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The Question of *Metaphysische Schuld* in Contemporary Christian German Life Histories

by

Rachel Alexandra Braun

A THESIS

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Abstract

This study explored eight Christian German reflections of *die Schuldfrage* ("the question of German guilt for the Second World War and the Holocaust) in relation to their life histories. To do so, this study employed German philosopher Karl Jaspers' concept of *metaphysische Schuld* ("metaphysical guilt") as a theoretical framework to better understand participants' reflections of three topics: 1) *die Schuldfrage* as a concept in relation to key life history events that informed their reflections thereon, 2) the theological dealings required to reconcile *die Schuldfrage* (however that looks for them), and 3) any observations regarding the potential relationship between *die Schuldfrage* and *Flüchtlingskriese.* Participants' life history interviews were conducted over field research in Berlin, Germany, and analyzed in two stages: I) using Amadeo Giorgi's empirical phenomenology to bracket participants' experiences of *die Schuldfrage* from their reflections of them, and II) applying Jaspers' concept of *metaphysische Schuld* ("metaphysical guilt") to stage I to identify thematic and structural overlap and disagreement.

Key Words: die Schuldfrage, German guilt, WWII, life histories, interview, field research, Christianity, phenomenology, Karl Jaspers, refugees, metaphysics, God, Holocaust.

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Table of Contents

Abstract .... **ii**

Acknowledgements .... **iii**

PART I: INTRODUCTION **1**

Chapter 1: The Situation *2*

1.1 Central Claim 2

1.2 Prior Research 3

1.3 Current Research 5

Chapter 2: The Research Problem *7*

2.1 A Gap in Our Understanding 7

2.2 Further Questions 10

Chapter 3: The Study *11*

3.1 Purpose 11

3.2 Principle Findings 11

3.3 Outline 12

PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **13**

Chapter 4: The Key Variables *14*

4.1 Theory Considerations in Scholarly Context 14

4.2 Categories at Issue Across Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) 16

4.3 Concepts of Guilt in Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) 20

Chapter 5: The Literature Review *24*

5.1 In Classical Reference 26

5.2 In the Time of *Die Schuldfrage*'s (1946) Circulation 30

5.3 In Contemporary Scholarship 33

Chapter 6: The Constructs in Jaspers' Metaphysische Schuld *36*

6.1 Guilt as *eine Grenzsituation* ("Boundary Situation"): 36

6.2 Self-Transformation Before God 37

6.3 Individual and Humanity 38

Chapter 7: The Research Warrant *40*

PART III: METHODOLOGY & METHOD **42**

Chapter 8: The Design *43*

8.1 Methodology & Methods Considerations in Scholarly Context 43

8.2 Methodology: Amadeo Giorgi's Empirical Phenomenology 45

8.3 Method: Life History Interviews and Field Research 47

Chapter 9: The Interviews and Field Research *50*

9.1 Participant Recruitment 50

9.2 Interview Process 50

9.3 Ethical Considerations 51

Chapter 10: The Interview Analysis *52*

10.1 Analysis Stage I: The Participants' Life History Interviews 52

10.2 Analysis Stage II: The Application of Jaspers' *Metaphysische Schuld* 53

PART IV: ANALYSIS **54**

Chapter 11: Stage I: The Participants' Life History Interviews *55*

11.1 "Daniel" 55

11.2 “Judith” 59
11.3 “Klaus” 63
11.4 “Heinrich” 67
11.5 “Paul” 72
11.6 “Hannah” 76
11.7 “Lena” 80
11.8 “Clara” 86
Chapter 12: Stage II: The Application of Jaspers’ Metaphysische Schuld *90*
12.1 *Die Schuldfrage* as *eine Grenzsituation* 90
12.2 Self-Transformation Before God 91
12.3 Individual and Humanity 93
PART V: DISCUSSION 95
Chapter 13: The Major Findings *96*
Chapter 14: The Study’s Limitations *98*
Chapter 15: The Potential for Future Research *101*
REFERENCES 102
Primary Sources *102*
Research Interviews 103
Secondary Sources *103*
APPENDIX: Interview Questions 108

PART I: INTRODUCTION

This section introduces the study, “The Question of *Metaphysische Schuld* in Contemporary Christian German Life Histories.” Chapter 1: “The Situation,” outlines the study’s central claim that Karl Jaspers’ concept of *metaphysische Schuld* (metaphysical guilt) is a useful framework to explore contemporary Christian German reflections on *die Schuldfrage* (“the question of German guilt” for WWII and the Holocaust). Chapter 2: “The Research Problem,” analyzes Jaspers’ *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) as a lecture, and outlines this study’s guiding questions. Chapter 3: “The Study,” announces the study’s purpose, principle findings, and organization.

Chapter 1: The Situation

1.1 Central Claim

"The question of German guilt" for the Second World War (WWII) and the Holocaust, henceforth *die Schuldfrage*, occupies formidable presence in German postwar philosophical, theological, and political thought. Its key terms and ideas are rooted in German philosopher Karl Jaspers' (1883-1969) University of Heidelberg lecture, *Die Schuldfrage: Von der politischen Hoffnung Deutschlands* ("The Question of German Guilt: The Political Hope of Germany," 1946).[1] Here, Jaspers argues post-war Germans must undertake intense and ongoing individual and group self-reflection: 1) to evaluate the conditions that led to National Socialism, 2) to differentiate "German guilt" in relation to one's complicity and participation in the Third Reich, and 3) to draw on philosophy and theology to illuminate *die Schuldfrage* in depth.[2] Throughout the lecture, Jaspers details his famous fourfold differentiations of "German guilt": *kriminelle Schuld* ("criminal guilt") denotes crimes; *politische Schuld* ("political guilt") examines deeds of statesmen and citizens as liable for the actions of the state; *moralische Schuld* ("moral guilt") comprises individuals' responsibility for their deeds, including the execution of military orders; and *metaphysische Schuld* ("metaphysical guilt") represents a violation of the "solidarity between men as fellow human beings."[3]

Over the last seventy-one years, Germans have reflected on *die Schuldfrage* within considerably complex situations, such as the Nürnberg Trials, postwar Allied military occupation, division into socialist and democratic states, and reunification into a single

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[1] Karl Jaspers, *Die Schuldfrage: Von der politischen Hoffnung Deutschlands*. München: Piper Varlag, GmbH, 2012. All quotes in this study are from English translation: Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt.* Translated by E.B. Ashton. New York: Capricorn Books, 1947. However, I consulted the original German throughout.

[2] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt,* 21-22.

[3] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 25-26.

Bundesrepublik ("republic"). Today, Germany faces another such situation in the so-called, *die Flüchtlingskriese* ("the Refugee Crisis"). Just as Jaspers expressed in his 1946 lecture, reflections within such contexts are expressed in diverse and sometimes contradictory ways. Understanding therefore requires talking amongst various individuals, and contemplating the experiences within their life histories that inform their reflections.

In seeking these expressions, this study claims Jaspers' specific concept of *metaphysische Schuld* is a useful framework to explore contemporary Christian German reflections on *die Schuldfrage.* Although this study does not assign (or assume) "German guilt" to participants (or their extended families), because Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* relies on individual self-reflection in relation to themselves (past and present), human kind (past and present), and God, it provides a useful theoretical framework to identify and explore the key variables, concepts, and constructs within participants' reflections. This analyses brings new insight on contemporary Christian German reflections on *die Schuldfrage* as a concept in relation to their life histories, their theological strategies to reconcile *die Schuldfrage,* and their observations regarding the potential relationship between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese.*

1.2 Prior Research

Prior research on *die Schuldfrage* as a concept and Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) are best contextualized within the broader category of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ("the struggle to master the past"). While both have received considerable scholarly research, most immediate post-WWII thought focused on *die Schuldfrage* as a concept. In 1959, German philosopher Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) coined the term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in his canonical essay, "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?" ("What is Meant by 'Working Through the Past'?") to capture the difficulties of understanding and learning from WWII within German

society.[4] Here, Adorno argued typical discussions of *die Schuldfrage* evidenced “the shadow of National Socialism” lived on, e.g., a “readiness” to avoid WWII topics, or an impulse to “draw up a balance sheet” of Allied and Axis wartime atrocities.[5] In his 1966 essay, “Education After Auschwitz,” Adorno expanded his thought with his oft-quoted thesis: “The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again.”[6]

Many other eminent twentieth century thinkers joined such discussions throughout their post-WWII careers, including philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975), philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), novelist Günther Grass (1927-2015), politician Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967), and architect Peter Eisenmann (1932 –). Over the last seven decades, multiple scholarly disciplines have researched German cultural expressions, public debates, and education processes of *die Schuldfrage* and *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* across artistic, historiographical, literary, political, and social fields. Today, North American and European university departments of German, History, Philosophy, Sociology, and Political Science commonly have interdisciplinary WWII-era specialists in Holocaust Studies, Memory Studies, German Studies, and biographical, philosophical, and political literature. Historically, such scholars have drawn on Jaspers’ (1946) framework to discuss guilt in post-conflict societies.[7] However, few Religious Studies or Theology departments house such expertise, and many of those scholars specialize in post-

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[4] Theodor Adorno, “The Meaning of Working Through the Past,” in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords.* Translated by Henry W. Pickford, 191-204. New York: Columbia University Press. 1998. In footnote 1, Pickford emphasizes the term’s connotations of “confrontation” and “overcoming,” as well as Adorno’s changing use of the word when referencing Germany’s need to “reappraise, or master’ the past”; “At the outset of the essay, Adorno contrasts ‘working through’ (*aufarbeiten*) with a serious ‘working upon’ (*verarbeiten*) of the past in the sense of assimilating, coming to terms with it.” (footnote 1, p 338).

