relation to “man”, but not vice versa. Any such imposition of meaning, although necessary for the production of meaning, necessarily undermines itself due to the elusive nature of

meaning in language. Derrida deconstructs these hierarchies by showing how they undermine themselves, thereby showing that the meaning thus produced is not naturally given and stable (Culler, 1998). The imposition of meaning characterizes what Derrida calls the metaphysics of presence. According to Derrida (in Cilliers, 1998), the metaphysics of presence is what characterizes the history of Western philosophy. This attempt to fix meaning, to make it simply present, leads to all kinds of exclusions and distinctions that are not tenable. One such distinction is the fundamental distinction between what is inside language and outside language - the referent of language (Cilliers, 1998). For Derrida however, “(t)here is nothing outside the text” (1976, p. 163). Human beings have cognitive access only to signs, there is no “thing itself” behind the text. No thought is a thought without being constituted in a system of signs, that is, a text. “The thing itself is *phenomenal* being, as structure of appearance, which Derrida has shown to be, not an illusion, but dependent on the work of signs.” (Caputo, 1987, p. 110). Therefore the attempt to posit the distinction between inside and outside language has excluded a discourse on language in what was seen as proper philosophy, where the focus was on the search for insight in to “reality” and language was seen merely as a tool (sometimes even an obstacle) in this search.

Likewise, other attempts to fix meaning result in the marginalization of discourses. This has been one of post-structuralism’s most significant insights, that has made a great contribution to especially the social sciences. Using the post-structuralist framework, the processes, ideologies and discourses that shape identity and serve to marginalise people or other discourses, can be investigated (Painter & Theron, 2001). As such, post-structuralist thought has played an important part in the investigation of discourses of racial discrimination.

### **2.1.3. Definition of concepts**

On the basis of the theoretical overview, the concepts pertinent to this study will now be discussed. It is important to note that the selected existential thinkers were discussed in order to develop a theoretical background from which existential meaning-in-life can be defined. The concept existential meaning-in-life has not been defined precisely prior to this study. As such, it was necessary for the present author to

develop the concept from its philosophical roots, extracting common themes that emerge in all of the most pertinent existential theories. This is necessarily the present author's own interpretation, and those thoughts not referenced should be considered as the present author's own views on the existential theories. However, these interpretations are grounded in the theory that presented in the previous sections (pp. 4-18), and will be presented thus.

The concept racial prejudice is more clearly defined. Two of the main perspectives on the definition will be discussed. In this regard, the theoretical background of post-structuralist thought that has been discussed will be of use in understanding and relating these two perspectives to each other.

### **2.1.3.1. Existential meaning-in-life**

Regarding existential meaning-in-life, it is important to note that all the theories are essentially concerned with the question: "How should the individual live?" or "What is the best way to live?". This does not mean that the theories prescribe certain values to be followed. Rather, they argue for a way of living in which the individual authentically chooses his own values to live by. Furthermore, all the theories put forward ideas on how the individual should relate to his/her world and own life, thereby grasping the self (in the Kierkegaardian sense, see p. 6) and becoming an authentic individual (in the Heideggerian or Sartrean sense, see pp. 7-11). In psychological terms, as put forward by May (see p. 12) and Frankl (De Vos, 1993), the question of how the individual should live has been expressed in terms of psychological health. Put differently, the authentic individual, who lives with meaning in his/her life, is psychologically healthy.

As a preliminary definition of the construct, it can be said that this "best way to live" is characterized and determined by existential meaning-in-life. This, however, is still a very vague definition, which needs clarification. Furthermore, without reference to the aspects that define existential meaning-in-life itself, it is not clear why this "best way to live" is characterized by the concept existential meaning-in-life. Hence the construct will be defined in terms of six aspects extracted from the relevant existential theories: Self-transcendence, non-conformity, self-reflectivity, empathetic relation-

ships, values and experience of meaning-in-life. Put differently, existential meaning-in-life is defined by self-transcendence, non-conformity, self-reflectivity, empathetic relationships, values and experience of meaning-in-life. These themes will be discussed in more detail in the sections that follow. It will demonstrated how these themes are present in all the theories discussed.

In the light of the introductory overview of existential thinkers, it is important to shed some light on the use of the terms existential meaning-in-life, authenticity, and experience of meaning-in-life. For the most part, existential-meaning-in-life and authenticity can be seen as synonymous, and have been used in that manner in this study (including the sections that follow). However, when they relate to the experience of meaning in life, this study makes the distinction between existential meaning-in-life and authenticity. The reason for this is that, given the background of Sartre and Heidegger (where authenticity is often characterized by an courageous acceptance that life is meaningless), authenticity can sometimes be taken to be at odds with the experience of meaning in life. Therefore, to avoid confusion, the experience of meaning-in-life is not included in the construct of authenticity. Experience of meaning-in-life, however, is taken to be an aspect of existential meaning-in-life, although it is definitely not the sole determinant thereof. In this regard, it is important to note that the concept existential meaning-in-life has been developed from existential theory alone. Other theoretical or religious backgrounds may define meaning-in-life differently. For instance, certain fundamental religious groups may be considered to display great measures of meaning-in-life, especially when significant experiences of meaning are reported.<sup>1</sup> However, this study uses the concept existential meaning-in-life, which has been developed specifically from existential theory, according to which certain practices or attitudes (considered by others to be meaningful) could be deemed inauthentic if they are not characterized by the other aspects of existential meaning-in-life, such as self-reflectivity or non-conformity.

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<sup>1</sup> This does not mean that members of fundamental religious groups cannot be characterized by existential meaning-in-life. The point is rather that all the aspects of existential meaning-in-life are not considered by all perspectives to contribute to meaning-in-life.



### 2.1.3.1.1. Self-transcendence

The concept of self-transcendence plays an important role in the theories of especially Kierkegaard (1843/1989) and Frankl (1987). Individual existence cannot, according to Kierkegaard (1844/1974; also see Shmueli, 1971), be grasped by (intellectual) concepts, for concepts are static, they refer to the universal and unchanging. This is exactly what existence is not: It is that which always transcends what it already is, and can therefore never be static. The individual only truly grasps his/her existence by the act of repetition: The self is gained by relinquishing the self and reaching out to something other than the self. This view is affirmed by Frankl (1987). However, he elaborates on Kierkegaard's theory in an important manner, by relating self-transcendence to meaning-in-life. According to Frankl (1987) individuals transcend themselves by reaching out to meaning. This aspect lies at the core of human personality and motivation.

In both the work of Kierkegaard and Frankl, self-transcendence is identified as a spiritual ability. This does not mean that it necessarily has to be seen in religious terms. Rather, it sets up self-transcendence against secure knowledge and reason. Self-transcendence is a leap of faith whereby individuals abnegate themselves in order to gain themselves. This leap of faith cannot be based on logic or knowledge. In the spiritual leap that characterizes self-transcendence, the individual cannot reasonably justify his/her decision to do so. Indeed, he/she merely believes that this leap is justified and that the expectations of meaning thus found are valid. This flies in the face of reason (Kierkegaard, 1843/1989). On the other hand, if the individual clings to secure knowledge, he/she will remain caught up in abstractions of his/her existence that are necessarily static, losing the essence of dynamic existence (Shmueli, 1971).

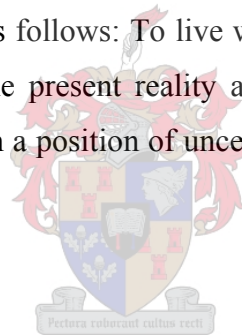
The focus on self-transcendence, especially on its spiritual nature, is not immediately evident in all existential thinkers. However, a closer investigation will reveal similar themes in for instance Heidegger, Sartre and May.

For Heidegger, life and the world have no universal meaning (Melchert, 1995; Scruton, 1999). However, to live authentically and meaningfully is to live engaged in the world. This entails that the individual stands in a relation to the world where he/she interprets the meaning that phenomena and occurrences have in relation to



his/her life. Yet there is no norm or abstract standard, no universal meaning from which to deduce the meaning of phenomena. The meaning thus attributed in an authentic life is essentially made without any reasonable grounds. Similarly, Sartre's view of life is that it is fundamentally absurd (Kearney, 1986; Scruton, 1999). However, the individual has to create or invent his/her own meaning in life. Once again, there is nothing on which to base the validity of the meanings thus invented. Therefore, as Yalom (1980) points out, although Sartre (as well as the existential writer Camus) believe in the absurdity in life, their work still call for a commitment and engagement in life that is based on no authority or rational grounds. May, following Kierkegaard affirms the significance of individuals' ability to relate to themselves (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003). This self-relatedness enables the individual to be free, therefore to transcend any given situation and state of being.

Although self-transcendence is described somewhat differently in all the theories, it can generally be characterized as follows: To live with self-transcendence is to break free of the limitations set by the present reality and reason. This involves making decisions and commitments from a position of uncertainty, and finding meaning in an absurd world.



#### **2.1.3.1.2. Non-conformity**

An individual characterized by non-conformity is aware of his/her own freedom, takes responsibility for his/her own decisions, and does not cede them to others. Freedom, and the responsibility that accompanies it, is a very important theme in existential philosophy, as can be seen from the earlier discussion of existential philosophers and psychologists. To be authentic and live a meaningful life, an individual needs to be aware of his/her freedom and act in an accordingly free and responsible manner. On the other hand, the individual who lives in accordance to the will and decisions of others, thereby conforming to them, lives inauthentically. For instance, Heidegger (Melchert, 1995; Scruton, 1999) posits conforming to *Dasman* ("they")<sup>2</sup> as one of the ways existential anxiety (that accompanies awareness of existential freedom) is avoided. This refuge in *Dasman* can take many forms, but essentially it entails ceding authority to someone (or something, like a religious tenet) else. Sartre has a largely

<sup>2</sup> *Dasman* can be translated as "they" or "one". For instance, to validate a statement or value, an individual might say: "They say ...", or "One does not lend money to beggars".

similar argument against conformity. Conforming is living in *bad faith* (Kearney, 1986; Scruton, 1999). May's argument (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003) is also in the same vein: To avoid the normal (existential) anxiety that accompanies personal growth, the individual takes refuge in conformity. This then leads to an inauthentic life, characterized by neurotic anxiety. Frankl (1965) emphasizes the individual's freedom to choose his/her attitude towards life. An awareness of such freedom leads to finding meaning-in-life, even in the face of tragedy. For Kierkegaard (1843/1946), good and evil do not pertain to acts that are in accordance with an existing norm or standard. Rather, the individual can only be described as "good" if he/she realizes his/her freedom and takes responsibility for his/her choices. Put differently: The "good" lies in the individual's awareness that it is he/she that *chooses* between good and evil. "Evil", then, refers to the individual's avoidance of choices, thereby living in despair and inauthenticity.

#### **2.1.3.1.3. Self-reflectivity**

Self-reflectivity can be defined as the ability to be aware of one's own thoughts, perspectives, positions and emotions. Self-reflectivity relates closely to awareness and responsibility. Kierkegaard's view of the individual as a relation between factuality and potentiality that relates to itself (Kierkegaard, 1849/1989) implies the possibility of self-reflection. In Kierkegaard's writing, self-reflectivity plays an important part in the quest to grasp the self (Kierkegaard, 1843/1946). In the Aesthetic mode of existence, the individual avoids consciousness, and wants rather merely to experience. This leads to a fragmented self. Only through self-reflection does the individual realize that he/she has free will and the responsibility that accompanies it. This development through self-reflection represents the Ethical mode of existence (Shmueli, 1971). However, the Ethicist is still not self-reflective enough: He/she still has to attain the (self-)insight that his/her existence cannot be conceptually grasped. Put differently, he/she has not come to realize the limits of his/her self-reflectivity. This realization comes only through reflectivity (Kierkegaard, 1843/1985; Shmueli, 1971).

Similar to Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, May and Frankl, propose the individual's self-awareness and insight into his/her own existence is a prerequisite for an authentic, meaningful life (Melchert, 1995; Kearney, 1986; Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003;

Scruton, 1999). An aspect of Heidegger's characterization of *Dasein's* existence is that it is the being that is concerned about its being. This concern flows from an awareness of the possibility of non-being (death) (Scruton, 1999). Enduring the anxiety that accompanies the confrontation with this possibility is key to living authentically, as discussed in section 2.1.1.2 (see p. 9) on Heidegger. In Sartre, a lack of awareness of freedom and responsibility leads to an inauthentic life, a life lived in *bad faith* (Scruton, 1999). Similarly, in May's theory, avoidance of normal anxiety leads to neurotic anxiety. Normal anxiety is the result of an awareness of existential freedom (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003). In Frankl's view, a meaning-in-life can be enhanced in a clinical setting by guiding the client to self-insight of his/her freedom regarding his/her attitudes toward a given situation (Frankl, 1965). In all these cases, the self-insight attained through self-reflectivity is associated with an authentic, meaningful life.

#### **2.1.3.1.4. Empathetic relationships**

The individual's relationship to other people is discussed in a variety of manners in different existential thinkers. Of those thinkers discussed in this study, Frankl and May's theories articulate most clearly what they believe to be the relationships authentic individuals have with other people.



As discussed in the section on Frankl, love is one area of life where meaning-in-life can be found. In this regard Frankl (1987) describes love as enabling the individual to experience the uniqueness of the other person. Similarly, May describes the love of an authentic person as comprising of four elements, sex, eros, philia and agapé, as discussed in section 2.1.1.4 (see p. 13) on May. The last two of these elements are particularly relevant to this study, and seem to correspond roughly to Frankl's conception of love. Philia and agapé entail respectively the true acceptance of the other's being and unconditional positive regard.

These conceptions of love have a certain quality in common: In all these cases (Frankl's love, and May's philia and agapé), there is an appreciation for the life-world of the other person. Following existential theory, by appreciating another person's unique being, the individual is treating the other person as an authentically existing being. This resonates with Buber's (1971), description of what he calls an I-Thou

relationship, as well as Rogers (1980) concept of unconditional positive regard: By appreciating another person's unique being, the individual gives positive regard unconditionally. If Sartre's theory on relationships (discussed in section 2.1.1.3, p.10 on Sartre) is applied to it, the treatment of the other person in this unconditional manner reveals a special quality. In Sartre's theory, the other person can only be grasped as an object, even if the desire is to grasp him/her as a subject.

Of the philosophers discussed in this study, Kierkegaard perhaps has the most optimistic view of human relations. In this regard he relates meaningful living to certain values in relationships with others, namely openness to others, grace and selflessness (Kierkegaard in Shmueli, 1971). These values point to a general directedness to others, in which a preoccupation with the self is avoided. Both Heidegger's and Sartre's philosophies, on the other hand, tend to be perceived as pessimistic regarding human relations, and seem to describe an authentic individual that is fundamentally lonely in the world. However, as discussed in the section on Sartre (section 2.1.1.3., see p. 11), Yalom (1980), arguing from an existential paradigm, shows that authentic individuals, although lonely, do not strive to escape this loneliness through relationships. Rather, their authenticity enables them to have meaningful and appreciative relationships. This resonates with the general directedness to others described by Kierkegaard as a characteristic of authentic individuals: Having gained the self (through losing it), the individuals are free to let go of their concerns and pre-occupations with themselves, and direct themselves to others. In this regard, Yalom (1980) describes the other side of Heidegger and Sartre's coin: Heidegger and Sartre relate specifically need-driven, deficiency-motivated relationships with inauthenticity, while not focussing on the relationship between authenticity and healthy relationship.

Therefore, in general, there seems to be an association between appreciating the being of other people and authenticity and meaning-in-life (even if this relationship is stated in the inverse, need-driven relationships being associated with inauthenticity). As was discussed earlier (see p. 25), the imaginative ability to live in the other person's life world, or at least strive to do so, paves the way for the ability to appreciate the being of another person unconditionally. This imaginative ability can be defined as empathy, where there is insight into both the person's unique viewpoints and

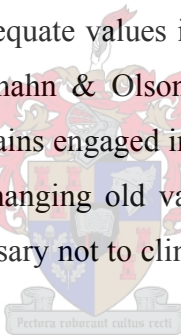
emotions (Davis, 1980, 1983). Thus, individuals characterized by existential meaning-in-life are also conceived to be characterized by empathetic relationships with others.