[5] Adorno, “The Meaning of Working Through the Past,” 89-90.

[6] Theodor Adorno, “Education After Auschwitz,” in *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*. Translated by Henry W. Pickford, 191-204. New York: Columbia University Press (1998): 191.

[7] See: John W de Gruchy, “Guilt, Amnesty, and National Reconstruction: Karl Jaspers’ *Die Schuldfrage* and the South African Debate,” in *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 83 (1993): 3-15; and Tomoko Iwasawa, “Jaspers’ *Schuldfrage* and Hiroshima: Does the Concept of Guilt Exist for Japanese Religious Consciousness?” in *Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts* 3(1) (2008): 20-30.

Holocaust Jewish theology, Jewish-Christian relations, or German church history. For further discussion and literature review on prior research, see chapter 5.2.

1.3 Current Research

Within contemporary religious studies, current research focuses more on Jaspers' (1946) lectures than on *die Schuldfrage* as a concept. Alan M. Olson (1939 –) and Kurt Salamun (1940 –) are the foremost Jaspers scholars. Olson considers Jaspers' metaphysics from a hermeneutic framework, while Salamun studies Jaspers' existentialism and philosophy of religion. For discussion and literature review of both, see chapter 5.3.

Of Jaspers' fourfold scheme, *metaphysische Schuld* is the most complex and the least studied differentiation. As evidence of the scheme's multidisciplinary appeal, many scholars have studied one (or a combination of) Jaspers' differentiations, as relevant to their discipline. To illustrate, in "*Die Schulfrage* Sixty Years After," American Jewish philosopher Berel Lang (1933 –) judges *moralische Schuld* as Jaspers' most important differentiation based on two features of the lecture: Jaspers' "moral mediation" (placing himself and the reader "into a court of moral responsibility" to prompt reflection on the future and the past); and Jaspers' assumptions about the morals of his audience (the lecture does not address those still committed to Nazi principles after WWII, however, Lang argues this exclusion is integral to Jaspers' analysis because for *moralische Schuld,* the accused must concur in the verdict).[8] Historians Dan Diner (1946 –) and Joel Garb's "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives: Epistemological Observations Regarding the Holocaust" (1997) assert that public and scholarly acceptance of Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) are most discernable in philosophy and theology, but political, criminal, and historical studies continue to make contradictory interpretations and distinctions in order to decipher *die*

[8] Berel Lang, "Die Schuldfrage Sixty Years After," in *The Review of Metaphysics* 60 (2006): 105-107.

Schuldfrage's diverse expressions within the public sphere, e.g., *der Historikerstreit* ("The Historian's Debate") of 1986-89, and the Goldhagen Controversy of 1996.[9] In contrast, within modern history, genocide historian A. Dirk Moses (1967 –) emphasizes Jaspers' rejection of *kollektivschuld* ("collective guilt") as axiomatic in German intellectual and political history.[10]

Due to the recent timing of *die Flüchtlingskriese*, few scholarly studies are currently available. However, given its unquestionable presence within the German public sphere, one can anticipate considerable research to come.

[9] Dan Diner and Joel Garb, "On Guilt Discourse and Other Narratives: Epistemological Observations Regarding the Holocaust," in *History and Memory* 9(1) (1997): 305.
[10] A. Dirk Moses, "Stigma and Sacrifice in the Federal Republic of Germany," in *History and Memory* 19(2) (2007): 166. Also: A. Dirk Moses, "The Non-German and the German-German: Dilemmas of Identity After the Holocaust," in *New German Critique* 101 (2007): 45-94.

Chapter 2: The Research Problem

2.1 A Gap in Our Understanding

Of the scholars mentioned thus far, none have analyzed Jaspers *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) in its original medium as a university lecture. While standards of lecturing vary across historical, institutional, and disciplinary contexts, a close reading discerns two key elements important for this study and its questioning: the manner Jaspers addresses his students, and the learning outcomes. This study does not assume these outcomes were achieved within the original course materials. Unless records exist of student interactions in the lecture hall, this study assumes that Jaspers intended students to apply his framework beyond the classroom in the meditative and communicative manner he models and describes.

Jaspers delivered the lecture of *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) at the University of Heidelberg in January 1946. Jaspers begins by inviting students to consider their university environment under Allied military occupation as, "potentially the ideal circumstance," to cultivate philosophical and scientific methods separate from the practices and phraseology that dominated universities under National Socialism.[1] Jaspers addresses his students' distrust of each other and of the universities by acknowledging the difficulties in accepting their "full consciousness" of WWII, and by urging them to take ownership of their education; "But I beg you in the course of your studies to keep an open mind for the possibility that now it may be different – that now there really may be truth at stake. You are the ones who are called upon, each to help in his place so that truth may be revealed."[2] Here, Jaspers emphasizes the dependence of university research on the political situation, stating: "By our manner of teaching we professors will have to show that the radical

[1] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 1-3.
[2] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 1.

difference – though also marked in certain contents – decisively lies in the very way of thinking."[3] For Jaspers, consequentially, professors have "no business" in "dabbling in the political actions and decisions of the day."[4] Rather, professor and student researchers alike were to be unrestrained in seeking truth; "It means, rather, that we are free to try by all means, and in all directions, to discover the methodically exportable."[5] Jaspers claims such exploration differentiates the specific charges of *die Schuldfrage*, defends against collective charges against all Germans as a people, and clarifies the meaning of the charges within students' diverse circumstances.[6]

Jaspers' learning objectives are twofold. First: "We must learn to talk to each other."[7] Jaspers argues this will unify Germans in their ability to work together, and will establish the ability to talk to other peoples. Jaspers describes this objective as follows:

> "That is to say, we do not just want to reiterate our opinions but to hear what the other thinks. We do not just want to assert but to reflect connectedly, listen to reasons, remain prepared for a new insight. We want to accept the other, to try to see things from the other's point of view; in fact, we virtually want to seek out opposing views. To get at the truth, an opponent is more important than one who agrees with us. Finding the common in the contradictory is more important than hastily seizing on mutually exclusive points of view and breaking off the conversation as hopeless" (Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 5-6).

Second, "We must learn to accept our extraordinary differences."[8] Jaspers qualifies this objective by explaining these differences are based on one's complicity and participation in the Third Reich. Here, Jaspers acknowledges that given the intense public censorship under National Socialism, talking with each other in a post-war context is more difficult and more essential:

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[3] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 2.
[4] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 4.
[5] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 4.
[6] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.
[7] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 5.
[8] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 5.

> "We cannot sensibly talk to each other unless we regard the extraordinary differences among us as starting points rather than finalities. We have to learn to see and feel the difficulties in situations and attitudes divergent from our own. We must see the different origins – in education, special fates and experiences – of any present attitude" (Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 10-11).

For the remainder of the lecture, Jaspers outlines his fourfold differentiations of German guilt (see chapter 5.3). The first three differentiations were outcome-oriented, relying on the processes, authorities, and interactions beyond the classroom, as overseen by the Allied occupiers; e.g., *kriminelle Schuld* rested in criminal courts, *politische Schuld* presided in the actions of civilians and state, and *moralische Schuld* developed within individual consciences in communication with loved ones.[9] However, *metaphysische Schuld* was uniquely focused on the process, "the inner activity" Jaspers saw as essential in the unrestrained search for truth: unilaterally engaging in questions of the immanent (individual self-reflection and communication with close friends and fellow citizens) and the transcendent (God) in pursuit of a *self-transformation before God* (see chapter 5.3.4).[10] Here, Jaspers' acknowledges that not everyone will be aware of these questions; "Most deeply aware of it are those who have once achieved the unconditioned, and by that fact have experienced their failure to manifest this unconditioned towards all men."[11] Rather, those conscious of *metaphysische Schuld* will sense a "shame for something that is always present," that can be communicated with others only generally, but never concretely revealed.[12] Understanding the meditative and communicative nature of Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) therefore requires detailed analysis of the processes he argues and engages to achieve this awareness (and the discrepancies therein).

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[9] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 25-26.
[10] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.
[11] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.
[12] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.

2.2 Further Questions

As the manner Jaspers addresses his students and the learning outcomes illustrates, Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) prompts reflection best conceptualized in the meditative questions and process of *metaphysische Schuld*. From here, we can discern two guiding questions for Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) as a whole: what is the post-WWII situation as it was given, and what is the consciousness that could emerge from it? To address these, we must consider the specific philosophical and theological concepts and processes Jaspers' draws on at the time of *Die Schuldfrage's* (1946) circulation (see Part II: "Theoretical Framework"). As Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* relies on individual self-reflection in relation to themselves, human kind, and God, what do these reflections look like for Christian Germans seventy-one years after WWII? Here, we must access contemporary Christian Germans directly, and inquire: *what* do they experience as *die Schuldfrage* today and *how* do they ascribe meanings to these experiences within their life histories (see Part III: "Methodology & Method")? Next, we can inquire: *what* theological and philosophical strategies do contemporary Christian Germans use to reconcile their experiences of *die Schuldfrage,* and *why* do they perceive these experiences as important in their engagement with themselves, human kind, and God (or not) (see Part IV: "Analysis")?

Chapter 3: The Study

3.1 Purpose

This study explores eight Christian German reflections of *die Schuldfrage* in relation to their life histories to test Jaspers' concept of *metaphysische Schuld* for its explanatory power on the metaphysical nature of *die Schuldfrage* seventy-one years later. Throughout, the researcher refers to *die Schuldfrage* as the general concept of "the *question* of German guilt." Therefore, "German guilt" is a direct quote from Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) or participants' interviews. The results of this study inform the larger, more important task of understanding contemporary Christian German reflections on *die Schuldfrage* as a concept, participants' theological strategies to reconcile *die Schuldfrage,* and participants' observations regarding the potential relationship between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese.*

3.2 Principle Findings

The principle findings of this study were as follows. First, all participants associated *die Schuldfrage* with being German. Six participants reflected on their experiences with *die Schuldfrage* as "guilt," and two reflected on their experiences as "shame." Significantly, all participants perceived these reflections as expressions of a sense of *responsibility* for *die Schuldfrage* in contemporary Germany. Second, the two participants who rejected *die Schuldfrage* most adamantly reported the most *metaphysische Schuld*-ish reflection in relation to key experiences in their life histories. Two participants reported heightened sensitivity to *die Schuldfrage* shortly after converting to Christianity in early adulthood. Significantly, participants in both groups stressed the importance of using an image of God without an expectation of intervention. Rather, these participants argued that one must seek independent reflection despite the stresses of one's environment. Third, all participants considered the question of the degree

they could be “guilty” or “responsible” for *any* historical situation before they were born. This question informed participants diverse reflections on their experiences navigating Germany’s contemporary situation of *die Flüchtlingskriese*. Here, five participants affirmed a connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese*, two rejected a connection, and one did not provide a clear stance.

3.3 Outline

This study has five parts. Part I: “Introduction” announces this study’s situation within current and prior scholarly research, and details guiding questions. Part II: “Theoretical Framework” contextualizes the variables, categories, and concepts at issue in Jaspers’ *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) within the classical tradition, at time of the lecture’s circulation, and in contemporary scholarship. This context provides the structure of this study’s application of Jaspers’ concept of *metaphysische Schuld* to participants’ life history interviews. Part III: “Methodology & Method” details the study’s design, interviews and field research, and two-stage interview analysis process. Part IV: “Analysis” reports each participants’ life history interview response, and applies Jaspers’ concept of *metaphysische Schuld* to them to discern thematic and structural overlap and disagreement. Last, Part V: “Discussion,” synthesizes the study’s major findings, considers the study’s limitations, and reflects on the study’s potential for future research.

PART II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section presents Jaspers' (1946) *metaphysische Schuld* as this study's theoretical framework. Chapter 4: "The Key Variables," overviews theoretical considerations within the context of religious studies, classifies six categories at issue in Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), and examines Jaspers' famous fourfold scheme of distinctions. Chapter 5: "The Literature Review," surveys thinkers informing Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), and engaging with it across classical reference, at the time of circulations, and within contemporary scholarship. Chapter 6: "The Constructs in Jaspers' *Metaphysische Schuld*," establishes its three theoretical constructs, as informed by Jaspers' broader thought: guilt as *eine Grenzsituation*, self-transformation before God, and individuals in relation to humanity. Chapter 7: "The Research Warrant," synthesizes the study's theoretical framework with its methodology and method.

Chapter 4: The Key Variables

4.1 Theory Considerations in Scholarly Context

4.1.1 Description

In religious studies, *theory* broadly refers to "the myriad of conceptual tools used to 'see' religion."[1] As Deal & Beal (2004) argue, utilizing these tools constitute a *de facto* theory of religion, meaning the tools used to identify, to organize, and to make sense of "religious" beliefs and practices invariably posit a theory of what can be called "religious."[2] Such processes raise questions of definition, of theories *of* religion, and of the application of "theory" *to* methodologies/methods of data collection and analysis in religious studies. Within this context, this study uses Stausberg & Engler's (2014) definition of *theory*: "A model, set of concepts, categories, and propositions, or set of analytical tools that are used to explain or interpret (not merely to describe) a general type of phenomena (not just a particular case) [and] can foster understanding, prediction, and/or action."[3] Theory is therefore assumed present throughout the research process, and result of the complex interplay between theoretical concepts, research design, data collection, and reporting.[4] A *theoretical framework* therefore functions to organize and support the theory present within a study by introducing and describing three elements: 1) the key variables, categories, concepts, and constructs; 2) the descriptive vocabularies that best translate data, and 3) the location of the study within a shared theoretical horizon.[5] To facilitate this process, this theoretical framework draws on the five-step framework of religious studies

[1] Deal and Beal, *Theory in Religious Studies*, xi; and Stausberg, "There is life in the old dog yet," 2.
[2] Deal and Beal, *Theory in Religious Studies*, xi; and Stausberg, "There is life in the old dog yet," 2.
[3] Stausberg and Engler, "1.1: Introduction," 20.
[4] Stausberg and Engler, "1.1: Introduction," 9-11.
[5] Stausberg and Engler, "Introduction," 11.

scholar, Bruce Lincoln's (1948 –) *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, and Scholarship* (1999).

4.1.2 Background

Lincoln's framework for reading and analyzing religious texts is as follows. First, establish the categories at issue, noting their relation and ranking to one another.[6] Lincoln does not define *categories* within his framework, so this study draws on Stausberg and Engler's (2014) definition: "[Categories are] more general constructs and conceptions of phenomena than concepts: concepts are properties of categories."[7] Second, assemble related materials from the time of the text's circulation, noting key differences between how they deal with the same categories and concepts. Third, establish connections between the categories, concepts, and the historical situations of the groups within which the texts circulate. Fourth determine the date and authorship of the texts. Fifth, analyze and "draw reasonable inferences" about the interests advanced, defended, or negotiated.[8] Each step is engaged throughout chapters 4.2-6.

4.1.3 Rationale

While Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) is not a traditional "religious text" such as the ancient Indo-European myths Lincoln researches, Lincoln's framework is useful for this study in establishing the key variables across Jaspers' (1946) lecture broadly, and within the concept of *metaphysische Schuld* specifically. As Lincoln claims, these elements illuminate the relation between a social and historic situation, and the stories one tells about them. Additionally, they identify and organize the elements the author (Jaspers) seeks to modify, add, or rebuke.[9] Such

[6] Bruce Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth: Narrative, Ideology, Scholarship.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1999): 150-151.
[7] Stausberg, "There is life in the old dog yet," 3.
[8] Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth,* 150-151.
[9] Lincoln, *Theorizing Myth,* 150.

analysis generates the elements essential in exploring the study's research questions within participants' life history interviews.

4.2 Categories at Issue Across Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946)

There are six categories at issue across Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946): charges, causes, jurisdiction, consequences, defense, and purification. These categories were identified through close reading of Jaspers' (1946) lecture using Lincoln's (1999) framework.