#### **2.1.3.1.5. Values**

It stands to reason that living meaningfully is accompanied by a realization or experience of what is of value in life. To interpret a specific act, experience or attitude as having meaning that relates to one's life, is to assign a certain value to that act, experience or attitude.

According to Frankl (1987), as discussed in section 2.1.1.5 (see p. 15), values refer to meanings (that were found in life) that are shared between people. Furthermore, as these values refer to shared meanings, striving towards these values and living by them can enhance the individual's meaning in life.

In May's theory, the search for adequate values is important for an individual to live his/her life meaningfully (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003). As discussed (see section 2.1.1.4., p. 13), the individual remains engaged in his/her world and avoids alienation by developing adequate values, changing old values if the need arises. Therefore, from May's perspective, it is necessary not to cling rigidly and dogmatically to values (Hergenhahn & Olson, 2003).



This resonates well with the theories of Heidegger and Sartre. For both, there is a clear distinction between values that are dogmatically followed in order to avoid one's freedom and responsibility, and the values the individual creates as an authentic being. It follows, then, that no authority other than the individual can prescribe which values he/she should hold or not. Similarly, Kierkegaard was against taking on values dogmatically (Shmueli, 1971).

Therefore, it is reasonable to deduce that from an existential perspective, it is the *manner* in which values are held that relate to meaningful existence, rather than which specific values are held. However, Yalom (1980) summarizes research done from an existential perspective that relates to the relationship between specific values and meaning in life. In this regard, anti-hedonist values, idealistic values, and conservative values were found to have a positive relationship with meaning-in-life. Furthermore,

involvement in organised groups such as religious groups was also positively related to meaning-in-life (Yalom, 1980). It is important to note that this research is very dated at this stage. More recent findings will be discussed with other empirical findings relevant to the study. Yalom's findings are only reported here to note that in the past, meaning-in-life has been associated with certain specific values.

#### **2.1.3.1.6. Experience of meaning-in-life**

Experience of meaning-in-life is considered to be the final aspect of the construct existential-meaning-in-life. It is therefore not simply equated with existential meaning-in-life: It is an aspect that characterizes existential meaning-in-life just as the other aspects discussed thus far. As these aspects are used in this study to characterize existential meaning-in-life, it is important to relate experience of meaning-in-life with these aspects. In this regard, the experience of meaning-in-life as it relates to the other aspects (and therefore to the construct existential meaning-in-life) is described differently by different existential thinkers.

Of those discussed here, Frankl's discussion on meaning-in-life most clearly relates the experience of meaning-in-life with the other aspects (that is, self-transcendence, non-conformity, self-reflectivity, empathy and values). This is done by relating it to self-transcendence. Kierkegaard's philosophy was concerned with showing that self-transcendence is necessary to gain the self, and therefore not to live in despair (Kierkegaard, 1849/1989). To gain his self, the individual has to abnegate the self, and reach out beyond the self to something other than the self. Frankl (1987) proposes that this "something" to which the individual reaches out, is meaning. Self-transcendence is a human potential to find meaning-in-life (Frankl, 1987). By doing this, he therefore relates experience of meaning-in-life with (re)gaining the self. The experience of meaning-in-life enables individuals to make sense of their existence: It gives an indication of how they should orientate themselves to the world, and how they should lead their lives (Frankl, 1969, 1987).

By relating experience of meaning-in-life to self-transcendence, Frankl also relates it to freedom and self-reflectivity. Individuals' insight into their own existence plays a big part in their ability to transcend themselves. Furthermore, individuals' freedom

lies in the fact they can transcend any given situation: They are free to choose their attitude towards any situation, and find meaning in it.

As discussed in section 2.1.1.5 on Frankl (see p. 14), he considers meaning to be specific for each individual and each situation. However, people can share meanings. In this regard, he relates values to meaning (defining values as meanings shared by people). Furthermore, Frankl describes different ways in which an individual can find meaning in life. These are: through work, through love, through suffering, and in the face of death.

Although not always immediately evident, the main concerns of the other existential thinkers discussed in this study can also be described in terms of meaning-in-life. From the discussion on Kierkegaard (see section 2.1.1.1., pp. 6-7 ), it appears his concern is mainly with the individual's grasping of the self and avoidance of despair through living in faith. The outcome of living in faith is engaging in the world in a manner that is true to the tension between factuality and potentiality that characterizes the true self (Kierkegaard, 1849/1989). Put differently, the individual who lives in faith has found a way to truly live in the world without detaching from it or merely turning to experience that avoids self-consciousness. The individual can thus orientate his/her life in the world, thus experiencing meaning-in-life.

Similarly, authenticity can also be described in terms of experience of meaning-in-life. Thinkers like Heidegger, Sartre and May view life as having no universal meaning independent of the individual. Authenticity is then often characterized as an acceptance of this fact, which accompanies awareness of the freedom and responsibility for one's own life. The onus is on the individual to create his own new possibilities for being. These possibilities can be seen in terms of the experience of meaning-in-life, because they refer to indications (although created or invented by the individuals themselves, and not referring to independent universal meanings) of how to live life in the world.

Although the question of how an individual should lead his/her life has been phrased in different terms by different existential thinkers (as interpreted by the present author), the experience of meaning-in-life is a characteristic of how the individual



should lead his/her life in each case, as are the other aspects of existential meaning-in-life. Experience of meaning-in-life therefore emerges as the final aspect of existential meaning-in-life.

### **2.1.3.2. Racial prejudice**

Racial prejudice can be defined in a number of ways. One of these relates to the way a prejudiced individual processes information. Prejudice against a certain group entails a judgement or evaluation of that group without sufficient grounds or evidence to make that judgement. The person belonging to the group is attributed characteristics perceived to be typical of the group, without there being sufficient information that the individual actually has these attributes (Devine, 2000; McGarty, 1999). Furthermore, prejudice is characterized by a selective approach to information: Information that validates prejudicial ideas are more easily processed (Allport, 1954; Carr, 2003). Racial prejudice therefore refers to prejudice towards a person based on his/her membership of a specific racial group. Typically, the specific group is seen as homogenous, and differences between groups are overemphasized (Carr, 2003, McGarty, 1999).

This focus on the individual processes has in recent times been eclipsed by focus on the ideological bases of racial prejudice, where racial prejudice is described in terms of ideologies that attempt to construct (discriminatory) social organizations as natural. Therefore, prejudice lies in the way the view of the other group is constructed by ideologies (Solomos & Back, 2000). Even in contemporary society, where racial prejudice is officially frowned upon, ideologies still serve this function. According to Carr (2003), these ideologies are expressed mainly in the following ways: Denial that discrimination exists, resistance against claims of restitution, and resistance against what is perceived as special treatment for the specific group. These beliefs, apparently opting for equality, serve to draw attention away from the social processes that result in discrimination, so that present inequalities can be seen only in terms of merit, thus justifying them.

Post-structuralist considerations are useful in understanding where these different conceptualizations of racial prejudice meet. In the social sciences, post-structuralism



has brought a focus on those systems that underlie the meanings of concepts (Painter & Theron, 2001). As discussed in section 2.1.2 (see p. 18) on Derrida and post-structuralism, the attempt to fix the meaning of a concept results in the marginalization of other meanings and connotations as exceptions to the rule. Applying this to the case of racial prejudice, the two conceptualizations of racial prejudice discussed above can be related to each other: The individual, whose conceptualizations of the world are guided by discourses or ideologies, apply the concepts thus constructed to the world. In applying them, and by the very logic of the concept itself, information that invalidates his conceptualization is excluded, making him prejudiced.

#### **2.1.4. Theoretical arguments for the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice**

In this section, the arguments for the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice will be presented. These arguments have been developed in this study from the basis of existential and post-structuralist thinkers, as they have been interpreted by the present author. As such, much of the following arguments contain the present author's own opinion, although they are grounded in existing theory. Therefore, where no reference is given, it should be assumed to be the present author's own interpretation.

The first argument to be presented is the argument from a synthesis between the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Derrida. Subsequently, the argument from the theories of May and Frankl will be presented.

##### **2.1.4.1. The argument from a synthesis between the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Derrida**

In recent times there has been a renewed interest in the work of Søren Kierkegaard from post-structuralist thinkers. Post-structuralist readings of his work call for a very specific type of dialogue with Kierkegaard, where one would as it were slip into the text, and let the text itself do the talking (often saying more than the original author intended to say). This is not the approach taken in this study. To develop the argument for a relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice from a

synthesis between the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Derrida, the philosophies must be compared. In this regard, the preceding discussion on their philosophies hopefully serves as an introduction to the concepts discussed here. Some common ground will initially be laid out by way of similarities between the two, whereupon the synthesis between the two can take place. On the basis of this synthesis, there will be argued for the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice.

### *The synthesis*

In the work of both Kierkegaard and Derrida, there is a focus on the dynamic – that which keeps moving away from an attempted grasp of it. In Kierkegaard it is the concept of existence that signifies the dynamic. According to Kierkegaard (as discussed in section 2.1.1.1., see p. 7) existence cannot be grasped by (intellectual) concepts: Concepts are static, they refer to the universal and unchanging. This is exactly what existence is not: It is that which always transcends what it already is, and can therefore never be static.

For Derrida, on the other hand, the slipperiness does not refer to something outside language that cannot be grasped by language. Rather, it refers to the instability of concepts *per se*. As discussed in section 2.1.2 on post-structuralism (see p. 16), Derrida holds that the meaning of signs (or words) are to be found in their differences from other signs. However, the meaning can never be fixed. In this regard he departs from De Saussure's linguistics. He deconstructs De Saussure's distinction between the signifier and signified of a sign: The signified, in Derrida's view, is itself is another signifier, referring to something other than itself for its meaning. Therefore meaning is always deferred to another sign, whose meaning in turn is also deferred to other signs. Derrida uses the word *différance* to denote the workings of language as system of signifiers only. It is interesting to note that both Derrida (1982) and Kierkegaard (Shmueli, 1971) refer to these words that mark a dynamic slipperiness as “non-concepts”, as they do not pertain to a simple presence. To some extent, though, the similarity ends here. The difference between Kierkegaard and Derrida regarding these concepts is important. As stated earlier, existence refers to something language cannot capture, something outside of language. For Derrida however, “(t)here is nothing outside the text” (1976, p163). The attempt to grasp meaning is not because of the inaccessibility of a phenomenon to language. Rather, the logic of language itself

causes meaning to always slip away. The question of what is outside the text will be particularly important when the present discussion moves to issues of responsibility and faith. Currently, the discussion returns to another similarity between the two thinkers, namely, the similarity between the sign and the self.

In the Kierkegaardian sense (1849/1989) the self refers to the relationship between factuality and potentiality that relates to itself. Furthermore, it is of importance to note that, where Kierkegaard's focus lies with the individual's concern to be a self, this concern can be discussed in terms of the search for meaning-in-life, as discussed in section 2.1.3.1.6. (see pp. 28-29) This leap from the concern for the self to the concern for meaning is conceivable on the basis of Kierkegaard's definition of the true self as self-transcendent. To truly exist, to transcend one's self, is to step out (from the Latin *existere*) and to reach out to something else, something that grounds existence, gives it coherence, and indicates to an individual how to orientate himself to his life and world. Therefore, according to Frankl (1987), human beings have the potential to reach out to meaning. Meaning is that which grounds the self's existence, that which enables one to retain one's self. Furthermore, the willingness of the self to lose itself in order to become a self (to become itself by reaching out to something other than itself) points to a spiritual orientation necessary for self-hood. This is a point that will be revisited later in the argument. Currently the present discussion returns to the similarity between the sign and the self. The self is characterized by a relation, not only with itself, but also with something other than itself. Therefore, just as the sign has no simply present meaning (in a system of signifiers), so the self is not simply present. It is not a simple monolithic entity, or identity, but refers to a dynamic existence that cannot be captured in (static) concepts.

Up to this point, it looks as if what is coming to pass in this argument is a mere allegory between Kierkegaard and Derrida: Where Kierkegaard is concerned with life, existence and the self, Derrida writes about language; the similarities between the two are merely similes. Yet the comparison between these two thinkers has more to offer. Earlier, the move from the apprehension of the self to meaning in life was discussed, so that self-transcendence implies a reaching out to meaning. This necessarily calls forth a discourse on text, and once again the Derridean statement can be repeated: There is nothing outside the text. This is a foothold into a much deeper comparison

and mutual supplementarity between Kierkegaard and Derrida. A key question in this regard is: Is there any access to that which is reached out to, other than through text, through language? Even if that which is reached out to (in Kierkegaard this will be God, but for the purpose of this discussion it will be called the Other), cannot be conceptually comprehended, can someone in any way be in relation to it without giving it a name or a sign?

Derrida has written extensively on the relation with the absolutely Other, with the unknown, especially in “The Gift of Death” (1995), and “Aporias” (1993). In discussing Kierkegaard, he explains how the relation with the other, and with death, represents the very condition, the possibility of concepts (Derrida, 1993). The logic of a sign where the referent is absent or inaccessible, such as is to be found with death or God (for it is impossible to know death or God), is the logic of the limit, of a line being drawn. As discussed in section 2.1.2 (see p. 17), this delimitation is necessary for the determination of the meaning of a concept: A line has to be drawn concerning what falls under a certain category, and what does not, so as to restrict the workings of *différance* (Derrida, 1988). This action of drawing the line is an ethical action (Derrida, 1988). For Derrida, ethics is not a separate issue to be discussed by a specific category of philosophy: It is fundamentally involved in how meaning is determined. As meaning is not simply present anywhere, and as it cannot be deduced from a fundamental ground, there is no authority to refer to in order to definitely say what is meant by a certain sign. Furthermore, as there is ultimately no ground to refer to, a *decision* has to be made, a decision for which responsibility must be taken. It is important to emphasize that this decision is made without there being sufficient ground from which to calculate the best decision. This is what Derrida refers to as an ethical decision. In this description of the ethical, he differs significantly from Kierkegaard. While Kierkegaard typifies the ethical stage in life as that stage where individuals make the choice to take responsibility for themselves (Shmueli, 1971), to choose to make choices, he elsewhere identifies the ethical with an adherence to the universal (Kierkegaard, 1843/1985). The ethical decision is one of adherence to principles that apply to everyone. Derrida’s ethical pertains much more to the particular, it comes into play with each decision about meaning, and cannot be deduced from universal principles. In this sense, Derrida’s ethical relates much better to Kierkegaard’s religious stage of life, where a break is made from the universal. It is

interesting that Kierkegaard, too, writes on the importance of the unknown, or the paradox as he likes to call it, for knowledge. “(O)ne should not think slightingly of the paradoxical; for the paradox is the source of the thinker’s passion, and the thinker without a paradox is like a lover without a feeling: a paltry mediocrity.” (Kierkegaard, 1844/1974, p.46). The religious is exactly the leap into this unknown. It is to embrace the unknown without knowing it. This seems a foolish thing to do, an offence to reason, but it is the only the way to grasp the self. Therefore, just as for Derrida the ethical is a decision above groundlessness, so the religious is for Kierkegaard a leap to where there is no ground to land. As such, it important to note that Kierkegaard’s concept of the religious is not to be equated with an institutional religiosity. Rather, it denotes what in modern terms would be understood as spirituality. Both Derrida and Kierkegaard therefore bring an understanding for the role of the fundamentally incalculable, or the incomprehensible, in how one has to live one’s life. The incalculable is not merely virgin territory to be ultimately conquered by reason: It underlies and makes possible the workings of reason.

The role of the unknown is the next foothold for investigating the similarities between these two thinkers. The role of the unknown in Derrida’s concept of the ethical and in Kierkegaard’s concept of the religious has already been discussed. This sets the stage for a dialogue between these two regarding responsibility and faith. Derrida discusses Kierkegaard (especially his distinction between the ethical and the religious) thoroughly and extensively in the *Gift of Death* (1995). For Kierkegaard, the religious involves the responsibility towards and the answering to God, or the absolutely Other, that asks of one to leave all other responsibilities, therefore all ethical responsibilities, if the responsibility to the Other asks for it. The religious is then an offence to these responsibilities: The religious can require of one to go against the ethical. Derrida dismantles this distinction between the ethical and the religious. Following Levinas, another philosopher he discusse in “*Gift of Death*” (1995), he argues that every other, one could say every other human, is just as absolutely other as the Absolutely Other. Just as with the Absolutely Other, there is a fundamental inaccessibility to another person (Derrida, 1995). Ethical action implies responsibility to others, being able to answer to others. Each of these others is in some sense an absolutely other, and furthermore, in every ethical decision one has to weigh one responsibility up against others. One has to sacrifice one for the other, just as, according to Kierkegaard (1985),

the Biblical figure Abraham sacrifices ethical responsibility for religious responsibility. Thus the distinction between the religious and the ethical, as set out by Kierkegaard, cannot be rigorously tenable.

One can perhaps even go further than Derrida, and demonstrate the ethical within the religious. For in the religious, there is always a sign. As Derrida (1995) points out, there is always something calling one to answer before the Other, be it a prophecy or a Messiah. This is a text to be interpreted, and as discussed earlier, in Derrida's approach, there is no way to calculate, or wholly determine, what is meant by a sign. To lay down its meaning is to draw the line as with any other sign or concept. It is an ethical, incalculable decision to lay down the meaning of the sign and to determine one's responsibility towards the Other.

Granting for a moment that faith involves an interpretation of a sign, therefore a decision about what the sign means, how does one make such a decision? What is implied in general when an ethical decision is made? To put it differently, what brings one to come to an ethical decision? To quote Derrida:

“Such, in fact, is the paradoxical condition of every decision: it cannot be deduced from a form of knowledge of which it would simply be the effect, the conclusion, explication. It structurally breaches knowledge and is thus destined to non-manifestation; a decision is, in the end, always a secret.”  
(Derrida, 1995, p. 77).

This secret responsibility, this responsibility of the secret, corresponds to faith, as set out by Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* (1985). To put it differently: The undecidable decision is made out of faith, within a relation of faith. There is always faith in the ethical.

“(W)hat can be said of Abraham's relation to God can be said about my relation without relation to *every other (one) as every (bit) other*, [*tout autre comme tout autre*] in particular my relation to my neighbour or my loved ones who are as inaccessible to me, as secret and transcendent as Jahweh.” (Derrida, 1995, p.78)

This line of enquiry thus leads to the conclusion that faith requires an ethical decision regarding the meaning of the sign, and that this ethical decision is made out of faith. This conclusion is of considerable significance, as it informs critical considerations on Derrida that illuminate the concept of faith. To bring these considerations to light, the discussion returns to the point where Derrida dismantles the distinction between the ethical and faith. In order to go through with his line of thinking, which regards a person's responsibility as something very individual, very singular, and very much pertaining to his/her own death and life, he proposes a new conception of God or the Other, distinctly moving away from the metaphysical in a typically Derridean manner.

“In order to eschew idolatrous or iconistic simplicisms, that is, visible images and ready-made representations, it might be necessary to understand this sentence (“and thy Father which seeth in secret ... shall reward thee”) as something other than a proposition regarding God, this subject, entity, or X who on one hand would already exist, and who, on the other hand, what is more, would be endowed with attributes such as paternity and the power to penetrate secrets, to see the invisible, to see in me better than I, to be more powerful and more intimate with me than myself. We *should* (present author's italics – JRN) stop thinking about God as someone, over there, way up there, transcendent, and, what is more, - into the bargain, precisely, capable, more than any satellite orbiting in space, of seeing into the most secret of the most interior places. It is perhaps necessary, if we are to follow the traditional Judeo-Christian-Islamic injunction, but also at the risk of turning it against that tradition, to think of God and of the name of God without such *idolatrous stereotyping* or *representation* (present author's italics – JRN). Then we might say: God is the name of the possibility I have of keeping a secret that is visible from the interior but not from the exterior. Once such a structure exists, of being with-oneself, of speaking, that is, of producing invisible sense, once I have within me, *thanks to the invisible word as such*, a witness that others cannot see, and who is therefore *at the same time other than me and more intimate with me than myself*, once I can have a secret relationship with myself and not tell everything, once there is a secrecy and secret witnessing within me, then what I call God exists, (there is) what I call God in me, (it happens that) I call myself God – a



phrase that is difficult to distinguish from “God calls me”, for it is on that condition that I can call myself or that I am called in secret. God is in me, he is the absolute “me” or “self”, he is that structure of invisible interiority that is called, in Kierkegaard’s sense, subjectivity. (Derrida, 1995, pp. 108-109)

Derrida argues for a different conceptualisation of God where there should be moved away from God as way up there, as transcendental. However, what Derrida does not take into account is that, however individual and particular the relationship with “God” may be, there is always a sign, God’s sign. Inseparable from faith in the Other is the belief that the sign of the Other is in fact the sign of the Other. There is always a symbol, an image, a *representation*, an *idol*. The idolatrous conception of the Other is then necessary in every internal relation with the Other. Idolatry cannot be escaped. This is not an inconsequential point. In trying to escape it, he also tries to reduce the paradox of the Other, that Kierkegaard explains so well as almost a double paradox, not just as the unknown, the failing of reason, but also that this unknown is a universal, an “up there”, a transcendental; that it is at the same time manifested in history, precisely to call upon each individual’s responsibility to it (Kierkegaard, 1974). Where man can do nothing from his side, where he is helpless and has nowhere to turn, he must reside, and *believe* that God, the Other, or whatever may be a guiding light or principle, will show him the right way. This way is the way to becoming a self. Every religion or life philosophy, has this structure of transcendentality: Even if it does not endorse the existence of an other-worldly being, it proposes a way of life that is wholesome. Even if it makes no claims to universal applicability, it still entails a world-view that fundamentally cannot be justified totally on rational grounds. The way to becoming a self looks necessarily looks towards the meta-physical for a coherence and a grounding in meaning of the self. Without this tension, the self is doomed to despair, as Kierkegaard sets out in *The Sickness unto Death* (1849/1989). The faith involved in undecidable decisions involves this great tension that cannot be reduced. Everything that is of the utmost importance to an individual is characterised by this tension, where the individual always stands in relation to something that promises a value, a goodness, or a wholesomeness (in Afrikaans: “heilsaamheid”), while that something manifests in history always in a concrete, historical, incomplete and fallible form, so that its promises have to be *believed*.



The synthesis between Kierkegaard and Derrida entails a synthesis where the concepts faith and ethics meet and interact with one another in a complex manner. In doing so, the synthesis binds together the issues of the individual's ultimate concern and the systems of meaning of which he is a participant. From the synthesis, it becomes clear that what lies at the bottom of all meaning and knowledge is something that no person can reason out. Meaning does not lie somewhere in the universal, but within the unknown that each person can only believe in. Furthermore, to interpret something as meaningful for his/her life, thereby assigning a specific meaning to it, is to fix the meaning thereof and to simultaneously exclude other meanings it may have in a system of signs.

#### *The argument*

On the basis of this exposition, the individual whose life is characterized by existential meaning-in-life can be described as someone who is aware that it is he/she that *decided*, not on rational grounds but by faith, to interpret "something" (in his life) as that which gives meaning to his life. Furthermore, this awareness of the groundlessness of his decision is accompanied by the realization that by assigning his specific meaning to a "something", he/she is marginalizing other possible meanings that other people may attribute to that "something". The individual characterized by existential meaning-in-life will therefore be aware that the discourses and ideologies he/she participates in are by no means naturally given or rationally justifiable. It follows that he/she will also be aware of the possibility and equal validity of other discourses. Therefore, in so far as he/she participates in discourses and ideologies that promote racial prejudice, the awareness of these will significantly undermine their workings, as their function is to promote ignorance of the social basis of racial inequality and stereotyping.

#### **2.1.4.2. The argument from the theories of May and Frankl**

In May's theory, existential meaning-in-life is accompanied by a normal existential anxiety. The individual, aware of the freedom and responsibility of his/her own meaningful existence, experiences anxiety in the face of the many possibilities for new being that lie before him/her (Bauman & Waldo, 1998; May, 1958). Frankl

(1969) and May (1958) agree that this anxiety should not be avoided. For Frank (1969), this avoidance leads to homeostasis, which prohibits individuals to reach beyond themselves to meaning. This, then, results in an experience of meaninglessness. Similarly, May holds that avoiding normal existential anxiety results in neurotic anxiety, a feature of inauthentic living (Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003; May 1958).

Taking the conceptualization of racial prejudice into account, the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice becomes clearer. As discussed, racial prejudice is considered to entail a selective processing of information that is consistent with the prejudiced beliefs. Therefore, where (negative) ideas about certain races stand firm even in the face of invalidating evidence, racial prejudice is involved. In the face of evidence that disconfirms these beliefs, individuals experience anxiety: The evidence that disconfirms these beliefs would imply that the beliefs that have helped them to orientate themselves in the world are invalid, and have to be relinquished. The individual is therefore confronted with new possibilities to view the world. These possibilities correspond to new ways of being in the world. From an existential background, the individual can choose to accept this anxiety, or to avoid it. The individual that does not confront these new possibilities for being will restrict his/her ability to live meaningfully. On the other hand, the individual who accepts this new freedom is living authentically. Therefore, the individual who clings to a racially prejudiced belief in spite of invalidating evidence can not only be guilty of racial prejudice, but also of living inauthentically. Therefore, there is a negative relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice: The individual who clings to racially prejudiced ideas in the face of disconfirming evidence, avoids confronting new possibilities of being in the world, and therefore restricts his/her ability to live meaningfully and authentically.

## **2.2. Empirical findings**

In light of the definition given to existential meaning-in-life in terms of its six aspects, as discussed in the theoretical overview, this section will report empirical findings that relate each of these aspects to racial prejudice. Furthermore, empirical findings that relate the aspects to each other will be discussed, thereby examining the empirical

support for the proposed structure of existential meaning-in-life. Finally, gender differences on all the constructs (the six aspects of existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice) will be discussed.

### **2.2.1. The relationship between self-transcendence and racial prejudice**

No studies could be found that directly relate self-transcendence and racial prejudice. However, the spiritual quality of self-transcendence, as discussed in the theoretical overview, should be taken into account.

In a cross-national study by Scheepers, Gijbets and Hello (2002), it was found that spiritual experience in religion was associated with a dissociation from prejudice against ethnic minorities. Saroglou (2002) found that spirituality was associated with low closed-mindedness. Furthermore, a religious orientation characterized by existential questioning and the acceptance of the lack of readily available answers (which is consistent with the exposition of self-transcendence set out in the theoretical overview) was found to correlate negatively with authoritarianism (Belcher, 1995). Authoritarianism has been found to be a reliable indicator of racial prejudice (Altemeyer in Duriez, 2004). Concerning another type of prejudice, namely prejudice against homosexuals, Basset, et al. (2005) report that a spiritual intervention reduced prejudices against homosexual persons, and enabled them to see the value of homosexual persons. Furthermore, Nidich et al. (2005) found that transcendental meditation, which positively influences spirituality, had a positive effect on intellectual abilities in a sample of older people. This is a significant finding for the present study, if the association between levels of tolerance and intellectual ability (Guthrie, 1997) is taken into account.

Related to the issue of racial prejudice, and prejudice in general, is forgiveness of past transgressions. According to McCullough (2001), forgiveness entails positive attributions of the offender, therefore not allowing past offences to shape and bias present attributions. Forgiveness can come into play in racial relations where contact between groups can comprise offences (McCullough, 2001). In this regard, there is empirical evidence for the relationship between spirituality and forgiveness (McCullough & Worthington in McCullough, 2001). Furthermore, in a study that

investigated the positive impact of forgiveness on health, spirituality was found to mediate the effect of forgiveness on health (Lawler et al., 2005).

### **2.2.2. The relationship between non-conformity and racial prejudice**

Several studies support the relationship between conformity and racial prejudice. Castelli, Arcuri and Zogmeister (2003) found that subtle conformity to individuals who stereotype others was related to prejudice level. This is consistent with a study by Duckitt, Wagner, Du Plessis and Birum (2002), where social conformity was related to authoritarianism in a sample of American and White Afrikaner students, authoritarianism being an indicator of racial prejudice. Similarly, Sniderman, Northrup, Fletcher, Russel and Tetlock (1993), found that the tendency of Quebecers to hold more negative views of Jews than other Canadians can be attributed to the high value placed on conformity in Quebec. Stones, Heaven and Bester (1997) found that conformity, together with authoritarian behaviour and prejudiced attitudes predicted negative attitudes against the ANC-government in a sample of Afrikaans speaking South Africans.

In contrast, a study by Duckitt (1994) did not find any significant relationship between conformity and racial attitudes when controlled for authoritarianism. Although perceived normative pressure was related to prejudice, this relationship did not vary between individual's scores conformity measures, indicating that it is unlikely that conformity underlies the relationship between perceived normative pressures and racial attitudes. However, the study also found small, though significant relationships between conformity measures and the amount of deviation from the mean score on racial attitudes. Therefore, conforming individual's were more likely to hold attitudes closer to the group norm, while non-conforming individuals were more likely to have more extreme attitudes. Thus, the relationship between conformity and racial attitudes may depend on what the group norm is.

### **2.2.3. The relationship between self-reflectivity and racial prejudice**

Although most interventions regarding racial prejudice involve exercises that encourage self-reflectivity (Papell & Skolnik in Millstein, 1997), few studies have

empirically studied the relationship. A study by Trepagnier (2002) has shown that awareness of own prejudice can decrease awareness. In a study investigating the consistency between implicit and explicit attitude measures, Hoffmann, Gschwender and Schmitt (2005) found that individuals with high self-awareness showed greater adjustment of their explicit attitudes. These findings suggest that individuals high in self-awareness can suppress implicit attitudes in order not to express them or act on them. Therefore, in the realm of interpersonal contact, highly self-aware individuals will exhibit less prejudiced action or discourse. Furthermore, in a qualitative study by Willow (2003), self-reflectivity emerged as a theme in interviews with individuals who were willing to take part in interracial dialogue.

In a racism course taught to students, exercises in self-awareness led to questioning of assumptions regarding race (Millstein, 1997). These findings are similar to those found by Garcia and Van Soest (in Millstein, 1997). Similarly, Gay and Kirkland (2003) argue for the need to train teachers in self-reflectivity in order to equip them for multicultural situations.

#### **2.2.4. The relationship between empathy and racial prejudice**

Several studies suggest a relationship between empathy and racial prejudice. Burkard and Knox (2004) found that therapists that scored high in the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, a scale measuring subtle racism, scored lower in empathy. Similarly, a study by Rhee-Worobec (2000) found that dispositional empathy was related to racism. In an Australian study, negative attitudes against indigenous Australians was predicted by low empathy for that group (Pederson, Beven, Walker & Griffiths, 2004). Furthermore, the induction of empathy was found to reduce prejudice against members of the out-group (Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Stephan & Finlay, 1999). On a discursive level, Johnson (2005) argues that discourses that foreclose empathy towards a certain group facilitates the denial that discrimination against that group exists.

Karniol and Shomroni (1999) found that individuals that scored higher on empathy measures had more sophisticated methods of predicting other people's likely thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, it was shown that the closer fit into a typical category, the

less sophisticated the methods of prediction need to be. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest from these findings that individuals higher in empathy will be better equipped to predict the thoughts and feelings of those who do not conform to typical categories.

Regarding perspective taking, which is also considered an aspect of empathy, Vescio, Sechrist and Paolucci (2003) found that perspective taking improved relations with members of the out-group, irrespective of the extent to which stereotypes of that group were endorsed. Similarly, Galinsky and Moskowitz (2000) found that perspective taking led to a decrease in prejudice.

There are also studies that support a relationship between empathy and forgiveness. Forgiveness, as was discussed in the section on empirical findings regarding the relationship between self-transcendence and racial prejudice, can be seen to have a relationship with racial prejudice. McCullough, et al. (1998) found that empathy was associated with forgiveness. Furthermore, it has been found that empathy impacts positively on the relationship between receiving an apology and forgiving the offender (McCullough & Rachal, 1997).