4.2.1 Charges

Jaspers argues that the *charges* of *die Schuldfrage* are "universal," meaning they are charged by "almost the entire world" against Germany for the atrocities of WWII.[10] For Jaspers, these charges received their universal characteristic in summer 1945, when posters depicting photos of concentration camps and the statement, *Diese Schuldtaten: Eure Schuld!* ("These atrocities: Your fault!") hung throughout Germany. Jaspers described German responses to these posters as: "…consciences grew uneasy, horror gripped many who had indeed not known this, and something rebelled; *who indicts me here?* No signature, no authority – the poster came as through from empty space. It is only human that the accused, whether justly or unjustly charged, tries to defend himself."[11]

Jaspers argues the lessons of these poster were twofold: *world opinion* condemns Germany as a nation, and *die Schuldfrage,* as Germany's "own concern," requires clarification independent of world opinion.[12] Therefore, the statement, "You are the guilty," could have several meanings: "You must answer for the acts of the régime you tolerated," "You are guilty of giving your cooperation to this regime," and "You are guilty of standing by inactively when the crimes were

[10] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 21.
[11] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 41.
[12] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 41.

committed." Throughout the lecture, Jaspers argues that the first statement is true "without reservations," but the latter two require context-specific reflections.[13] Alternative interpretations included: "You took part in these crimes, and are therefore criminals yourselves," and "You are inferior as a nation, ignoble, criminal, the scum of the earth, different from all other nations."[14] Here, Jaspers argues both alternatives are "collectivist and false."[15]

4.2.2 Cause

In Jaspers' lecture, *cause* is, "[firstly in,] the general human events and conditions, and secondarily in special intra-national relations and the decision of single groups of men."[16] These events, conditions, and relations make up the *world situation:* the moral, everyday lives and characteristic behaviors of individuals and collectives that contribute to (and are products of) the *political situation* of an age. The political situation arises out of history, made real by ancestral political situations, and made possible by the broader world situation.[17] An individual cannot choose the situation he or she is born into, nor can an individual or group change it in a single event or within a single generation.[18] Here, Jaspers draws on Herodotus to place the individual within two schematically opposed possibilities: 1) *political liberty,* wherein the ethos of a political situation is the principle of the state, "in which all [citizens] participate with their consciousness, their opinions, and their wills"; or 2) *political dictatorship,* a political situation in which the majority of citizens are alienated from politics.[19] Jaspers argues the contemporary world-historical situation from which the causes of World War II and *die Schuldfrage* can be

[13] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 44.
[14] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 43-44.
[15] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 43-44.
[16] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 18.
[17] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 28-29.
[18] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 29.
[19] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 29.

analyzed "justly and unmercifully" as a "crisis of mankind" within the context: "a technical age and in world politics in the loss or transformation of all faith."[20]

4.2.3 Jurisdiction

Jaspers argues an accusation is only meaningful if it is clear who is the accused and who is the judge.[21] The accused is *charged from without* (charges by the world raised with the intention of effecting punishment or holding liable) and/or *charged from within* (charges by one's conscience and soul raised out of moral and metaphysical weakness). For Jaspers, it is unquestionable that someone needs to have the "right to accuse and indict."[22] However, Jaspers qualifies that whoever judges expose themselves to interrogations of the source of their authority, the motives for their judgment, and the situation in which the judged and accused meet.[23] Consequentially, there is no single judge suitable for all charges:

> "No one needs to acknowledge a worldly tribunal in points of moral and metaphysical guilt. What is possible in close human relationships which are based on love is not permitted to distantly cold analysis. What is true before God is not, therefore, true before man. For God is represented by no authority on earth – neither in the ecclesiastic nor in foreign offices, nor in world opinion announced by the press (Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt,* 1946: 36).

4.2.4 Consequences

For Jaspers, consequences correspond to the specific charges. These consequences affect daily life, whether or not the individuals and groups realize it. Jaspers argues that all Germans are "guilty"; "If everything said before was not wholly unfounded, there can be no doubt that we Germans, every one of us, are guilty in some way."[24] Here, Jaspers lists four consequences. First, all Germans, "without exception," share in political liability. Consequentially, all must cooperate

[20] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 18.
[21] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 32-33.
[22] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 36.
[23] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 36.
[24] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 67-68.

in making legal amends (*politische Schuld*). Second, all Germans may defend themselves, but with the knowledge that only a small minority will be punished for National Socialist activities by the courts (*kriminelle Schuld*). Third, all Germans have reasons to morally analyze themselves (*moralische Schuld*). Here, the individual only recognizes the authority of his or her own conscience. Fourth, all Germans capable of understanding this analysis will transform their approach to the world; "How this happens none can prescribe, and none anticipate. It is a matter of individual solitude. What comes out of it has to create the essential basis of what will in future be the German soul" (*metaphysische Schuld*).[25]

4.2.5 Defense

Jaspers argues that wherever charges are raised, the accused must be allowed a hearing. The accused has six options for defense. First, the defense can *urge differentiation;* "Differentiation leads to definition and partial exculpation. Differentiation cancels totality and limits the charges."[26] Second, the defense can adduce, stress and compare facts. Third, the defense can appeal to natural law, human rights, and international law. However, any group that has violated these laws on principle, "at home from the start, and later, in war," has no claim to recognition of such laws on their favor. Fourth, the defense can judge if an indictment is not "a true bill," but a "weapon" for the victors to use for other purposes. In the specific charges of moral and metaphysical guilt, guilt charges to political ends are to be rejected.[27] Fifth, the defense can reject the judge if they have reason to believe them prejudiced, or if the matter is "beyond the jurisdiction of a human tribunal," such as *metaphysische Schuld's* accountability to God.[28] Sixth, the defense can make *countercharges*; "[pointing] to acts of others" which helped cause the

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[25] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 68.
[26] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 38.
[27] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 39.
[28] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 39.

atrocities and are labelled as crimes for which the vanquished are charged, or "[pointing] to general world trends" which evidence a guilt common to all mankind.[29]

4.2.6 Purification

For Jaspers, Germans charges from within (*moralische* and *metaphysische Schuld*) were more important than charges from without (*criminelle* and *politsche Schuld*). Jaspers argues the charges from within have been "voiced in German souls" under National Socialism; "They, by the changes they effect in ourselves, old or young, are the source of whatever self-respect is still possible to us."[30]

4.3 Concepts of Guilt in Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946)

The core thesis of Jaspers' (1946) lecture is his differentiation of four concepts of "German guilt." Each concept is detailed below with reference to the categories outlined in chapter 4.2.

4.3.1 Kriminelle Schuld ("Criminal Guilt")

Kriminelle Schuld denotes *crimes;* acts capable of objective proof and violate unequivocal laws.[31] Jaspers identifies three charges against Germany: WWII as caused by Hitler's Germany, WWII as the largest war the world had seen, and WWII victor's as establishing the Nuremberg Trails to indict.[32] Jurisdiction rests in *courts,* which apply formal proceedings to determine "the facts" in question, and to apply the law.[33] As consequence, crime meets with *punishment.* These charges come from without. While the judge is required to acknowledge the accused's choice to

[29] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 40.
[30] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 43.
[31] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 25.
[32] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 45-46.
[33] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 25.

commit the crime, the accused is not required to acknowledge the justice of his or her punishment.[34]

4.3.2 Politische Schuld ("Political Guilt")

Politische Schuld involves the deeds of statesmen and citizens. The charge is the liability of all citizens for the deeds of their state; "Everybody is co-responsible for the way he is governed."[35] These charges come from without. The cause for *politische Schuld* is civilian actions within the state, specifically, voting or failing to vote in elections; "The sense of political liability lets no man dodge."[36] Jurisdiction rests in the will of the victor, and the accused meets *liability.* Consequentially, there are necessary reparations, restrictions in political power and rights, and in the case of political guilt as decided by war: destruction, deportation, or extermination. Here, Jaspers argues there is no defense.[37]

4.3.3 Moralische Schuld ("Moral Guilt")

For *moralische Schuld*, the individual is held morally responsible for all deeds, including the execution of military orders.[38] Jaspers argues such self-identification with the army and state, "in spite of all evil," was made possible under National Socialism by a misinterpretation of Romans 13:1.[39] Here, Jaspers claims Germans are divided by their greatest differences, as the acts specific to *moralische Schuld* varied as much as individual's decisions to engage in self-reflection thereon.[40] This self-reflexivity is the cause of *moralische Schuld,* as it is based on an individual's capacity for conscience, repentance, and penance. Charges come from within, and

[34] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.
[35] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 25.
[36] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 56.
[37] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.
[38] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 25-26.
[39] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 59-60.
[40] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 57.

one can only condemn oneself, not others.[41] Acts of specific *moralische schuld* include: living in disguise (e.g., appearing to participate in National Socialist activities, such as giving the Hitler salute), false consciousness (e.g., the view that "being a good soldier" absolved one from guilt), self-deception (e.g., the view that *der Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* ["the German National Socialist Party," abbreviated as "the NSDAP") would disappear after WWII), passive and apathetic "blindness" to the misfortune of others, and "running with the pack" (e.g., conforming to NSDAP demands to maintain employment).[42] Jurisdiction rests in one's conscience, which exists in communication with friends and others "who are lovingly concerned about my soul."[43] Here, Jaspers emphasizes that *moralische Schuld* can only be discussed among men in solidarity with one another. The consequence is *insight,* which involves *penance and renewal;* inner developments that impacts one's engagement with the external world.[44]

4.3.4 Metaphysische Schuld ("Metaphysical Guilt")

Metaphysische Schuld is the lack of the "absolute solidarity" with fellow human beings. This solidarity is defined as follows:

> "There exists a solidarity among men as human beings that makes each co-responsible for every wrong and every injustice in the world, especially for crimes committed in his presence or with his knowledge. If I fail to do whatever I can to prevent them, I too am guilty. If I was present at the murder of others without risking my life to prevent it, I feel guilty in a way not adequately conceivable legally, politically, or morally." (Jaspers, *The Question of Metaphysical Guilt,* 1946:26).