### **2.2.5. The relationship between values and racial prejudice**

Relatively few studies empirically investigate the relationship between specific values and racial prejudice. The findings that are available suggest a complex and nuanced relationship between specific values and racial prejudice. It has been found that individuals who value conformity to social norms and conservatism are higher in racial prejudice (Castelli, Arcuri & Zogmeister, 2003; Duckitt, Wagner, Du Plessis & Birum, 2002; Hurwitz and Peffley, 1993; Stones, Heaven & Bester, 1997). On the other hand, a study by Wyer (1998), found that the activation of individualistic values seemed to increase the access to racial stereotypes. However, the valuing of individual differences and the accompanying democratic values is positively related to tolerance (Mondak & Hurwitz, 1998). These findings suggest that valuing social harmony within the context of differences seems to be the value orientation most favourably related to tolerance.

Kinder and Sears (in Crandall, 1994) have found that adherence to Protestant work ethic values are associated with symbolic racism. According to this, inequalities are justified by the explanation that the people of the other group do not adhere to work ethic values. This points to a relationship between perceived difference in values and prejudice. In this regard, Dunbar, Saiz, Stela and Saez (2000) found that perceived in-group/ out-group value dissimilarity predicted racial stereotyping.

### **2.2.6. The relationship between experience of meaning-in-life and racial prejudice**

Although both May and Maslow (in Hergenhahn & Olsen, 2003) characterize individuals high in meaning-in-life as tolerant, democratic and involved in value systems that bind all people together, not much empirical research has been done on the relationship between experience of meaning-in-life and racial prejudice. However, there are recent research findings that suggest that a relationship between these two constructs exist.

In an empirical study of wisdom in women, both meaning-in-life and tolerance were found to be associated with wise women (Helson & Srivastava, 2002). A study by Niemand (2004) found a significant negative correlation in women between scores on the Purpose-in-Life Test (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969), a test designed to measure meaning-in-life, and the Subtle Racism Scale (Duckitt, 1991). This result, however, was not found in men.

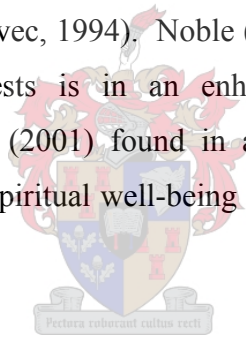
Furthermore, Elata and Priel (1989) found tolerance for ambiguity and contradiction to be associated with the ability to experience meaning in paradox. The findings of this study in particular correspond closely with the relevant theory discussed in the present study, where racial prejudice is associated with the inability to accept exceptions to a category and the accompanying ambiguity, while meaning-in-life is something to be found in an absurd world.



### 2.2.7. Empirical evidence for structure of existential meaning-in-life

There are several studies that support the relationship between self-transcendence or spirituality and the other aspects of existential meaning-in-life. Saroglou, Delpierre and Dernelle (2004) found an association between limited self-transcendence and values that favour conformity.

In a study investigating aged individuals that have gone through a major life crisis, self-reflection is described as a method of coping with these crises. The resulting changes in their lives expressed a greater focus on faith, spirituality and finding meaning-in-life (McCaughey, 2004). Similarly, in investigating the process of healing through reflection, spirituality emerged as a theme of healing (Thorpe & Barsky, 2001). Furthermore, it was found that near death experiences, which are often accompanied by intense spiritual experiences, often lead to an increase in self-awareness and empathy (MacHovec, 1994). Noble (2000) found that one of the areas where spiritual growth manifests is in an enhanced feeling of empathy and compassion for others. Maciak (2001) found in a study of counsellors receiving training in empathy that higher spiritual well-being correlated with higher empathetic abilities.



In the study of McCaughey cited above (2004), values that accompanied the new spiritual approach to life included the belief that life is precious, while material possessions were deemed of lesser value. Wilson (2005) found that a post-materialist orientation (which is characterized by a transcendence of material concerns) was related to values of self-direction and universalism. Furthermore, Spini and Doise (1998) found that self-transcendental values were associated with an agreement with human rights and applied personal involvement in human rights.

Many studies report a positive relationship between spirituality or self-transcendence and the experience of meaning-in-life (Eggers, 2003; Mahoney & Graci, 1998; Nygren, Jonsén, Gustafson, Norberg, & Lundman, 2005; Young, Cashwell, & Woolington, 1998). Furthermore, spirituality and experience of meaning-in-life were found to emerge together as themes in qualitative studies (Katsuno, 2003; Westgate,



1996). Also, in a study by MacDonald and Holland (2002), both spirituality and meaning-in-life were found to be negatively related to boredom proneness.

Regarding the relationship between empathy and conformity, Haviland, Sonne and Kowert (2004) have shown that lack of empathy and high social conformity occur in patients that suffer from Alexithymia. Furthermore, empirical studies support a relationship between self-reflectivity and empathy. Joireman, Parrott and Hammersla (2002) found a positive relationship between self-reflection and empathy. In a study by Bengtsson and Johnson (1992), self-reflectivity was related to pro-social behaviour, which was associated with empathy for others. Empathy and self-reflectivity have also been jointly associated with other constructs. Self-reflectivity has been found to mediate the relationship between guilt proneness and empathy (Joireman, 2004) and both empathy and self-reflectivity emerged as themes in those individuals who engage in interracial dialogues (Willow, 2003).

Regarding the relationship between empathy and specific values, it was found that empathy was positively related to post-materialistic values, that refer to values that are not concerned with immediate survival and security (Bekkers, 2005), as well as values of benevolence and universalism (Myyry & Helkama, 2001). It was negatively related to self-enhancement values (Myyry, 2002). Furthermore, Munro, Bore and Powis (2003) related empathy to openness and an orientation towards others.

No studies could be found that directly and empirically study the relationship between empathy and experience of meaning-in-life. However, some empirical findings still suggest the existence of this relationship. Intrinsic religiousness, that has been found to correlate with meaning-in-life (Soderstrom & Wright in Van Wijk, 1995), was found to correlate with high levels of empathy (Mickley, Carson, & Soeken, 1995). Furthermore, growth programmes (Oxenbergh, 1996; Tehrani, 1997), as well as therapy for burn victims (Williams, Reeves, Cox & Call, 2004) has been found to simultaneously enhance both experience of meaning-in-life and empathy.

Empirical studies on specific values have found that conformity is often accompanied by specific values. Conformity has been found to accompany values of tradition and power in authoritarian fathers (Knafo, 2003). Values of tradition, power, and security

have been found to accompany conformity as predictors of unwillingness to out-group contact (Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995). Similarly, Braithwaite (1997) found an association between security value orientations and conformity. Furthermore, Morris (1994) found that autonomy contributed to experience of meaning-in-life in individuals who have made successful transitions in their lives after suicide attempts. Similarly, Barcus (1999) found that both autonomy and experience of meaning-in-life was associated with existential well-being.

Studies that relate self-reflectivity to values rather focus on the role of self-reflectivity in the individual's relationship with his values, rather than examining relations between specific values. Kimmelmeier (2001) found that individuals high in self-reflectivity showed a relationship between attitudes and values, while this was not true for individuals low in self-reflectivity. Shrum and McCarty (1992) found that self-reflective individuals could make better distinctions between values and were more aware of internal dispositions. In research on handedness, Niebauer (2004) found that ambidexterity was associated both with self-reflectivity and the tendency to update beliefs. In addition, Kimmelmeier (2001) also found a relationship between self-reflectivity and a specific value, namely individualism.

Regarding the relationship between self-reflectivity and experience of meaning-in-life, Lin and Bauer-Wu (2003) found that self awareness and experience of meaning-in-life both emerged as themes that characterize psycho-spiritual well-being. Similarly, Hoover (2002) found that self awareness and experience of meaning-in-life emerged as themes that characterize spiritual awareness.

Few recent studies investigate the relationship between specific values and the experience of meaning-in-life. In a study of law and MBA-students, Orange (2003) found that meaning-in-life was associated with family values in this group. Westgate (1996) identifies intrinsic values along with experience of meaning-in-life as aspects of spiritual wellness. Finally, Richards, Owen and Stein (1993) describe a religiously orientated intervention that was associated with a decrease in perfectionism and an increase in experience of meaning-in-life.

### 2.2.8. Gender differences

Several empirical studies suggest gender differences on the aspects of existential meaning-in-life, as well as racial prejudice.

In a sample of trainee counsellors, Bromley (2004) found women to have lower scores on the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale, an indicator of subtle racial prejudice. Coward (1996) found self-transcendence to be higher in women.

Gender differences in empathy are well supported by empirical evidence. Several studies show woman to score higher on empathy measures (Becares & Turner, 2004; Jenkins, Stephens, Chew & Downs, 1992; Karniol & Shomroni, 1999; Rose, 1999). Hatcher, Nadeau, Walsh and Reynolds (1994) found that females have a higher base-line empathy, but that men and women were equally able to develop empathy. Furthermore, empathy was found to be related to marital satisfaction in men, but not in women (Rowan, Compton & Rust, 1995).

In a study by Alanazi (2001), high school and university women were found to score significantly higher on measures of private self-consciousness, of which self-reflectivity is a component. Furthermore, in a dated study, loneliness was found to relate to self-consciousness in men only (Moroi, 1985).

Studies concerning gender differences in specific values and meaning-in-life are similarly dated. Shanker, Clark and Asthana (1979) found men to score higher on political and economic values, while women scored higher on aesthetic values. Furthermore, while Yalom (1980) reports findings that men score higher on the Purpose in Life Test, an indicator of experience of meaning-in-life, Van Wijk (1995) reports opposite findings. In a study by Niemand (2004), a relationship between racial prejudice and meaning-in-life in women, but not in men. In this study, it was speculated that the absence of this relation in men could be explained by direct experience of affirmative policies. A negative attitude towards the latter is taken as an indication of subtle racial prejudice.

### 2.2.9. Summary of empirical findings

In summary, it seems that there is support for the relationship between each of the aspects of existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice. Furthermore, several findings support the relationship between the aspects of existential meaning-in-life, with the exception of non-conformity: The empirical evidence that relates non-conformity to the other aspects is weak, if not absent. Gender differences on the constructs were also found.

### 2.3. Research hypotheses

In the light of the literature reviewed, in which the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice, as well as the structure of existential meaning-in-life were supported by theory and empirical findings, the following hypotheses are made:

- 1) Scores on the measures of the aspects of existential meaning-in-life will relate to each other in such a way that principal components analysis will reveal underlying dimensions that account for a large proportion of the total variance of the measures.
- 2) Scores on these underlying dimensions will predict scores on the measures of racial prejudice.
- 3) In the light of the study by Niemand (2004), it is expected that men and women will differ in the relationship between dimensions of existential meaning-in-life and the measure of racial prejudice that concerns resistance against affirmative policies.

## CHAPTER 3

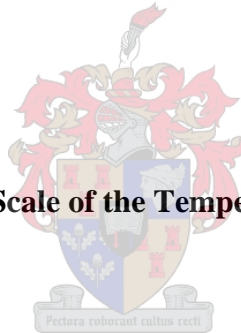
### METHOD

#### 3.1. Participants

A sample of students was drawn on an ad hoc-basis from the student population of Stellenbosch University. As the samples were drawn in class situations, the sample is mainly limited to undergraduate students. A total of 149 students participated in the study. The average age of the sample was regarded to be representative of the population of students ( $\bar{X}=21.44$ ). The sample consisted out of 95 women and 54 men. Although women are the majority of the student population, the gender ratio in this sample cannot be considered to be very representative. In terms of race distribution, however, the sample is considered to be roughly representative, 109 being white, 39 being coloured, and 1 black.

#### 3.2. Measuring instruments

##### 3.2.1. The Self Transcendence Scale of the Temperament and Character Inventory



The Temperament and Character Inventory (henceforth TCI) was standardised on 300 adults, 150 men and 150 women, who were selected to be representative of the population of St. Louis (Cloninger, Svrakic, & Przybeck, 1993). The items of the Self-Transcendence Scale covers three themes which constitute the construct (Cloninger et al., 1993). Firstly, the items cover “self-forgetfulness”. This refers to the total immersion in a specific cause or experience. Secondly, the items cover “transpersonal identification”. This refers to the experience of identification and unification with other people, a cause, or a higher reality. Thirdly, the items cover “spiritual acceptance”, referring to the acceptance of that which cannot be known by analytical reason.

Content validity was established by the authors based on descriptions from transpersonal psychology (Cloninger et al., 1993). Factor analysis of the Character-

section of the TCI revealed three factors. All the items relating to self-transcendence loaded highly on one factor, thereby supporting the construct validity of the Self Transcendence Scale. The TCI has been studied extensively in various cultures (Svrakic et al., 2002), where the abovementioned factor structure was replicated.

The moderate correlation between scores on the Self Transcendence Scale and symptoms of schizotypal and paranoid personality disorders {respectively  $N(109)$ ,  $r(108) = .31$ ,  $p < .001$  and  $N(109)$ ,  $r(108) = .28$ ,  $p < .05$ } supports the concurrent validity of the scale, as it indicates the imaginative thinking (present in the extreme in personality disorders) that accompanies self-transcendence (Svrakic et al., 2002). Internal reliability was determined at .84 (Cloninger et al., 1993). The scale is attached as Addendum A.

Some of the other studies that have used the TCI (and the Self Transcendence Scale) will now be discussed in order to gain a more complete picture of the construct that is measured by the Self Transcendence Scale. Svrakic, Whitehead, Przybeck and Cloninger (in Cloninger et al., 1993) found that self-transcendence was generally lower in psychiatric inpatients than in the general population, suggesting that self-transcendence is a positive characteristic of personality. Furthermore, Ha et al. (2004) found that self-transcendence increased with age in healthy women, while there was no such increase in women with borderline personality disorder. Most of the research done with the TCI, however, has been done on psychiatric inpatients, and the findings that will now be presented have to be interpreted in this context. Patients with dental anxiety have been found to score higher on self-transcendence than healthy individuals (Bergdal & Bergdal, 2003) indicating that they are prone to magical thinking and brief dissociative periods. Marteinsdottir, Tillfors, Furmark, Anderberg and Ekselius (2003) found that individuals with social phobia scored significantly lower on self-transcendence than healthy individuals. Furthermore, Luty, Joyce, Mulder, Sullivan and McKenzie (1998) found that depressed patients that scored high on grief measures scored higher on self-transcendence than other depressed patients, suggesting that self-transcendence is associated with the ability to cope with loss.

### 3.2.2. Conformity Scale

The Conformity Scale (Mehrabian & Stefl, 1995) measures the tendency to follow others' behaviour and identify with them. To ensure content validity, items were generated to cover the following themes: Following a dominant other, following group tendencies, trusting another's advice, and being easily convinced. Factor analysis revealed only one factor, thereby supporting construct validity. Regarding concurrent validity, a significant negative correlation with trait dominance was found,  $N(184)$ ,  $r(183) = -.68$ ,  $p < .05$ . Internal reliability was determined at .77 (Mehrabian & Stefl, 1995). In a study by Mehrabian (1997), sensitivity to rejection was found to be similarly related to trait dominance, suggesting a relationship between sensitivity to rejection and conformity. The scale is attached as Addendum B.

### 3.2.3. The Self-Reflectivity Scale of the Self-Consciousness Scale

Originally, the Self-Consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier & Buss, 1975) was divided into three subscales, the Private Self-Consciousness Scale, the Public Self-Consciousness Scale, and the Social Anxiety Scale. However, Burnkrant and Page (1984) have proposed that the Private Self-Consciousness Scale be subdivided into a Self-Reflectivity Scale and an Internal State Awareness Scale. Using confirmatory factor analysis, the two models were compared. The unidimensional model (where Private Self-Consciousness remains undivided), the model was found not to fit the data adequately ( $\chi^2(35) = 145.00$ ,  $p = .00$ ). According to Burnkrant and Page (1984) the two factor model (where Private Self Consciousness is divided into Self-Reflectivity and Internal State Awareness) approached an acceptable fit ( $\chi^2(19) = 31.01$ ,  $p = .04$ ), thereby supporting construct validity. Discriminant validity is supported by correlations between the factors of Private Self-Consciousness that are significantly smaller than 1.00 ( $p < .01$ ). These results were confirmed in the same study on another sample of 189 students. For the Private Self-Consciousness Scale, concurrent validity was supported by a significant correlation with the Guilford-Zimmerman Thoughtfulness Scale,  $N(179)$ ,  $r(178) = .48$ ,  $p < .01$ , and the Self-Monitoring Scale,  $N(146)$ ,  $r(145) = .27$ ,  $p < .01$  (Turner, Carver, Sheier & Ickes,



1978). Regarding specifically the Self-Reflectivity Scale, no studies could be found that investigate its concurrent validity in relations to variables that are conceptually related, except for studies that investigate the relationship between Self-Reflectivity and other subscales of the Self-Consciousness Scale. In this regard, Burnkrant and Page (1984) found that the Self-Reflectivity Scale was significantly correlated with the Internal State Awareness Scale,  $N(360)$ ,  $r(359) = .51$ ,  $p < .05$ . Nysted and Ljungberg (2002) also report a significant correlation between these two scales,  $N(393)$ ,  $r(392) = .35$ ,  $p < .01$ . The same study also found the Self-Reflectivity Scale to be significantly correlated with the Style Consciousness Scale,  $N(393)$ ,  $r(392) = .22$ ,  $p < .01$ . Internal reliability was determined at .76 (Nysted & Ljunberg, 2002). The scale is attached as Addendum C.

### 3.2.4. The Interpersonal Reactivity Index

The items of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (henceforth IRI) was generated to cover two aspects of empathy: The cognitive aspect and the emotional aspect (Davis, 1980). Factor analysis of these items revealed four factors: Fantasy, referring to the person's ability to experience himself in the position of a fictional character; Perspective Taking, referring to the person's ability to take in the position of perspective of another person; Empathic Concern, referring to the experience of feelings of sympathy; finally, Personal Distress, referring to the level of the person's distress at observing another person's negative experience.

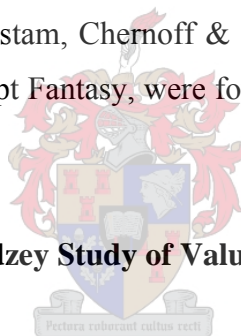
The IRI was standardised on 1161 students, 579 men and 582 women. For men, internal reliability for the Fantasy, Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern and Personal Distress subscales was determined at respectively .78, .75, .72, and .78. For women, internal reliability for the Fantasy, Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern and Personal Distress subscales was determined at respectively .75, .78., .70., and .78. Test-retest reliability for men in the respective subscales was .79, .61, .72, and .68. For women, test-retest reliability in the respective subscales was .81, .62, .70, and .76 (Davis, 1980).

Concurrent validity (Davis, 1983) is supported by a significant correlation between the Perspective Taking subscale and the Hogan Empathy Scale,  $N(429)$ ,  $r(428) = .40$ ,



$p < .05$ . The Hogan Empathy Scale is a measure of the cognitive aspects of empathy. Empathic Concern and Fantasy correlated significantly with the Emotional Empathy Scale {respectively  $N(429)$ ,  $r(428) = .60$ ,  $p < .05$  and  $N(429)$ ,  $r(428) = .52$ ,  $p < .05$ }. Personal Distress correlated significantly with the Emotionality Scale { $N(429)$ ,  $r(428) = -.41$ ,  $p < .05$  for men and  $N(429)$   $r(428) = -.54$ ,  $p < .05$  for women}. The scale is attached as Addendum D.

The following studies shed further light on the constructs measured by the IRI. In a study by Joireman, Parrot and Hammersla (2002), self-esteem was found to be positively correlated with empathic concern and perspective taking, and negatively correlated with personal distress. Honda and Nihei (2003) found that persons who can provide more intelligible descriptions of routes have higher empathic concern. Furthermore, empathic concern was found to be related to environmental concern (Wilson, 2003). Empathic concern and perspective taking was found to be positively related to total forgiveness (Konstam, Chernoff & Deveney, 2001) and all scores on all the subscales of the IRI, except Fantasy, were found to predict voluntarism (Unger & Thumuluri, 1997).



### **3.2.5. The Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values**

The Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values (henceforth SOV) measures the importance of six basic interests or motivations in a person (Allport, Vernon, Lindzey, 1960). These six areas are the following: The theoretical, the economical, the aesthetic, the social, the political and the religious.

Theoretical values place importance on discovering the truth. Emphasis is placed on the rational and the intellectual. Economical values place importance on usefulness and practicality. These values are also associated with interest in production, consumption and the accumulation of material wealth. In aesthetic values, harmony, form, grace and symmetry are valued. Social values place importance on love for other people. In this regard, it is especially the altruistic or philanthropic aspect of love that is relevant. In political values, power is of interest. Personal power, influence and status is of importance. Religious values place importance on unity and

wholeness. These values relate to the mystical and an embracing of totality (Van Wijk, 1995).

Split half reliability was determined at .90 (Allport et al., 1960). Test-retest reliability figures between .77 and .93 have been found (Anastasi in Steel, 1979). The validity of the scale had also been determined (Anastasi in Steel, 1979) by demonstrating how the scale could discriminate between different occupations and academic disciplines. More recently, there have been similar findings regarding occupation (Hojat, 1998) and academic discipline (Kopelman, Prottas & Tatum, 2004) where the SOV's discriminatory function was evaluated. In this study, the scale as it was adapted by Steel (1979) was used. Where the initial version made participants choose for one value to the exclusion of others, this version requires participants to rate the importance of values independent of their ratings of other values. This facilitates the meaningful use of statistical procedures on the data (Steel, 1979). The scale is attached as Addendum E.

The following studies shed further light on the constructs measured by the SOV. Individuals high in environmental concern have been found to score higher on social values, and lower on economical and political values (Shean & Shei, 1995). The SOV has also been found to discriminate between home makers and career wives, home makers scoring higher on religious values, while career women scored higher on political values (Pirnot & Dustin, 1986).

### **3.2.6. The Purpose in Life Test**

The Purpose in Life Test (Crumbaugh & Maholick, 1969) attempts to measure experience of meaning-in-life. The whole scale consists of three parts, of which only the first part is used in this study. Crumbaugh and Henrion (in Van Wijk, 1995) determined split-half reliability at .90. Regarding concurrent validity, the Purpose in Life Test (henceforth PIL) has been assessed by Crumbaugh and Maholick (1969) by correlating scores on the PIL with respectively therapists' and ministers' ratings of the degree of purpose and meaning that participants exhibited. The correlation between scores on the PIL and the therapists' ratings was .37. Between the PIL and ministers' ratings, the correlation was .47. The scale is attached as Addendum F.

Further studies that elaborate on the construct measured by this scale will now be discussed. Scores on the PIL have been found to have a positive relationship to measures of hope (Feldman & Snyder, 2005) and happiness (Robak & Griffin, 2000). In a sample of elderly people, experience of meaning-in-life was positively related to subjective well-being, while it was negatively related to death anxiety (Ardelt, 2003). Furthermore, elimination of drug-problems has been associated with an increase in scores on the PIL (Noblejas de la Flor, 1997) while boredom proneness been found to be correlate negatively with scores on the PIL (Weinstein, Xie & Cleanthous, 1995).

### 3.2.7. Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale

The Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (Neville, Lilly, Duran, Lee & Brown, 2000) was used as a measure of racial prejudice. The scale measures awareness of the existence of racism, as well as the belief that all groups have to be treated the same. According to Duckitt (1991), the latter belief represents a subtle form of racism. Carr (in Nevill et al., 2000), argues that colour-blind beliefs entail prejudiced thinking, as the ideologies that underlie such beliefs perpetuate racial discrimination. The scale was standardised on a sample of American students ( $N=302$ ). Of these, 246 were white, 24 black, 10 Asian, and 9 Latin-American. The remainder consisted of participants of unspecified race. The scale consists of three subscales. Subscale A measures ignorance of the existence of inequality. Subscale B measures ignorance of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination, as well as attitudes towards rectification in this regard. Subscale C measures the ignorance of racism and racial conflicts.

Reliability was determined at .68. Concurrent validity was determined by correlations with the Quick Discrimination Index, the Global Belief in a Just World Scale, and the Multidimensional Belief in a Just World Scale. The following significant correlations were found, respectively  $N(145)$ ,  $r(144) = .71$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $N(145)$ ,  $r(144) = .52$ ,  $p < .05$ ;  $N(145)$ ,  $r(144) = .53$ ,  $p < .05$ ; and  $N(145)$ ,  $r(144) = .61$ ,  $p < .05$ . Further support for concurrent validity was found in a study by Burkard and Knox (2004), where it was found that scores on the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (henceforth COBRAS) was associated with lower scores on empathy in counsellors. Furthermore, counsellors

who scored lower on the COBRAS were more likely to attribute responsibility for a problem to African American clients than to European American clients. Discriminant validity was tested when no significant correlation with the Marlowe Crowne Social Desirability Scale was found.

The scale was adapted by the present author to suit the South African context. The term “minority groups” was changed to “marginalized groups” in order to denote a similar meaning in the South African context. The spelling of “color” was changed to the standard English spelling. In a recent study by Niemand (2005), this revised scale was found to be suitably reliable. The scale is attached as Addendum G.

### **3.2.8. Biographical Questionnaire**

A biographical questionnaire was constructed to record participants’ age, gender, race and course. The questionnaire is attached as Addendum H.

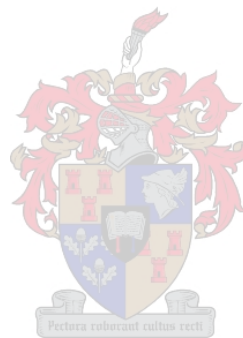
### **3.3. Procedure**

After consent was received from the specific lecturers, sampling was done in class situations. The study was explained in very broad terms to all the possible participants, so as not to bias results. It was made clear that the full explanation of the study will be provided after all the questionnaires had been filled in. Students who were willing to participate were asked to fill in all seven questionnaires. Participants had the choice to fill in the questionnaires in class time, or on their own time. When the questionnaires of the willing participants had been received, the study was explained to them. The study was approved by the ethical committee of Stellenbosch University.

### **3.4. Statistical procedures**

A principal components analysis was carried out on participants’ scores on the six questionnaires measuring the construct existential meaning-in-life. The underlying dimensions that emerged in the process were then entered into a regression model that attempted to predict scores on each of the subscales of the COBRAS. The standard

multiple regression method was used, as the unique contribution of each underlying dimension was of interest for this study. Furthermore, gender differences between scores on the relevant scales and subscales, as well as the underlying dimensions were investigated by means of a t-test or the Mann-Whitney' U, depending on the normality of the distribution of data.



## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

For the sake of clarity in subsequent tables, abbreviations for scales and subscales are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Abbreviations for Scales and Subscales Used*

Scale or subscale	Abbreviation
Self-Forgetfulness subscale of the Self Transcendence Scale	<b>SF</b>
Transpersonal Identification subscale of the Self Transcendence Scale	<b>TI</b>
Spiritual Acceptance subscale of the Self Transcendence Scale	<b>SA</b>
Total score on the Self Transcendence Scale	<b>ST</b>
Conformity Scale	<b>C</b>
Self-Reflectivity Scale	<b>SR</b>
Fantasy subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index	<b>F</b>
Perspective Taking subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index	<b>PT</b>
Empathic Concern subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index	<b>EC</b>
Personal Distress subscale of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index	<b>PD</b>
Total score on the Interpersonal Reactivity Index	<b>IRI</b>
Scientific values on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	<b>Sc</b>
Economic values on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	<b>Econ</b>
Aesthetic values on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	<b>Aes</b>
Social values on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	<b>Soc</b>
Political values on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	<b>Pol</b>
Religious values on the Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values	<b>Relig</b>
The Purpose in Life Test	<b>PIL</b>
Subscale A of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale	<b>COBRAS-A</b>
Subscale B of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale	<b>COBRAS-B</b>
Subscale C of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale	<b>COBRAS-C</b>
Total score on the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale	<b>COBRAS</b>

#### 4. 1. Preliminary analysis of data

Initial data screening revealed that data on all subscales were non-normally distributed, except for the following scales and subscales: The Self Transcendence Scale, the Conformity Scale, Personal Distress, Scientific Values, Social Values, Subscale A of the COBRAS, and the COBRAS. The Shapiro-Wilkes statistics of these variables are given in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Shapiro-Wilkes Statistics of Normally Distributed Scales*

Scale	Shapiro-Wilkes	Sig.
ST	.984	.142
C	.986	.183
PD	.987	.275
Sc	.987	.250
Soc	.991	.524
COBRAS-A	.991	.609
COBRAS	.985	.155

The results of the subsequent principal component analysis can thus not be generalized beyond this sample (Field, 2002). However, for the purpose of summarizing data in order to conduct a regression analysis, the non-normal distribution of data is not problematic. Initial data screening also revealed that scores on some scales were significantly related to only a few other scales. These scales were then excluded of the subsequent analysis. They are: Conformity, Personal Distress, Scientific values, Economic Values, Political values and Religious values. The exclusion of the variables on the SOV were considered to reflect that only certain values have a relationship to existential meaning in life. Conformity had a significant relationship only with Personal Distress  $\{N(149), r(148) = .310, p = .000\}$ . Besides Conformity, Personal Distress had significant relationships with Fantasy  $\{N(149), r(148) = .241, p = .002\}$ , Aesthetic Values  $\{N(149), r(148) = -.172, p = .022\}$ , and Purpose in Life  $\{N(149), r(148) = -.174, p = .020\}$ . This lack of significant relationships suggested that these variables did not relate meaningfully to the

construct of existential meaning in life, and were therefore excluded from the principal components analysis. Total scores on the Self Transcendence Scale and Interpersonal Reactivity Index were also excluded, as they were considered not to contribute meaningfully to the analysis, being merely the sums of their subscales. Also, their inclusion had unacceptable negative effects on sampling adequacy. The scales and subscales included in the principal components therefore were: Self-Forgetfulness, Transpersonal Identification, Spiritual Acceptance, Self-Reflectivity, Fantasy, Perspective Taking, Empathic Concern, Aesthetic values, Social values, and Purpose in Life.

To aid overall interpretation of results, the non-parametric correlations of all the scales used in the principle components analysis were determined. These results are summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Kendell's Tau Correlation Between Scales and Subscales Included in Principal Components Analysis*

	SF	TI	SA	SR	F	EC	PT	Aes	Soc	PIL
SF	-	.287**	.244**	.202**	.277**	.339**	.147*	.078	.190**	-.043
TI		-	.302**	.086	.160**	.224**	.104	.013	.052	.035
SA			-	.121*	.168**	.188**	.143*	.102	.100	.132*
SR				-	.271**	.280**	.175**	.092	.155*	.064
F					-	.420**	.239**	.172**	.235**	.097
EC						-	.349**	.089	.166**	.078
PT							-	.240**	.138*	.158**
Aes								-	.332**	.180**
Soc									-	.185**
PIL										-

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

The determinant of the correlation matrix for the variables included in the principle components analysis was .109 ( $> .00001$ ) indicating acceptable multicollinearity. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin statistic for the variables was .747, and never smaller than .500 for each separate variable, indicating that principle components analysis was appropriate for this data. Also, Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ( $p=.000$ ) indicating adequate relationships between variables.



## 4.2. Extraction, rotation and interpretation of components

Extraction according to Kaiser's criterion (in Field, 2002), Joliffe's criterion (in Field, 2002) and the scree plot, yielded respectively a three-factor, five-factor, and a two-factor solution. The five-factor solution was discarded because the resulting factor solution yielded a very trivial interpretation, the factors corresponding to the six aspects of existential meaning in life (excluding conformism) as discussed earlier. The two-factor solution yielded factors that explained less variance than the three-factor solution, and that were not as easily interpretable. Furthermore, the scree plot was considered not as reliable a criterion in such a relatively small sample. Thus there was decided on the three-factor solution.