The charges of *metaphysische Schuld* are therefore of "violation" of this solidarity. The causes of *metaphysische Schuld* depend on one's consciousness of it, and therefore exist beyond morality (which is always influenced by mundane purposes) and in *universality*: "Every human

[41] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 33.
[42] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 58-64.
[43] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt,* 27.
[44] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.

being is fated to be enmeshed in the power relations he lives by. This is the inevitable guilt of all, the guilt of human existence."[45] Jaspers' does not define this "guilt of human existence" within *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), and we must look into his broader thought to understand his wording (see chapters 5 and 6).

The consequence of *metaphysische Schuld* is a *transformation of human self-consciousness before God;* "Pride is broken. This self-transformation by inner activity may lead to a new source of active life, but one linked with an indelible sense of guilt in that humility which grows modest before God and submerges all its doings in an atmosphere where arrogance becomes impossible."[46] Individuals most conscious of *metaphysische Schuld* have "achieved the unconditioned," meaning they have realized human solidarity exists and an action (or inaction) of theirs has violated it.[47] Jurisdiction rests with God alone. While it may be the subject of individual revelations or the work of poets and philosophers, it is not the subject of communication between others. Consequentially, there are no defense or purification for *metaphysische Schuld*; "If human beings could free themselves from metaphysical guilt, they would be angels and all other concepts of guilt would be immaterial."[48]

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[45] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 28.
[46] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.
[47] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.
[48] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.

Chapter 5: The Literature Review

To understand the philosophy and theology Jaspers' draws on to illuminate *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) broadly and *metaphysische Schuld* specifically, one must first consider his academic background. Jaspers began his career in psychology, studying at the universities of Munich, Göttingen, and Heidelberg before completing his doctoral thesis in 1909. In 1913, Jaspers' published his first major work, *Allegemeine Psychopathologie: Ein Leitfaden für Studierende, Ärzte und Psychologen* ("General Psychopathology"). In 1916, Jaspers became a professor of psychology at the University of Heidelberg. By 1919, he published the equally notable, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen* ("The Psychology of Worldviews"). However, as Jaspers describes in his "Philosophical Autobiography," 1920 was a crossroads for his career. On the one hand, his methodologies were applied to many university courses on psychology of religion, social psychology, and the psychology of morals; "I could have branched out on the level I had reached, viewing things in a way which probably had content but was philosophically unclear. The temptation was great to publish such a book every year or two, each one supposedly momentarily successful".[1] On the other hand, psychology was no longer intellectual fulfilling; "Another level of thinking had to be gained. That meant the decision to make a new start from the beginning."[2]

Jaspers decided to change his field from psychology to philosophy, but it did not go smoothly. Jaspers reports his lack of publications in the subsequent decade almost destroyed his career, but he viewed this time as essential in developing his existentialism in the three-volume, *Philosophie: Band I-III* ("Philosophy: Volumes I-III" 1931).[3] Jaspers described this work as

[1] Jaspers, "Philosophical Autobiography," 34.
[2] Jaspers, "Philosophical Autobiography," 35.
[3] Jaspers, "Philosophical Autobiography," 35-37.

achieving two feats. First, it uncovered Jaspers' two assumptions that 1) scientific knowledge is indispensable in philosophy; and 2) philosophy is the inner activity that leads to the full realization of *self* and "awakens the sources" that give meaning to scientific knowledge.[4] Second, it defined his *Existenz*-philosophy that became the basis of is philosophical, theological, and political thought for the remainder of his career:

> "*Existenz*-philosophy is the way of thought by means of which man seeks to become himself; it makes use of expert knowledge while at the same time going beyond it. This way of thought does not cognize objects, but elucidates and makes actual the being of the thinker. Brought into a state of suspense by having transcended the cognition of the world (as the adoption of a philosophical attitude towards the world that fixate being, it appeals to its own freedom (as the illumination of *Existenz*) and gains space for its own unconditioned activities through conjuring up Transcendence (as metaphysics)" (Jaspers, "Philosophical Autobiography," 1957: 40).

Throughout Germany's twelve years of National Socialism, Jaspers never hid his opposition, but neither did he publically criticize the regime. Historian Mark W. Clark claims Jaspers evidenced considerable "political naiveté," as illustrated by the single reference to National Socialism in *Die geistige Situation der Zeit* ("The Spirit of the Age," 1931), despite its publication two years before Hitler came to power.[5] In 1933, Jaspers was banned from participation in all university administration activities because he refused to divorce his Jewish wife, Gertrud Mayer (1879-1974). In 1934, like all civil servants at the time, Jaspers took the oath of loyalty to Adolf Hitler. As of 1938, Jaspers was "retired" from his university post, and forbidden to publish, teach, or conduct research elsewhere.[6] In April 1945, Jaspers and his wife

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[4] Jaspers, "Philosophical Autobiography," 40. Here, Jaspers is quoting, *Man in the Modern Age.* For a *mammoth* collection of original essays and commentary on Jaspers' existentialism, see: Paul Arthur Schlipp (ed). *The Library of Living Philosophers: The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers*. New York: Tudor Publishing Company, 1957

[5] Clark, A Prophet Without Honour, 199.

[6] Clark, A Prophet Without Honour, 200.

were on the list of deportees to Ravensbrück concentration camp, but were spared by the American occupation of Heidelberg weeks prior.[7]

From 1945-1948, Jaspers was one of the most recognized intellectuals in the Allied occupation zones. In 1945, Jaspers was elected as an honorary senator of the University of Heidelberg, and asked by the American occupiers to be the German Minister of Culture. He declined due to his age and immanent move to Basel, Switzerland.[8] As Clark reports, Jaspers understood post-WWII Germans as dependent on the Allied occupation powers for the scope of activities allowed, and also believed Germany could be "recreated anew from its depths in a new situation with a view to the world situation and her co-responsibility in it."[9] Understanding this world situation required understanding *die Schuldfrage* amongst individuals before engaging existing cultural institutions such as Germany's universities.[10] Within this context, Jaspers turned his post-WWII philosophical attention in two directions: 1) towards religion, developing his concept of *philosophical faith* as the middle-ground between fundamentalism and atheism, and 2) towards politics, developing his concept of *the world citizen*.[11]

5.1 In Classical Reference

In addressing *die Schuldfrage* as a concept in his lectures, Jaspers draws on three concepts in classical philosophy: 1) Søren Kierkegaard's concept of guilt as dialectic, 2) Immanuel Kant's critique of metaphysics, and 3) Georg Wilhem Friedrich Hegel's master-slave relationship.

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[7] Clark, A Prophet Without Honour, 200.
[8] Alan M. Olson, "Introduction: A Dialectic of Being and Value," in *Heidegger and Jaspers,* ed. Alan M. Olson, *Heidegger and Jaspers.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press (1994): 7.
[9] Clark, A Prophet Without Honour, 200-202.
[10] Clark, A Prophet Without Honour, 202.
[11] Of Jaspers' many publications from 1948 until his death in 1969, his most notable works are: *Der Philosophische Glaube* ("The Philosophical Faith," 1948); *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* ("The Origin and the Goal of History," 1949); *Die Frage der Entmythologisierung* with Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976) ("Myth and Christianity: An Inquiry into the Possibility of Religion without Myth," 1954); *Die Atombombe und die Zukunft des Menschen* ("The Atom Bomb and the Future of Man," 1961); and *Der philosophische Glaube angesichts der Christlichen Offenbarung* ("Philosophical Faith and Revelation," 1962).

5.1.1 Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855)

As previously discussed, Jaspers' concept of *moralische* and *metaphysiche Schuld* hinge on the individual's capacity to be conscious *of* guilt. However, Jaspers urges these two concepts are misleading in identifying their source. As Jaspers states at the beginning of his lecture: "But in the end these distinct concepts are to lead us back to the one source, which cannot be flatly referred to as our guilt."[12] Here, Jaspers does not define what "our guilt" means. However, at the end of the lecture, Jaspers explicitly states something of what "our guilt" is not:

> "The question of original sin must not become a way to dodge German guilt. Knowledge of original sin is not yet insight into German guilt. But neither must the religious confession of original sin serve as guise for a false German confession of collective guilt, with the one in dishonest haziness taking place of the other" (Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt,* 94).