Both orthogonal and oblique rotations were considered in deciding on the most suitable factor solution. An oblique rotation was preferred on the theoretical grounds that the factors, assumed to be all measures of different aspects of existential meaning-in-life, were likely to be related to each other. This was supported by the results: The component transformation matrix (shown in Table 4) for the orthogonal rotation was not symmetrical. The component correlation matrix for the oblique rotation showed substantial correlations between the first and second factor, as well as between the first and the third factor. This indicates an interrelation between some of the factors, providing further grounds for an oblique rotation. The component correlation matrix is shown in Table 5.

**Table 4**

*Component Transformation Matrix for Orthogonal Rotation*

Component	1	2	3
1	.743	.503	.440
2	-.156	.771	-.617
3	-.650	.390	.652

**Table 5**

*Component Correlation Matrix for Oblique Rotation*

Component	1	2	3
1	1.000	.290	.292
2	.290	1.000	.098
3	.292	.098	1.000

In the factor solution thus obtained, Self-Forgetfulness, Self-Reflectivity, Fantasy, Perspective Taking and Empathic Concern loaded highly onto the first component. Aesthetic and Social Values, as well as Purpose in Life loaded highly on the second component, while Self-Forgetfulness, Transpersonal Identification and Spiritual Acceptance loaded highly on the third component. The component solution is given in Table 6, with loadings higher than .4 in bold.

**Table 6**  
*Three-Component Solution After Oblique Rotation*

Scale	Component		
	1	2	3
SF	<b>.499</b>	-.155	<b>.457</b>
TI	.067	-.091	<b>.806</b>
SA	-.115	.205	<b>.822</b>
SR	<b>.708</b>	-.021	-.094
F	<b>.737</b>	.065	.033
EC	<b>.771</b>	.015	.091
PT	<b>.487</b>	.272	-.033
Aes	.091	<b>.686</b>	-.040
Soc	.201	<b>.683</b>	.062
PIL	-.114	<b>.797</b>	.057

This solution explains 57.32% of variance in the data, the three factors accounting for respectively 32.59%, 14.18%, and 10.55% of variance before factor rotation. After oblique rotation, they accounted for respectively 27.19%, 20.56%, and 19.13%. The amount of variance accounted for by this component solution in each variable, indicated by the communalities after extraction, is shown in Table 7.

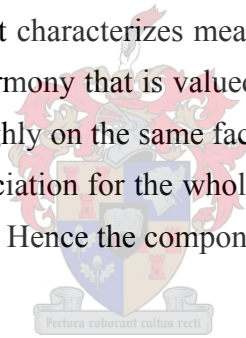
**Table 7**  
*Communalities after extraction*

Scale	Communality
SF	.557
TI	.677
SA	.696
SR	.463
F	.591
EC	.651
PT	.378
Aes	.509
Soc	.605
PIL	.604

An underlying theme in all the variables loading highly on the first component (Self-Forgetfulness, Self-Reflectivity, Fantasy, Perspective Taking and Empathic Concern)

is the ability to stand outside oneself in a certain sense. All the empathy variables represent the ability, whether cognitive or emotional, to place oneself away from one's own position, into another's position. Self-reflectivity involves (amongst other things) the ability to stand away from oneself, and to treat oneself as an object for investigation. Self-forgetfulness implies the ability to experience phenomena in a manner (seemingly) absolved from one's personal, concrete position in time and space, almost as if it is not just that particular person having the experience. Therefore it seems that this component can be denoted by the concept "Self-Absolution"

Aesthetic values, Social values, and Purpose-in-life loaded highly on the second factor. These three variables could all be subsumed under meaning-in-life, as meaning-in-life entails an experience of coherence to one's life, as well as real love for others (Frankl, 1987). However, to distinguish this factor from the Purpose-in-life variable, another definition was sought. Purpose-in-life implies an experience of a rich and meaningful existence, while Social values indicate the valuing of other's lives. The experience of coherence that characterizes meaning-in-life (or purpose-in-life) is mirrored in the experience of harmony that is valued in the variable Aesthetic values. Since the three variables load highly on the same factor, an underlying theme emerges that is characterized by an appreciation for the wholeness and coherence of existence, including the existence of others. Hence the component can be denoted by the concept "Life Appreciation".



Self-Forgetfulness, Transpersonal Identification and Spiritual Acceptance loaded highly on the third variable. In this case, the factor obviously represents Self-Transcendence. To distinguish it from scores on the Self Transcendence Scale, it will here be labelled as "Existential Self-Transcendence". Table 8 shows the abbreviations that will be used for these components.

**Table 8**

*Abbreviations for the Extracted Components*

Component	Abbreviation
Self-Absolution	S-Ab
Life Appreciation	LA
Existential Self-Transcendence	EST

### 4.3. Regression analyses

Self-Absolution, Life Appreciation and Self-Transcendence were used in regression analyses to predict Subscales A, B, C. Total scores on the COBRAS were not included in a regression analysis, as scores on this scale were bounded. On inspection of the plots of standardised predicted values against standardised residual values for each outcome variable, it appears as if assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity are met. Histograms of residuals also appear to show normally distributed errors. The assumption of independence is met, because all the values of the outcome variable were collected from separate participants. All variables in the analyses had non-zero variance, were continuous, unbounded and measured at the interval level. Based on the literature review, it is assumed that no external variables that could predict the respective outcome variables correlate well with the predictor variables. Furthermore the Durbin-Watson statistic for the predictor variables in relation to each outcome variable was acceptable (1.677, 1.850, and 1.971 for respectively scores on Subscale A, B, and C of the COBRAS). The VIF statistics, where more than one predictor variable was retained, were well below 10, indicating that the assumption of no perfect multicollinearity was met. Likewise, Cook's distance was much smaller than one in all cases (0.007, 0.008, and 0.009 for the regression model in relation to respectively Subscale A, B and C of the COBRAS), suggesting the absence of problematic influential cases.

Using standard multiple regression, only Self-Absolution made a significant contribution to predicting scores on Subscale A of the COBRAS. Furthermore, the zero-order correlations of the other variables were small, indicating that their small their insignificant contributions to prediction were not only due to covariance. The zero-order, part and partial correlations are given in Table 9. For this reason, Self-Absolution was entered on its own, significantly predicting scores on Subscale A of the COBRAS. The summary of the model, including the Durbin-Watson statistic, is given in Table 10.

**Table 9**

*Zero-Order, Part and Partial Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Subscale A of the COBRAS*

	Zero-Order	Partial	Part
S-Ab	-.260	-.231	-.229
LA	-.123	-.051	-.050
EST	-.066	.012	-.011

**Table 10**

*Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale A of the COBRAS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F	t	p	Durbin-Watson
S-Ab	.260	.068	-.260	10.021	-3.166	.002	1.684

Only Life Appreciation made a significant contribution to the prediction of scores on Subscale B of the COBRAS. Once again, the zero-order correlations of the other predictor variables was small, indicating that their small their insignificant contributions to prediction were not only due to covariance. The zero-order, part and partial correlations are given in Table 11.

**Table 11**

*Zero-Order, Part and Partial Correlations Between Predictor Variables and Subscale B of the COBRAS*

	Zero-Order	Partial	Part
S-Ab	.020	-.034	-.033
LA	.214	.218	.218
EST	-.022	-.033	-.033

Therefore, Life Appreciation was entered on its own, significantly predicting scores on Subscale B of the COBRAS ( $\beta = .214$ ,  $p = .011$ ). The summary of the model, including the Durbin-Watson statistic, is given in Table 12.

**Table 12***Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale B of the COBRAS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F	t	p	Durbin-Watson
LA	.214	.046	.214	6.628	2.575	.011	1.855

All the predictor variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of scores on Subscale C of the COBRAS ( $\beta = -.405, p = .000$ ;  $\beta = -.214, p = .007$ ; and  $\beta = .162, p = .039$  for respectively Self-Absolution, Life Appreciation and Existential Self-Transcendence). The zero-order correlations are also of importance here, as will become apparent in the discussion of results. The individual contributions of each predictor variable, including the standardised  $\beta$ -coefficients, zero-order, part and partial correlations, will be summarised in Table 13, along with the VIF statistic. The summary of the model is given in Table 14.

**Table 13***Summary of Statistics of the Individual Contributions of Predictor Variables of Subscale C of the COBRAS*

Predictor	$\beta$	t	p	Correlations			VIF
				Zero-Order	Partial	Part	
S-Ab	-.405	-5.015	.000	-.419	-.393	-.372	1.182
LA	-.214	-2.755	.007	-.315	-.204	-.204	1.092
EST	.162	2.087	.037	.023	.175	.155	1.094

**Table 14***Summary of Regression Model Predicting Subscale C of the COBRAS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p	Durbin-Watson
S-Ab, LA, EST	.490	.240	14.561	.000	1.971

Stepwise multiple regression was carried out with the same variables. In each case, the same variables were retained as when the standard method was used.

#### 4.4. Gender differences

Since previous studies have found gender differences on variables relevant to this study, the gender differences on the various measures in this study were investigated. Except for Social values, where data was parametric and an independent t-test used, all differences between genders were investigated using the Mann-Whitney test.

Significant differences were found on Self-Forgetfulness, Transpersonal Identification, Self-Reflectivity and Subscale B of the COBRAS. Women scored higher on all these measures excepts for Subscale B, where men scored higher. A gender difference was also found on Existential Self-Transcendence. These findings are summarised in Table 15.

**Table 15**

*Mann-Whitney Statistics of Gender Differences*

Scale	Mean Rank		Mann-Whitney U	p
	Women	Men		
SF	81.78	63.07	1921.00	.01*
TI	81.23	64.04	1973.00	.02*
SR	78.77	63.68	1921.50	.04*
COBRAS B	63.79	84.67	1500.00	.00**
EST	81.71	63.20	1928.00	.01*

\*  $p < .05$

\*\*  $p < .01$

Gender differences in the prediction of scores on the different subscales of the COBRAS were also investigated. For women, none of the predictor variables predicted scores on Subscales A of the COBRAS significantly. For men, Self-Absolution ( $\beta = -.499, p = .000$ ) and Life Appreciation ( $\beta = -.294, p = .021$ ) were retained in a model that significantly predicted scores on Subscale A of the COBRAS. The individual contributions of each predictor variable, including the standardised  $\beta$ -coefficients, zero-order, part and partial correlations, will be summarised in Table 16, along with the VIF statistic. The summary of the model is given in Table 17.

**Table 16**

*Summary of Statistics for Men of the Individual Contributions of Predictor Variables of Subscale A of the COBRAS*

Predictor	$\beta$	t	p	Correlations			VIF
				Zero-Order	Partial	Part	
S-Ab	-.499	-4.072	.000	-.558	-.532	-.489	1.043
LA	-.294	-2.398	.021	-.395	-.347	-.288	1.043

**Table 17**

*Summary of Regression Model for Men Predicting Subscale A of the COBRAS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p	Durbin-Watson
S-Ab, LA	.628	.395	13.699	.000	1.045

Similar to Subscale A, no model could significantly predict scores on Subscale B of the COBRAS for women. However, Life Appreciation significantly predicted scores on Subscale B of the COBRAS for men. The summary of the model, including the Durbin-Watson statistic, is given in Table 18.

**Table 18**

*Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale B of the COBRAS for Men*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F	t	p	Durbin-Watson
LA	.504	.258	.504	4.756	3.491	.001	1.756

Self-Absolution significantly predicted scores on Subscale C of the COBRAS for women. The summary of the model, including the Durbin-Watson statistic, is given in Table 19.

**Table 19**

*Summary of the Regression Model Predicting Subscale C of the COBRAS for Women*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	$\beta$	F	t	p	Durbin-Watson
S-Ab	.278	.077	-.278	7.792	-2.791	.006	2.194



For men, all the predictor variables significantly predicted scores on Subscale C of the COBRAS. The zero-order correlations are also of importance here, as will become apparent in the discussion of results. The individual contributions of each predictor variable, including the standardised  $\beta$ -coefficients, zero-order, part and partial correlations, will be summarised in Table 20, along with the VIF statistic. The summary of the model is given in Table 21.

**Table 20**

*Summary of Statistics of the Individual Contributions of Predictor Variables of Subscale C of the COBRAS for Men*

Predictor	$\beta$	t	p	Correlations			VIF
				Zero-Order	Partial	Part	
S-Ab	-.595	-5.365	.000	-.579	-.633	-.560	1.128
LA	-.246	-2.192	.034	-.445	-.317	-.229	1.153
EST	.312	2.779	.008	.250	.390	.290	1.157

**Table 21**

*Summary of Regression Model for Men Predicting Subscale C of the COBRAS*

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p	Durbin-Watson
S-Ab, LA, EST	.729	.532	16.272	.000	1.859

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

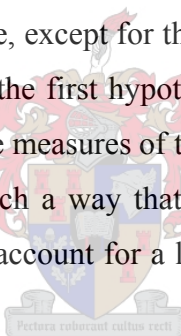
### 5.1. Discussion of results of the principal components analysis

The first point of discussion is the exclusion of certain variables due to a lack of significant intercorrelations with other variables. These variables are Conformity, Personal Distress and four of the value measures (Scientific, Economic, Political, Religious). The exclusion of the value were interpreted as indicating that holding these specific values did not relate to existential meaning-in-life. The fact that Personal Distress showed only a few relationships with other measures of existential meaning-in-life would perhaps suggest that the aspect of empathy that is measured by Personal Distress is not associated with existential meaning-in-life. This is perhaps consistent with the finding that Personal Distress is related to low self-esteem (Joireman, Parrot & Hammersla, 2002). This suggests that Personal Distress may be a maladaptive aspect of empathy, in the light of which the lack of correlations with the other variables makes sense.

Conformity's lack of correlations with other variables is perhaps more intriguing. On the one hand, the exclusion of Conformity from the principal components analysis is not totally unexpected, as it was noted in the overview of empirical findings that few studies support the relationship of non-conformity or autonomy with the other relevant variables. Conformity has only been found to be associated with valuing power and tradition (Braithwaite, 1997; Knafo, 2003; Sagiv & Schwartz, 1995) while only the study by Morris (1994) directly related autonomy with experience of meaning-in-life. On the other hand, non-conformity plays a very important role in the existential theories reviewed. One interpretation of this situation is that existential theories' position on non-conformity needs revision. It is perhaps possible that individuals high in existential meaning-in-life are characterized by humility and an awareness of their own limitations and wisdom. These individuals would then perhaps prefer others to play a part in their decisions, thereby confounding the relationship that non-conformity may have with existential meaning-in-life. However, another interpretation is possible. From the existential theories reviewed, it is perhaps accurate to suggest that the conformity characteristic of inauthenticity is a conformity of which

the individual is unaware: The individual does not know that he is ceding his freedom and responsibility for his life. In this sense, conformity cannot be measured by a self-report scale as in this study. It is therefore possible that conformity characterized by unawareness, if it can be measured, could still be related to existential meaning-in-life.

The discussion now turns to the component structure that emerged from the principal components analysis. As was discussed, the first component, Self-Absolution, refers to a general ability to stand outside of oneself that underlies empathy, self-reflectivity and self-forgetfulness. The second component, Life Appreciation, is characterized by an appreciation for the wholeness and coherence of life, one's own as well as that of others. Existential Self-Transcendence, the third component, was defined largely by a combination of the subscales of the Self-Transcendence Scale. These components accounted for an adequate amount of variance. Components were also found to correlate with each other. Therefore, except for the exclusion of Conformity, Personal Distress, and certain value scales, the first hypothesis of the study was confirmed. It was hypothesized that scores on the measures of the aspects of existential meaning-in-life will relate to each other in a way that principal components analysis will reveal underlying dimensions that account for a large proportion of the total variance of the measures.



It is also of interest to note that scores on the PIL correlated higher to the dimension of Life Appreciation than it did to other measures that were used to assess its validity. Also, more variance of scores on the PIL was explained by the general component solution than by these measures. Similarly, the total variance explained for each other variable was high. Therefore, given this study's theoretical background, the results of the principal components analysis seem to suggest that there is an empirical base for defining existential meaning-in-life in terms of a combination of these variables. However, it has to be noted that, as scores on most of the scales were not normally distributed, the factor structure cannot be generalized beyond this sample. On the other hand, the non-parametric correlations between variables (see Table 3, p. 61), that can be generalized beyond this sample, suggest that it is at least feasible to investigate whether component solutions that are roughly similar to that found in this study may be found in other samples. Given the non-parametric correlations, it is not

unreasonable to speculate that the construct existential meaning-in-life will be defined empirically in a similar fashion in other samples.

## 5.2. Discussion of the regression analyses

In general, the results of the regression analyses confirm the second hypothesis of this study, that scores on the underlying dimensions of existential meaning-in-life will predict scores on the measures of racial prejudice. Scores on Subscale A of the COBRAS were significantly predicted only by Self-Absolution ( $\beta = -.260, p = .002$ , see Table 10, p. 66) The relationship between Self-Absolution and scores on Subscale A was negative and relatively small, although significant. Subscale A measures the ignorance of racial inequality. Therefore, the results of this regression analysis suggest that individuals higher in Self-Absolution will be less ignorant of racial inequality. The individual's ability to stand outside himself enables him to see another person's position, which enables him to become aware of inequality in his relationship with that person. The relationship between Self-Absolution and a measure of racial prejudice is consistent with the empirical evidence discussed in the literature review, that support the relationship between racial prejudice and self-transcendence, self-reflectivity and empathy respectively. Self-transcendence has been found to be related to low close-mindedness and a dissociation from prejudice (Belcher, 1995; Saroglou, 2002; Scheepers, Gijssberts & Hello, 2002). Self-reflective individuals have been found to be less prejudiced, and more likely to readily change their views (Hoffmann, Gschwender & Schmitt, 2005; Trepagnier, 2002). Furthermore, exercises in self-reflectivity have been found to make individuals aware of their racial beliefs (Millstein, 1997). Furthermore, numerous studies have found a relationship between empathy and low prejudice (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Rhee-Worobec, 2000; Pederson, Beven, Walker & Griffiths, 2004; Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Stephan & Finlay, 1999).

Scores on Subscale B of the COBRAS were significantly predicted by Life Appreciation (see Table 12, p. 67). The relationship between the latter and scores on Subscale B was positive and relatively small, although significant ( $\beta = .214, p = .011$ ). Subscale B measures ignorance of the implications of institutional forms of racial discrimination, as well as negative attitudes towards rectification and affirmative action in this regard. These findings suggest that individuals high in Life Appreciation

are more likely to be ignorant of institutional forms of racial prejudice, and are more likely to resist it. This is inconsistent with the empirical findings that suggest a negative relationship between racial prejudice and social harmony values and experience of meaning-in-life respectively. Regarding social harmony values Mondak and Hurwitz (1998) found that the valuing of individual differences and the accompanying democratic values to be positively related to tolerance. With regard to experience of meaning-in-life, studies by Helson and Srivastava (2002) and Niemand (2004) have found associations between experience of meaning-in-life and racial tolerance. However, these associations were only found in women (Helson & Srivastava, 2002; Niemand, 2004). It is important to note that, when gender differences were investigated, the relationship between Subscale B and Life Appreciation was absent in women, but present in men. This suggests that gender plays a role in the relationship between resistance to rectification of inequality and Life Appreciation. This relationship will be discussed when gender differences are discussed.

Scores on Subscale C of the COBRAS were significantly predicted by all the predictor variables (see Table 14, p. 67). In the regression model, the relationship between the Self-Absolution and Subscale C was negative and moderate ( $\beta = -.405$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Both Life Appreciation ( $\beta = -.214$ ,  $p = .007$ ) and Existential Self-Transcendence ( $\beta = .162$ ,  $p = .037$ ) showed relatively small relationships to Subscale C in the regression model. Where Life Appreciation showed a negative relationship to Subscale C, the relationship between Existential Self-Transcendence and Subscale C was positive (see Table 13, p. 67). Subscale C measures ignorance of racism and racial problems. Because the standardised regression method was used, the relationships represent each predictor variable's unique contribution to prediction. Similar to the case of Subscale A, the results of this regression analysis suggest that individuals higher in Self-Absolution will be less ignorant of racial problems. Individuals' ability to stand outside of themselves and understand another person's position, enables them to become aware of racism in their relationship with that person. Again, the relationship between Self-Absolution and a measure of racial prejudice is consistent with the empirical evidence discussed in the literature review, that support the relationship between racial prejudice and self-transcendence (Belcher, 1995; Saroglou, 2002; Scheepers, Gijssberts & Hello, 2002), self-reflectivity

(Hoffmann, Gschwender & Schmitt, 2005; Trepagnier, 2002) and empathy (Burkard & Knox, 2004; Rhee-Worobec, 2000; Pederson, Beven, Walker & Griffiths, 2004; Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Stephan & Finlay, 1999) respectively.

The negative relationship found between Life Appreciation and Subscale C is also consistent with findings that suggest a relationship between racial prejudice and social harmony values (Mondak & Hurwitz, 1998) and experience of meaning-in-life (Helson & Srivastava, 2002; Niemand, 2004) respectively. One possible interpretation of this result is that individuals, who value the wholeness and coherence of their existence as well as that of others, will be more aware of cases where this harmony is undermined.

In contrast, the positive relationship found between Existential Self-Transcendence and Subscale C (which measures ignorance of racism and racial problems) is inconsistent with empirical findings that support a negative relationship between racial prejudice and self-transcendence (Belcher, 1995; Saroglou, 2002; Scheepers, Gijssberts & Hello, 2002). However, it is important to note that the zero-order correlation between Existential Self-Transcendence and Subscale C is substantially smaller than its eventual contribution to its prediction. Therefore, the variance in Subscale C that is shared by both Existential Self-Transcendence and the other predictor variables diminishes the positive relationship between Existential Self-Transcendence and Subscale C. Thus, the positive relationship between Existential Self-Transcendence and Subscale C should be interpreted as representing the relationship between the latter and a type of self-transcendence that is characterized by an absence of Life Appreciation and Self-Absolution. This suggests a very dogmatic and exclusive transcendent approach to life, which may be conducive to prejudice.

Although the component structure emerging from the principal components analysis can not be generalized to other samples, the underlying dimensions thus uncovered can still be used to summarize data to use in, for example, regression analysis. As such, the results of the above regression analyses can potentially be generalized. The combinations of variables may not account for the same amount of variance in all samples, but the regression analyses still show that these combinations are related to

measures of racial prejudice. The composition of the sample in this study places serious limits on the generalisability of findings. The main reason for this is that the sample is not representative of the gender composition of the population, and, as will be discussed in the following section, there are gender differences that have an important impact on the findings.

### **5.3. Discussion of gender differences**

Women were found to score higher on Existential Self-Transcendence, Self-Forgetfulness, Transpersonal Identification, and Self-Reflectivity, while men scored higher on Subscale B of the COBRAS. The differences in self-transcendence are consistent with the study by Coward (1996) that found self-transcendence to be higher in women. The difference in self-reflectivity is consistent with the studies that support a relationship between gender and self-reflectivity (Alanazi, 2001; Moroi, 1985). Furthermore, the difference in Subscale B is consistent with the gender difference in scores on the COBRAS found by Bromley (2004). However, gender differences were not found in empathy, for which there is strong empirical evidence (Becares & Turner, 2004; Jenkins, Stephens, Chew & Downs, 1992; Karniol & Shomroni, 1999; Rose, 1999). The absence of differences in empathy between genders can perhaps be attributed to the fact that many of the men who volunteered to participate were students in courses related to caring professions. As such they could perhaps be expected to have higher levels of empathy than is generally the case in men. No differences were found on Purpose in Life and specific values. Although this is inconsistent with empirical findings, these findings are considered to be dated. It is therefore possible that gender differences in this regard have diminished.

The fact that gender differences were found on some variables, while no differences were found on others, suggest the possibility that component solutions may differ between genders. Unfortunately, the samples of men and women separately were not considered large enough to investigate this possibility reliably. However, this possibility has to be considered, especially when the differences in the results of regression analyses between men and women are discussed.



In general, the relationships between predictor variables and outcome variables are much stronger for men in comparison to women. For men, both Self-Absolution ( $\beta = -.499, p = .000$ ) and Life Appreciation ( $\beta = -.294, p = .021$ ) significantly predicted scores on Subscale A of the COBRAS. Both variables had a negative relationship to Subscale A (see Table 16, p. 69). For women, no predictor variables could significantly predict scores on Subscale A. This suggests that, while men who are high in Self-Absolution and Life Appreciation are less ignorant of racial inequality, there is no such relationship in women. Furthermore, Life Appreciation did not predict scores on Subscale B for women, while it did for men ( $\beta = .504, p = .001$ , see Table 18, p. 69). This confirms the third hypotheses of this study. As suggested by Niemand (2004), a possible reason for this is that men are perhaps more directly affected by affirmative action. In comparison to women, attempts at rectifying inequality is perceived to be a greater threat to existence and well-being in men, which would explain more negative attitudes toward these attempts.

For men, all the predictor variables significantly predicted scores on Subscale C (see Table 20, p 70). Self-Absolution ( $\beta = -.595, p = .000$ ) and Life Appreciation ( $\beta = -.246, p = .034$ ) showed negative relationships to Subscale C, while Existential Self-Transcendence showed a positive relationship ( $\beta = .312, p = .008$ ). For women, on the other hand, only Self-Absolution predicted scores on Subscale C, and this relationship was much weaker than in men ( $\beta = -.278, p = .006$ , see Table 19, p. 69)

These results suggest that the results obtained in the whole sample reflect mainly the results found in male participants, where the relationships between predictor variables and outcome variables were very strong. There are a number of possible explanations as to why the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice is absent in women, while it is present in men. Concerning scores on Subscale B of the COBRAS, the gender difference can perhaps be explained with reference to men's attitudes towards affirmative processes. More generally, it has to be taken into consideration that men and women may perhaps differ in how existential meaning-in-life is structured, as is suggested by the differences on some of the variables. Given the gender differences on self-reflectivity, self-forgetfulness and transpersonal identification, these variables may have greater weight in a principal components analysis in women, while others (that may have hidden a relationship with racial



prejudice in this study) will have less weight. As such, women may have gender-specific dimensions of existential meaning-in-life that may vary with racial prejudice.

A more apparent interpretation is that the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice is much stronger in men than in women. A possible explanation for this, similar to the explanation pertaining to Subscale B, is that racial issues play a more central role in men's lives, especially in the context of affirmative processes in South-Africa. Competing ideologies of race perhaps have a more direct impact on men's lives. As such, how a man orientates his life around race is to a greater extent associated with how he lives his life in general. This does not mean that racial issues have no impact in women's lives. Also, it cannot be said that there is no relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice for women, because a relationship was found between Self-Absolution and scores on Subscale C for women.

#### **5.4. Limitations and recommendations**

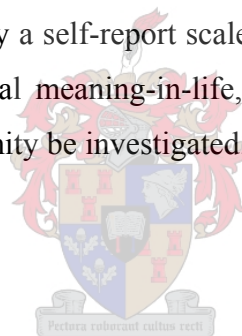
As is perhaps apparent from the preceding discussion, there are important limitations to this study. The first pertains to the composition of the sample. Because the sample was not representative of the gender composition of the population, the results of the regression analyses cannot be generalized to the population, especially as gender differences in the relationship between racial prejudice and existential meaning-in-life emerged. However, this suggests that it would in any case not be prudent to attempt to draw any conclusions that are not gender-specific. In the light of these findings, it is perhaps necessary to conduct a study such as this for each gender separately. To a certain extent this has been done in the present study. However, the possibility of different component structures between genders could not be investigated, because sample sizes for respectively men and women were too small. Therefore, it is recommended that a study similar to the present study be conducted on adequate samples of men and women separately.

Another limitation pertains to the sampling procedure. Because participation was voluntary, results may have been biased. Firstly, the sample consisted of South-Africans. In this regard, given the role racial issues may play for men in South-Africa,

it is important to conduct similar studies on international samples. Furthermore, it has already been noted that a lack of gender differences in empathy could be explained by the fact that many of the men who volunteered to participate were students in courses related to caring professions. Similarly, it is also possible that participants who volunteered were more likely to demonstrate a relationship between racial prejudice and existential meaning-in-life. However, there is no empirical evidence that supports this speculation. Therefore it is recommended that the influence of those individual differences given preference in voluntary participation be investigated. Also, other methods of sampling that reduce this bias need to be investigated.

The measurement of non-conformity also limits this study. As discussed, it is perhaps possible that the measure of conformity used in this study does not adequately measure the construct as it is found in existential theories. The conformity characteristic of inauthenticity is a conformity of which the individual is unaware, and can therefore not be measured by a self-report scale as in this study. As the construct may still be related to existential meaning-in-life, it is recommended that ways to measure unawareness of conformity be investigated.

## 5.5. Conclusions



The possible conclusions to be drawn from this study will now be discussed. To a certain extent, all the hypotheses of the study were confirmed. Concerning the first hypothesis, most of the variables measured related to each other to such an extent that principal components analysis was applicable. However, some variables were excluded, most notably Conformity. Whether this is because there is no relationship, or self-report scales do not adequately measure conformity, it is perhaps reasonable to conclude that conformity as measured by a self-report scale appears to be to a great extent unrelated to existential meaning-in-life. Therefore, for the purpose of quantitative studies of existential meaning-in-life, the component structure that emerged in this study could perhaps be of value. Although the component structure cannot be generalized beyond this sample, non-parametric correlations suggest that similar solutions are possible in other samples. In this regard, the findings of this study represent the possible validity of empirically measuring existential meaning-in-life in terms of the variables used in this study.

The ability to potentially measure existential meaning-in-life quantitatively can be of great value for studies in existential psychology. Not only does it serve to clarify and define the concepts existential theories use, it facilitates the investigation of these concepts' relationships to other concepts relevant to contemporary society. In the present author's opinion, it is not self-contradictory to measure existential concepts. In attempting to measure existential meaning-in-life, there is no pretence that the individual's whole existence is grasped. Rather, by attributing certain levels of existential meaning-in-life to an individual, one is ascertaining to what extent the individual is living according to principles of authenticity argued for by existential thinkers. Furthermore, by measuring existential meaning-in-life empirically, other behaviours associated with it can be investigated empirically.

Behaviour pertaining to racial prejudice is one type of behaviour that can be brought into relation to existential meaning-in-life. It is in this light that the findings pertaining to the second and third hypotheses are discussed. The second hypothesis of this study was confirmed when one or more dimensions of existential meaning-in-life predicted scores on each of the subscales of the COBRAS. However, given the limitations of this study, the conclusions to be drawn from these results are to be approached with caution. Given the gender differences found, it is prudent not to make too many conclusions about the relationship between racial prejudice and existential meaning-in-life that are not gender specific.

Results suggest that the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice is much stronger in men than in women. A possible explanation for this is that competing ideologies of race perhaps have a more direct impact on men's lives. Therefore, how a man orientates his life around race is to a greater extent associated with how he lives his life in general. However, given the gender differences on some variables, it is also possible that women may have different underlying dimensions of existential meaning-in-life that may vary more with racial prejudice than was found in this study.

For men, the results of the regression analyses suggest that Self-Absolution is significantly related to awareness of racial inequality (Subscale A of the COBRAS)

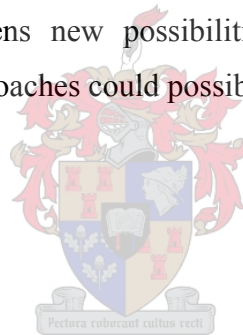
and racism and racial conflict (Subscale C). It seems the individual's ability to stand outside himself corresponds to an ability to become aware of other people's positions, which give insight into the existence of racial prejudice and discrimination. Life Appreciation was positively related to resistance to affirmative processes (Subscale B), but negatively to ignorance of racism and racial conflict (Subscale C). This suggests that concern for the coherence and wholeness of own existence and that of others corresponds to a sensitivity of cases where this harmony is disrupted, as is the case with racism and racial conflict. On the other hand, the positive relationship with resistance to affirmative processes suggests that where the individual's own existence and well-being is threatened, the concern for the coherence of his own existence corresponds to resistance of affirmative processes. Existential Self-Transcendence that was not characterized by Self-Absolution and Life Appreciation was positively related to ignorance of racism and racial conflict. As discussed earlier, this variable seems to represent a certain element of dogmatism. This dogmatism, then, relates to ignorance of racial conflicts. It has to be noted, however, that Existential Self-Transcendence that included shared variance with Self-Absolution and Life Appreciation was not significantly related to ignorance of racism. Therefore, the conclusion that self-transcendence is positively related to racial prejudice cannot be made.