Here, Jaspers' is drawing on Kierkegaard's thesis on the dialectical nature of guilt from *Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift til de philosophiske Smuler* ("Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs," 1846) to argue that at its broadest philosophical and theological possibilities, *die Schuldfrage* is not about original sin. In this canonical work, Kierkegaard states "guilt is the expression of the strongest self-assertion of existence," in answer to the question of how consciousness of guilt becomes "the decisive expression" of the relation of an individual to eternal happiness.[13] To identify Jaspers' perceived source of "our guilt" fully, one must understand Jaspers' use of Kierkegaard's consciousness of guilt as *a dialectic*; an expression of the relationship between existence and the individual conscious of existence.[14] See chapter 6.1 for discussion on Jaspers' concept of guilt as *eine Grenzsituation* ("boundary situation").

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[12] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.

[13] Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Scientific Postscripts to the Philosophical Crumbs*, edited by Alastair Hannay, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 442.

[14] Kierkegaard, *Concluding Scientific Postscripts*, 442.

5.1.2 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831)

Throughout his lecture, Jaspers addresses the Allied countries as "the victors" and the Germans as "the vanquished". Jaspers gets these terms from his characterization of war as a situation of *force;* the ultimate decider in dealings between humans which serves societal control from within (e.g., state law enforcement) and from without (e.g., world war). By virtue of force's purpose, Jaspers states: "Where force is used, force is aroused."[15] Jurisdiction and consequences rest in the will of the victors. Therefore, there is limited potential for defense: "The vanquished can either die or do and suffer what the victor wants. As a rule, he has always preferred to live."[16] Here, Jaspers argues that force in the post-WWII world situation embodies Hegel's master-slave relationship.[17] Through consciousness, the victors and the vanquished mediate themselves *with* themselves and *for* each other through their mediations of their exchanges; as Hegel states, in his monumental *Phänomenologie des Geistes* ("The Phenomenology of Spirit," 1807): "They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another."[18]

Jaspers repeats this characterization to his students throughout his lecture: "Let us be clear about this in our minds: that we live and survive is not due to ourselves…As today every German government is an authoritarian government set up by the Allies, so every German, every one of us, owe the scope of his activities today to the Allies' will or permission. This is a cruel fact."[19] Just as Hegel's slave becomes conscious of himself through work, so Jaspers argues the vanquished who prefers life over death "can only live in truthfulness – the only dignity left to him if he decides upon this life in full realization of its meaning." However, Jaspers

[15] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 31.
[16] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 31.
[17] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 31.
[18] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* edited by J. Hoffmeister. Oxford: Oxford University Press (1977): 112.
[19] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 8-9.

acknowledges this is precisely what Hegel demonstrated humans would like to avoid most.[20] See chapter 6.2 for discussion on Jaspers' ideas of human self-transformation before God.

5.1.3 Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

The metaphysical structure across Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) is predominately Kantian, and Kant is deemed as Jaspers' primary influence by contemporary scholarship. As Koterski (2000) notes, Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) draws on Kant's doctrine of the Three Ideas (the World, the Soul, and God) from *Kritik der reinen Vernuft* ("The Critique of Pure Reason," 1781) to assert that reason must theorize about reality in order to compensate for how we will never be presented with the entirety of it, yet desire to understand its entirety; "We human beings know anything that we do come to know only within the boundaries of some horizon or another."[21]

In Jaspers' lengthiest materials on *metaphysische Schuld* in *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), he draws on Kant's 1795 essay, *Zum ewigen Frieden: ein philosophischer Entwurf* ("Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch") as follows: "We could seek death when from the start of the war the régime acted against the words of Kant, our greatest philosopher, who called it a premise of international law that nothing must occur in war which would make a latter reconcilement of the belligerents impossible."[22] Here, Jaspers situates his claim of German consciousness of *metaphysische Schuld* going back to the 1930s, where he argues: "the crimes of the régime became publically apparent on June 30, 1934."[23] Although Jaspers does not call it by its established title, this date was *der Nacht der langen Messer* ("The Night of the Long Knives"). This claim further develops Jaspers' thesis that Germans had been aware of *die Schuldfrage* throughout National Socialism, with the purpose to support his ideas of the universal charges of

[20] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 102-103.
[21] Koterski, "Introduction to the 2000 Edition," xviii.
[22] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 66.
[23] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 65.

die Schuldfrage and the violation of the solidarity among fellow human beings. See chapter 6.3 for discussion on the individual in relation to humankind.

5.2 In the Time of *Die Schuldfrage*'s (1946) Circulation

Jaspers was well-connected amongst twentieth century German intellectuals, including sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), evolutionary biologist Ernst Mayr (1904-2005), and theologian Rudolph Bultmann (1884-1976). Jaspers' most influential (and most researched) relationships were with Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Hannah Arendt (1913-2005), and Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005).

5.2.1 Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

Jaspers and Heidegger had a lifelong but troubled relationship. The degree they influenced each other's works is debatable, and this study found no published response from Heidegger on Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946). However, *die Schuldfrage* (as a concept) was a point of contention in their post-WWII relationship. While Heidegger holds more prestige today, Jaspers and Heidegger were first philosophically associated with each other in the 1920s for their metaphysics.[24] By the 1930s, Jaspers and Heidegger vehemently opposed each other on the place and purpose of universities in society, and on Heidegger's open support of NSDAP.[25] In December 1945, Jaspers wrote the report to the Freiburg University Senate Committee that led to Heidegger's teaching ban in January 1946. In Jaspers view, Heidegger's silence about his

[24] For an exploration of Heidegger's and Jaspers' differing reception after WWII, see: Alan M. Olson, "Cultural Factors in the North American Reception of Karl Jaspers," in *Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts* 4(1) (2009): 40-51. For an excellent essay comparing Jaspers' and Heidegger's thought within their historical context, see: Paul Tillich, "Heidegger and Jaspers," in *Heidegger and Jaspers*. Edited by Alan M. Olson. 16-28. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.
[25] Olson, "Introduction: A Dialectic of Being and Value," 6.

involvement with the Nazi Party was a political statement indicative that "certainly [Heidegger] did not see through the real forces and purposes of the National Socialist leader."[26]

5.2.2 Hannah Arendt (1906-1975)

Jaspers was Arendt's doctoral supervisor from 1926-1929, and they maintained a lifelong correspondence.[27] After WWII, Arendt's first contribution to discussion of *die Schulfrage* appeared in her 1945 essay, "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility."[28] Here, Arendt identifies the Nazi propaganda strategy of removing any conceivable difference between Nazis and Germans as the root for Germans expressions of shame for being Germans. As consequence, there were no post-WWII distinctions of guilt and responsibility because by virtue of this strategy, "they [the Allies] will find no one to whom the title of war criminal could not be applied."[29] Arendt's thought on this strategy changed in her canonical, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) with her identification of "gangster complicity" (political offices which a lack of interrelationship between members of a social class or political status) as a key factor in the Nazi spread of complicity throughout German society; "for totalitarianism uses its power precisely to spread this complicity through the population until it has organized the guilt of the whole people under its domination."[30]

In 1961, Arendt infamously expressed her views on Germany's post-WWII reflections on National Socialism in, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1961). As

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[26] Anson Rabinbach, "The German as Pariah: Karl Jaspers and the Question of German Guilt," in *Radical Philosophy*, 15 (1996): 15-16.
[27] See: Jon Nixon, "Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers: The Time of Friendship," In *Journal of Educational Administration and History 48* (2) (2016): 160-172. English translations of Jaspers' and Arendt's letters are published in: Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, *Hannah Arendt Karl Jaspers Correspondence 1926-1969.* Edited by Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner. Translated by Robert and Rita Kimber. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich Publishers, Inc. (1992).
[28] Hannah Arendt, "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility," in *Jewish Frontier*, 1945: 19-23.
[29] Arendt, "Organized Guilt and Universal Responsibility," 19.
[30] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism,* new edition with added prefaces. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1979: 407-408.

Arendt reported on the trial of *Schutzstaffel-Obersturmsbannführer* (SS-lieutenant colonel) Adolf Eichmann for the *New Yorker*, she observed and described Germany's response to Eichmann's capture and trial as disengaged, with the exception of concern for their own image to the rest of the world:

> When Eichmann was captured, Chancellor Adenauer had foreseen embarrassment and had voiced a fear that the trial would "stir up again all the horrors" and produce a new wave of anti-German feeling throughout the world—as it did. During the ten months that Israel needed to prepare the trial, Germany was busy bracing herself against its predictable results by showing an unprecedented zeal for searching out and prosecuting Nazi criminals within the country. At no time, however, did either the German authorities or any significant segment of public opinion demand Eichmann's extradition, which seemed the obvious move, since every sovereign state is jealous of its right to sit in judgment on its own offenders" (Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem,* 1964:16).