For women, the only relationship found between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice was that Self-Absolution predicted awareness of racism and racial conflict. The possible explanations for the lack of other relationships have already been discussed.

It is important to note that a relationship between at least one underlying dimension of existential meaning-in-life and one subscale of the COBRAS was found in both genders. Even if the limitations in the representivity of the sample are considered, this finding still suggests a general relationship between a dimension of existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice, specifically that between Self-Absolution and awareness of racism and racial conflict. This relationship may be small. However, this study did not set out to compare existential meaning-in-life to other predictors of racial prejudice. Rather, this study set out to establish whether existential meaning-in-life was related to racial prejudice. In this regard, the size of the relationship is not of such a great concern.

Naturally, this general conclusion as to the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice has to be investigated further, as do the differences in this relationship between men and women. However, the findings of this study at least prove the possibility of such a relationship. Moreover, there is little to suggest that this relationship cannot be generalized to a population of similar demographic properties.

This study has therefore shown the relationship between existential meaning-in-life and racial prejudice to be possible. Furthermore, it has demonstrated the possibility of empirically measuring existential meaning-in-life in a quantitative manner which avoids excessive vagueness. This represents a step forward in the study of racial prejudice from the existential paradigm, and paves the way for an investigation into racism where both the individual and society are simultaneously the focus of study. Accordingly, it potentially opens new possibilities for the prevention of racial prejudice, where existential approaches could possibly be of great value.



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## ADDENDA

The following scales are attached as they were presented to participants.

Addendum A:

The Self Transcendence Scale of the Temperament and Character Inventory

Addendum B:

The Conformity Scale

Addendum C:

The Self-Reflectivity Scale of the Self-Consciousness Scale

Addendum D:

The Interpersonal Reactivity Index

Addendum E:

The Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values

Addendum F:

The Purpose in Life Test

Addendum G:

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale

Addendum H:

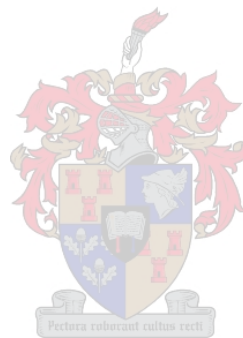
Biographical questionnaire



### Addendum A

		True	False
1	I am often moved by a fine speech or poetry		
2	I believe that miracles happen		
3	Often when I am concentrating on something, I lose awareness of the passage of time.		
4	I often feel so connected to the people around me that it is like there is no separation between us.		
5	I am often called "absent- minded" because I get so wrapped up in what I am doing that I lose track of everything else.		
6	I am fascinated by the many things in life that cannot be scientifically explained.		
7	Often I have unexpected flashes of insight or understanding while relaxing.		
8	I sometimes feel so connected to nature that everything seems to be part of one living organism.		
9	I seem to have a "sixth sense" that sometimes allows me to know what is going to happen.		
10	Sometimes I have felt like I was part of something with no limits or boundaries in time and space.		
11	I sometimes feel a spiritual connection to other people that I cannot explain in words.		
12	I often feel a strong sense of unity with all the things around me.		
13	Religious experiences have helped me understand the real purpose of my life.		
14	Even after thinking about something a long time, I have learned to trust my feelings more than my logical reasons.		
15	Sometimes I have felt my life was being directed by a spiritual force greater than any human being.		
16	I often wish I could stop the passage of time.		
17	I think that extra- sensory perception (ESP, like telepathy or precognition) is really possible.		
18	I think that most things that are called miracles are just chance.		
19	I often become so fascinated with what I'm doing that I get lost in the moment - like I'm detached from time and place.		
20	I often feel a strong spiritual or emotional connection with all the people around me.		
21	I think it is unwise to believe in things that cannot be explained scientifically.		
22	I often try to put aside my own judgement so that I can better understand what other people are experiencing.		
23	I have made real personal sacrifices in order to make the world a better place --- like trying to prevent war poverty and injustice.		
24	I almost never get so excited that I lose control of myself.		
25	I have had experiences that made my role in life so clear to me that I felt very excited and happy.		

26	I believe that I have experienced extra- sensory perception myself.		
27	I have had personal experiences in which I felt in contact with a divine and wonderful spiritual power.		
28	I have had moments of great joy in which I suddenly had a clear, deep feeling of oneness with all that exists		
29	I often feel like I am a part of the spiritual force on which all life depends.		
30	I believe that all life depends on some spiritual order or power that cannot be completely explained.		
31	Reports or mystical experiences are probably just wishful thinking.		
32	It often seems to other people like I am in other world because I am so completely unaware of things going on around me.		
33	I love the blooming of flowers in the spring as much as seeing an old friend again.		



### Addendum B

Instructions: mark the number that best describes how you agree/disagree with a statement, e.g. *I often like to do things because others do them*. So if you e.g. disagree moderately, then you would mark the number as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

1. I often rely on, and act upon, the advice of others

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

2. I would be the last one to change my opinion in a heated argument on a controversial topic.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

3. Generally, I'd rather give in and go along for the sake of peace than struggle to have my way.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

4. I tend to follow family tradition in making political decisions.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

5. Basically, my friends are the ones who decide what we do together.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

6. A charismatic and eloquent speaker can easily influence and change my ideas.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Strong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

7. I am more independent than conforming.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Stong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

8. If someone is very persuasive, I tend to change my opinion and go along with them.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Stong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

9. I don't give in to others easily.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Stong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

10. I tend to rely on others when I have to make an important decision quickly.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Stong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

11. I prefer to make my own way in life rather than find a group I can follow.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Very strong disagreement	Stong disagreement	Moderate disagreement	Slight disagreement	Neutral	Slight agreement	Moderate agreement	Strong agreement	Very strong agreement

### Addendum C

Instructions: mark the number that best describes how accurately a statement describes you, e.g. *I am in touch with my feminine side*. So if the statement is e.g. extremely uncharacteristic, then you would mark the number as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely uncharacteristic	Uncharacteristic	Neutral	Characteristic	Extremely characteristic

1. I'm always trying to figure myself out.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely uncharacteristic	Uncharacteristic	Neutral	Characteristic	Extremely characteristic

2. I reflect about myself a lot.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely uncharacteristic	Uncharacteristic	Neutral	Characteristic	Extremely characteristic

3. I'm often the subject of my own fantasies.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely uncharacteristic	Uncharacteristic	Neutral	Characteristic	Extremely characteristic

4. I'm constantly examining my motives.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely uncharacteristic	Uncharacteristic	Neutral	Characteristic	Extremely characteristic

5. I sometimes have the feeling that I'm off somewhere watching myself.

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely uncharacteristic	Uncharacteristic	Neutral	Characteristic	Extremely characteristic



### Addendum D

Instructions: mark the number that best describes how accurately a statement describes you, e.g. *I am in touch with my feminine side*. So if the statement (for example) does not describe you well, but you think it might have some truth in it, then you would mark the number as follows:

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

2. I often have tender, concerned feelings for people less fortunate than me.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

3. I sometimes find it difficult to see things from the “other guy’s” point of view.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

4. Sometimes I don’t feel very sorry for other people when they are having problems.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

5. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in a novel.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

6. In emergency situations, I feel apprehensive and ill-at-ease.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

7. I am usually objective when I watch a movie or play, and I don’t often get completely caught up in it.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

8. I try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement before I make a decision.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

9. When I see someone being taken advantage of, I feel kind of protective towards them.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

10. I sometimes feel helpless when I am in the middle of a very emotional situation.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

11. I sometimes try to understand my friends better by imagining how things look from their perspective.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

12. Becoming extremely involved in a good book or movie is somewhat rare for me.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

13. When I see someone get hurt, I tend to remain calm.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

14. Other people's misfortunes do not usually disturb me a great deal.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

15. If I'm sure I'm right about something, I don't waste time listening to other people's arguments.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

16. After seeing a play or movie, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

17. Being in a tense emotional situation scares me

1	2	3	4	5
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

18. When I see someone being treated unfairly, I sometimes don't feel much pity for them.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

19. I am usually pretty effective in dealing with emergencies.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

20. I am often quite touched by things that I see happen.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

21. I believe that there are two sides to every question and try to look at them both.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

22. I would describe myself as a pretty soft-hearted person.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

23. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

24. I tend to lose control during emergencies.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

25. When I'm upset at someone, I usually try to put myself in his shoes for a while.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

26. When I am reading an interesting story or novel, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

27. When I see someone who badly needs help in an emergency, I go to pieces.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

28. Before criticizing someone, I try to imagine how I would feel if it were in their place.

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Does not describe me well		Neutral		Describes me well

**Addendum E**

How important or desirable for you is it to strive toward the following goals, situations, activities or actions? Please judge according to the following scale

Not important or desirable at all	<b>1</b>
Not important or desirable	<b>2</b>
Neutral	<b>3</b>
Important or desirable	<b>4</b>
Very important or desirable	<b>5</b>

Then write the number you chose in the block next to the statement, e.g.

*To drink tea with my friends* **4**

Please do the same with the following statements

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1) if I were to live in a small town and earn enough to provide for my needs, to help advance the activities of local religious groups.          |  |
| 2) to attend an orchestral performance after a busy week.  |  |
| 3) to accept that a good government’s aim is to introduce the highest ethical principles into its policies and diplomacy                         |  |
| 4) if I were to live in a small town and earn enough to provide for my needs, to make a contribution to the local welfare organisation           |  |
| 5) to attend a series of interesting lectures on the improvement of social work in the region  |  |
| 6) if I had sufficient leisure and money, to establish a centre for the care of the feeble minded  |  |
| 7) to accept that a good government’s aim is to establish a position of prestige and respect among nations                                       |  |
| 8) to have a friend who reflects seriously on his attitude toward life as a whole.   |  |
| 9) to attend a series of interesting lectures wherein the forms of government of South Africa and Britain are compared and critically evaluated. |  |
| 10) to read a book with the title The History of Industry in South Africa  |  |
| 11) if I have the necessary abilities, to be a banker  |  |
| 12) to attend plays and performances that deal with the lives of great and famous people   |  |
| 13) if I have the ability and if other conditions permit it, to enter a local sports tournament.   |  |
| 14) to regard selflessness and sympathy as desirable character traits  |  |
| 15) to regard the Bible in the light of its beautiful mythology and literary style   |  |





76) if conditions permit it, to spend my vacation in some secluded place that permits me to appreciate the fine scenery

77) when attending an exposition, to go to exhibitions of scientific (e.g. chemical) apparatus

79) to accept that all evidence that has been impartially collected shows that the work of a Higher Intelligence can be seen in the development of the universe

80) if I had sufficient leisure and money, to aim at senatorship or a position in Cabinet

81) ) when I spend the evening with close friends, to talk about developments in science

82) if I am a university professor and have the necessary ability, to teach physics and chemistry

83) to attend plays that consistently argue for some point of view

84) to read a book titled "The History of Religion in South Africa"

85) to have a friend who possesses qualities of leadership and organizing ability

86) to attend a series of lectures on the development of the biggest religious faiths

87) when I am in a waiting room, to read a book titled "Arts and Decorations"

88) to be a politician (if I had the ability)

89) to guide my conduct according to, or develop my chief loyalties toward my religious faith

90) if I have the opportunity to found something new in my community, to found a orchestra for classical

91) to read attentively a newspaper article titled "Church Leaders Consult on Reconciliation"

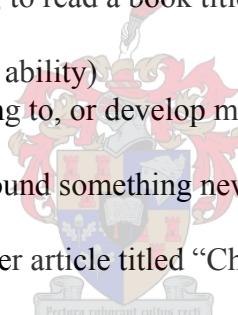
92) if I have sufficient leisure time, to do voluntary social or public service work

93) if I am waiting in a waiting room, to read a magazine titled "Scientific Age"

94) if I have the opportunity to found something new in my community, to found a debating society

95) if I could influence educational policies, to promote the study and participation in music

96) if I could influence educational policies, to provide additional laboratory facilities



### Addendum F

For each question, circle the number that best describes how you feel concerning a certain aspect of your life. For example, if you feel your friendships are mostly superficial, but that you sometimes share an intimate moment with some of your friends, you would answer as follows on the following question:

*I experience my relationships as*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superficial			Neutral			Very intimate

1. I am usually

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely bored			Neutral			Enthusiastic, exuberant

2. Life to me seems

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely routine			Neutral			Always exciting

3. In life I have

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No goals or aims at all			Neutral			Very clear goals and aims

Pectora roborant cultus recti

4. My personal existence

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Utterly meaningless, without purpose			Neutral			Very purposeful and meaningful

5. Every day is

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Exactly the same			Neutral			Constantly new and different

6. If I could choose, I would

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Prefer never to have been born			Neutral			Like nine more lives just like this one



7. After retiring, I would

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Loaf completely the rest of my life			Neutral			Do some of the things I've always wanted to

8. In achieving life goals I have

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Made no progress whatsoever			Neutral			Progressed to complete fulfilment

9. My life is

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Empty, filled only with despair			Neutral			Running over with exciting things

10. If I should die today, I would feel that my life has been

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely worthless			Neutral			Very worthwhile

11. In thinking of my life, I

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Often wonder why I exist			Neutral			Always see a reason for my being here

12. As I view the world in relation to my life, the world

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completelt confuses me			Neutral			Fits meaningfully with my life

13. I am a

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very irresponsible person			Neutral			Very responsible person

14. Concerning man's freedom to make his own choices, I believe man is

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Completely bounded by limitations of heredity and environment			Neutral			Absolutely free to make all life choices

15. With regard to death, I am

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Unprepared and frightened			Neutral			Prepared and not afraid

16. With regard to suicide, I have

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Thought of it seriously			Neutral			Never given it a second thought

17. I regard my ability to find a meaning, purpose, or mission in life

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Practically none			Neutral			Very great

18. My life is

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Out of my hands and controlled by external factors			Neutral			In my hands and I am in control of it

19. Facing my daily tasks is

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A painful and boring experience			Neutral			A source of pleasure and satisfaction

20. I have discovered

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No mission or purpose			Neutral			Clear-cut goals and a

in life						satisfying life purpose
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### Addendum G

Please answer each question by marking the appropriate option, e.g.

*Black people are better sprinters.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree			Neutral		*	Strongly agree

So, if you agree, but not so strongly, you would for example pick option 5, or 6.

1. Certain racial groups in South Africa have certain advantages because of the colour of their skin.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

2. Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

3. Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

4. Race plays a major role in the type of social services (e.g. health care) that people receive in South Africa.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

5. Previously marginalized racial and ethnic groups do not have the same opportunities as white people in South Africa.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

6. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

7. Whites are more to blame for racial discrimination than other racial and ethnic groups.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
---	---	---	---	---	---	---

8. Social policies such as affirmative action discriminate unfairly against white people.

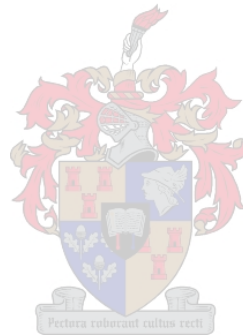
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
9. White people in South Africa are discriminated against because of the colour of their skin.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
10. English should be the only official language of South Africa.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
11. Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
12. Previously marginalized groups in South Africa have certain advantages because of the colour of their skin.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
13. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as South African and not as e.g. Afrikaners or Xhosas.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
14. People not from this region should try to fit into the culture of Stellenbosch.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
15. Racial problems in South Africa are rare, isolated situations.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
16. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
17. Racism is a major problem in South Africa.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
18. It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of previously marginalized groups.
- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

19. It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7

20. Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not a problem today.

1            2            3            4            5            6            7



**Addendum H**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Race (mark the appropriate term):

Black

Coloured

White

Indian

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_