5.2.3 Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005)

Jaspers served as Ricoeur's doctoral supervisor after WWII. At the time of *Die Schuldfrage's* (1946) publication, Ricoeur contextualized Jaspers' lectures as appearing at a time of considerable turmoil in European Christianity. On the one hand, those who remained devotedly Christian attempted to return to its perceived origins to rule out contemporaneous cultural and political "contaminations" (e.g., National Socialism). On the other hand, "the great humanisms inherited from the 19th century" provoked many people to conceptualize human existence without God.[31] Within a few years of this statement, their relationship came to a permanent end, and scholars continue to speculate on the exact cause. The most common explanation is irreconcilable intellectual differences regarding the nature of religious commitment.[32]

Ricoeur took up Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004). In this book, Ricoeur seeks: "[to undertake] the question of representation of the past on the plan of

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[31] Paul Ricoeur, "The Relation of Jaspers' Philosophy to Religion," in *The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers,* 69-70.
[32] Mark D. Gedney, "Jaspers and Ricoeur on the Self and the Other," in *Philosohy Today* (2004): 331

memory and of history at risk of forgetting."[33] In the final section: "Epilogue: Difficult Forgiveness," Ricoeur draws on Jaspers' concept of *Grenzsituationen* to explore the reflective thinking between the polarities of what Ricoeur calls, "the depth of fault" and "the height of forgiveness."[34] Here, Ricoeur adopts: "a reading grid similar to that proposed by Karl Jaspers in *Die Schuldfrage* – that shocking work of the early postwar period, translated as *The Question of German Guilt*..." to analyze the social role of institutions established for the purpose of public accusation, and the possibilities of forgiveness for the atrocities.[35] For Ricoeur, such forgiveness goes beyond the existential capacities of guilt to designate, "the ineluctable space of consideration due to every human being, in particular to the guilty."[36]

5.3 In Contemporary Scholarship

There are two major Jaspers scholars in religious studies today: Alan M Olson (1939 –) of the Boston University Institute for the Philosophy of Religion, USA, and Kurt Salamun (1940 –) of *das Institut für Philosophie* ("The Institute for Philosophy") at the University of Graz, Austria.

5.3.1 Alan M. Olson (1939 –).

Olson's research engages Jaspers' thought from metaphysics and hermeneutic frameworks in relation to myth, transcendence, and symbols. Olson is also past-president of the Karl Jaspers Society of North America.[37] In *Transcendence and Hermeneutics: An Interpretation of the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers* (1979), Olson draws on Jaspers' philosophy of *Existenz* to explore diverse interpretations on the nature of God, as experienced in historical consciousness.[38] One of

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[33] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* translated by Kathleen Blamey & David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004): 457.
[34] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* 457-458.
[35] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* 470.
[36] Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* 458.
[37] Karl Jaspers Society of North America, "Welcome," accessed on May 4, 2016. http://www.bu.edu/paideia/kjsna/.
[38] Alan M. Olson, *Transcendence and Hermeneutics: An Interpretation of the Philosophy of Karl Jaspers.* Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1979.

Olson's most known works is the edited volume, *Heidegger and Jaspers* (1994), comprising essays from diverse fields comparing Jaspers and Heidegger's thought.[39] In 2009, Olson continued to explore his perceived cultural, religious, political factors impacting Jaspers reception amongst North American speaking scholars in, "Cultural Factors in the North American Reception of Karl Jaspers."[40]

In specific regards to Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), Olson explores *metaphysische Schuld* in his essay, "Metaphysical Guilt" (2008).[41] Here, Olson compared Jaspers' thinking to Ricoeur, Augustine of Hippo, and Kant to argue that *metaphysische Schuld* is *a posteriori* in the order of time (as it develops only in an *Achsenzeit* [axial age]), and *a prior*i in the order of logic.[42] For Olson, just as metaphysical guilt is "written in the hearts of man" as if it were *a priori*, so it is also "inconceivable and incomprehensible" in the sense that it transcends linguistic and interpersonal communication.[43]

5.3.2 Kurt Salamun (1940 –)

Salamun is the current President of the *Österreichische Karl-Jaspers-Gesellschaft*.[44] Salamun's work argues that Jaspers' existentialism and philosophy of religion offer a moral framework for the conditions under which humans can achieve self-realization as *Existenz*. This thesis can be traced to his 1988 essay, "Moral Implications of Karl Jaspers' Existentialism," wherein Salamun argues Jaspers' four types of communication are analogous with his four

[39] Alan M. Olson (ed.), *Heidegger and Jaspers.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993.
[40] Alan. M. Olson, "Cultural Factors in the North American Reception of Karl Jaspers," in *Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts* 4(1) (2009): 40-51.
[41] Alan M. Olson, "Metaphysical Guilt," in *Existenz: An International Journal in Philosophy, Religion, Politics, and the Arts* 3(1) (2008): 9-19.
[42] Olson, "Metaphysical Guilt," 19.
[43] Olson, "Metaphysical Guilt," 11-12.
[44] Österreichische Karl-Jaspers-Gesellschaft, "Home ÖKJG," accessed May 4, 2016. http://www.karljaspers.info/.

dimensions of self-realization.[45] It also continues to be present in Salamun's recent works, wherein he distinguishes between Jaspers' existentialism and his philosophy of religion. Of note, in his chapter on Karl Jaspers in *History of Western Philosophy of Religion: Volume 5* (2009), Salamun argues that one is not to take *how* to realize morality literally within Jaspers' methodology. As Salamun criticizes, if one was to follow Jaspers' demands to "transcend" the descriptive form and content of his language, one would never be able to interpret any of his philosophical propositions; such a literal interpretation would put both Jaspers and his readers in danger of what Solomon called "philosophical mysticism".[46] Instead, the best way to interpret Jaspers is to see his methodological demands as "an appeal to philosophical open-mindedness that does not reduce all Being to what which can be objectively articulated."[47]

[45] Kurt Salamun, "Moral Implications of Karl Jaspers' Existentialism," in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 49(2) (1988): 317-323. Jaspers' introduces of these groups in *Philosophy: Vol. 2.* Jaspers' four types of communication are: 1) primal communication; 2) intellectual communication; 3) communication in the idea; and 3) existential communication. Jaspers' four dimensions of human self-realization are: 1) *bloßes Dasein* ("mere existence"), *Bewußtsein überhaupt* ("consciousness at large"), *Geist* ("spirit"), and *Existenz*.
[46] Salamun, Kurt. "Karl Jaspers." In *History of Western Philosophy of Religion, Volume 5: Twentieth-Century Philosophy of Religion.* Edited by Graham Oppy and N.N. Trakakis, 119-132. Durham: Routledge (2009):122.
[47] Salamun, "Karl Jaspers," 122.

Chapter 6: The Constructs in Jaspers' *Metaphysische Schuld*

6.1 Guilt as *eine Grenzsituation* ("Boundary Situation"):

Within Jaspers' broader thought, *eine Grenzsituation* ("a boundary situation") is one of five basic facts of human life: *dasein* (we are always in situations), *Tod* (death), *Zufall* (suffering and misfortune), *Kampf* (struggle), and *Schuld* (guilt). They are unavoidable and unchangeable; "They are like a wall we run into, a wall on which we founder. We cannot modify them, all that we can do is to make them lucid, but without explaining or deducing them from something else. a situation that I cannot live without or avoid."[1]

Jaspers' first wrote on *Grenzsituationen* in *Psychologie die Weltanschauungen* (1919) from a psychological perspective. By 1931, Jaspers' approach changed alongside changes in his philosophical focus in *Philosophie: Band I-III* (1931).[2] Here, Jaspers describes the specific *Grenzsituation* of *Schuld* as the inevitable consequences (known and unknown) of every act in the world. To those aware of the *Grenzsituation,* "the consequences of [these actions] frighten him because, although he never thought of them, he knows he caused them."[3] By one's consciousness of *Schuld*, one "[incurs] a guilt that is objectively inconceivable and incomprehensible to me as it lurks in the silent background of my soul. It is this guilt which most radically shatters self-righteousness in my *Existenz* that becomes real."[4] When the consequences of these actions arise, one becomes guilty of *inaction;* "action by omission, and it has

[1] Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy: Vol. 2*. Translated by E.B. Ashton. Chicago: University of Chicago Press (1969): 178.
[2] Alfons Grieder, "What are Boundary Situations: A Jasperian Notion Reconsidered," in *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 40(3) (2009): 330-332. As Grieder observes, all five *Grenzsituationen* are interrelated, but Jaspers does not analyze their relationships explicitly. Exegesis of the many shifts in Jaspers' thought could be a thesis of its own. For the purposes of this study, we rely on the philosophical account of *Grenzsituationen* found in *Philosophie: Band II* (1931)*,* given its relevance to the philosophical and theological thought at issue in Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946).
[3] Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy, Vol 2.,* 215.
[4] Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy, Vol 2.,* 216.

consequences."[5] Here, one has two options: 1) to avoid the *Grenzsituation,* or 2) to accept the consequences that come "without my direct volition."[6] For Jaspers, whereas the former is denial for the act that caused suffering onto another, the latter is *responsibility;* "the readiness of man to take the guilt upon himself."[7]

Jaspers' describes this concept almost verbatim in his description of *metaphysische Schuld* in *Die Schuldfrage* (1946):

> "Metaphysical guilt is the lack of absolute solidarity with the human being as such – an indelible claim beyond morally meaningful duty. This solidarity is violated by my presence at a wrong or a crime. It is not enough that I cautiously risk my life to prevent it; if it happens, and if I was there, and if I survive where the other is killed, I know from a voice within myself: I am guilty of still being alive" (Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt,* 1946: 65).

In considering *metaphysische Schuld* as *eine Grenzsituation*, we can therefore identify its core construct as follows: even within the complex, dangerous, and compromising situations of world war and National Socialism, *Schuld* is inevitable. For Jaspers, by virtue of the unique impacts of National Socialism, this inevitability has two unique features: 1) in criminal, political, and moral spheres, one does not need to be conscious of *Schuld* in order to be given it, 2) in metaphysical spheres, one is conscious of *Schuld* and its inevitability, and *takes it upon themselves readily*.

6.2 Self-Transformation Before God

For Jaspers, once the individual has taken *metaphysische Schuld* upon themselves, they begin a process of reflection in relation to the immanent (individual self-reflection and communication with close friends and fellow citizens) and the transcendent (God) in pursuit of a *self-transformation*.[8] Jaspers translator Leonhard H. Ehrlich (1924-2011) provides a helpful

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[5] Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy, Vol 2.,* 216.
[6] Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy, Vol 2.,* 217.
[7] Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy, Vol 2.,* 217.
[8] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.

contextualization of Jaspers' concept of self-transformation in Kierkegaard's subjectivity.[9] As Ehrlich states:

> "The decisive originality that Jaspers perceives in Kierkegaard's knowing response to the crisis of modernity can be summarized as follows: unrelenting reflection leads to the realization the fundamental truth transcends human reason, renders such truth in the end to be a matter of faith, and places the burden of proving it on the fallible shoulder of the individual. In the words of one of Kierkegaard's pseudonyms, 'truth is subjectivity'" (Ehrlich, "Jaspers Reading Kirkegaard," 2003: 238).

This "unrelenting reflection" is therefore both the outcome and the process of self-transformation in *metaphysische Schuld*. The primary construct is therefore that one must be conscious *of metaphysische Schuld* in order to be "metaphysically guilty," and to engage in the self-reflection required to begin one's self-transformation *given* by this guilt. Transformation occurs before God because the charges, jurisdiction, and consequences of *metaphysische Schuld* rest with God alone. However, Jaspers qualifies shame and guilt of this reflection will never be satisfied: "There remains shame for something that is always present, that may be discussed in general terms, if at all, but can never be completely revealed."[10] As consequence, the individual's pride is broken, modesty before God grows, and engagement with fellow man occurs "in an atmosphere where arrogance becomes impossible."[11]

6.3 Individual and Humanity

For Jaspers, human beings invariably come to a point where they have to make the impossible choice of risking their lives or surviving. Here, the source our *metaphysische Schuld* is that humans have themselves up to live in one of two capacities: "to live only together [being our

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[9] Leonard H. Ehrlich, "Jaspers Reading Kierkegaard: An Instance of the Double Helix" in *Karl Jaspers on Philosophy of History and History of Philosophy*, edited by Joseph W. Koterski and Raymond J. Langley, 236-242 (Amherst, N.Y: Humanity Books. 2003), 238.
[10] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 27.
[11] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 30.

closest ties only] or not at all".[12] Therefore, the construct is that "the guilt of human existence" is that we are limited to the situation we find ourselves in. For Jaspers, this means that we are guilty by virtue of the power relations of the situation we are born in, and therefore live by.[13]

[12] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 26.
[13] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 28.

Chapter 7: The Research Warrant

In, *The Craft of Research, Fourth Edition* (2016), scholars Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, and William T. Fitzgerald define *research warrants* as general principles that connect reasons for a given study to the claims it makes about its topic. They are important when the specific principles of reasoning, situations, and consequences of specific communities of researchers are not explicit or obvious.[1] Given the study's unique scholarly and contemporary situations (see Part I: "Introduction") and its complex theoretical, philosophical, and theological backgrounds (see Part II: "Theoretical Framework"), the researcher restates the research warrant here to synthesize the theoretical framework with the methodology and method going forward.

At the end of WWII, Germans faced considerable charges of "guilt" for National Socialism from within German society and throughout the world. Within this context, Jaspers' published his lectures, *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), to facilitate discussion on "the question of German guilt" amongst individuals, and on the acceptance of these individuals' diverse (and sometimes contradictory) experiences of the historical situation in question.

Throughout considerably complex situations over the next decades, philosophical and theological discussions considered both *die Schuldfrage* (as a concept) and Jaspers' 1946 lectures (specifically) in order to understand the impact of the past within the German public sphere. Seventy-one years after WWII, Germany faces another complex situation in the so-called, *die Flüchtlingskriese*. Given the ongoing decades of thought informing these discussions, we can

[1] See "Warrants" in: Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, Joseph Bizup, & William T. Fitzgerald, *The Craft of Research*, 4th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (2016): 155-174.

infer that *die Schuldfrage* continues to hold considerable and ongoing presence within the German public sphere.

This study seeks to break away from public expressions of *die Schuldfrage* to inquire on individual Christian German expressions. This task requires talking to various individuals about their reflections on *die Schuldfrage*, and contemplating the life experiences that inform their reflections. As participants are embedded in Germany's present situation, and their family members were embedded in the historical situation of WWII, we can infer that investigating their life histories will provide the necessary data (see Part III: "Methodology & Method").

Given that data and their interpretations do not exist "out there" waiting to be found, we need a theoretical framework to structure and inform our inquiry.[2] As Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* requires intense and transformative individual self-reflection in relation to themselves, to human kind, and to God, it provides the ideal framework to identify and explore key variables, concepts, and constructs within participants' reflections. This analysis brings new insight on contemporary Christian German reflections on *die Schuldfrage* as a concept in relation to their life histories, their theological strategies to reconcile *die Schuldfrage,* and their observations regarding the potential relationship between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese* (see Part IV: "Analysis").

[2] Allen, "Phenomenology of Religion," 196 and 202.

PART III: METHODOLOGY & METHOD

This section details the study's methodology and methods. Chapter 9: "The Design," overviews three topics: methodology and methods considerations within religious studies, humanistic psychologist Amadeo Giorgi's (1931 –) empirical phenomenology the methodology, and life history interviews conducted over field research the method. Each topic includes a basic description, background, and rationale. Chapter 10: "The Interviews and Field Research," overviews this study's participants, interview process, and ethical considerations. Chapter 11, "The Data Analysis," describes the two-stage life history interview analysis.

Chapter 8: The Design

8.1 Methodology & Methods Considerations in Scholarly Context

8.1.1 Description

The primary consideration for methodology and methods design in religious studies is the multi-disciplinary nature of the field. This is convoluted by how religion as a research object often defies conventional definition and categorization strategies. Consequentially, there is considerable debate regarding the *why* and *how* of scholarly work; from the research design, to the roles and tasks of a researcher, and to the validity, analysis, and interpretation of data. Within this context, this study was aligned with Stausberg & Engler's (2014) twofold conception of *methodology* as: 1) the technical issues in relation to *methods* ("accepted modes of scholarly analysis and production of data"), and 2) the theorization and conceptualization of methods in relation to their direct impact on data interpretation.[1] As this study focused on the meanings ascribed to experience, the researcher's own assumptions were treated as a methodological concern.[2] The researcher therefore assumed a *self-critical approach* to make her presuppositions explicit, to emphasize participants' experiences with the methodology (phenomenology), and to seek descriptions (as accurately as possible) of the these experiences with the method (life history interviews via field research).[3] This approach was supported in conducting interviews with *methodological agnosticism*; "we neither confirm nor deny the existence of gods."[4]

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[1] Stausberg and Engler, "1.1: Introduction," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. Edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler. New York: Routledge (2014): 20.
[2] Stausberg and Engler, "1.1: Introduction," 4.
[3] Douglas Allen, "Phenomenology of Religion," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*. Edited by John R. Hinnels. New York: Routledge (2005): 201.
[4] Ninian Smart, *The Science of Religion and the Sociology of Knowledge*, *Science of Religion and the Sociology of Knowledge: Some Methodological Questions*. Princeton University Press: Princeton (1973): 54.

8.1.2 Background

Methodological agnosticism is rooted in the thought of sociologist of religion, Peter Berger (1929 – 2017) and phenomenologist of religion, Ninian Smart (1927-2001).[5] Both proposed research methods using the phenomenological concept of *bracketing;* "the process of removing layers of interpretations surrounding a particular experience, ideally until one has reached a description of the subjective experience itself."[6] However, they differ in their assumptions of the meaning and purpose of bracketing between researchers and their subjects.[7] In *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion* (1969), Berger proposed *methodological atheism*, whereby religion is to be understood as, "a human projection, grounded in specific infrastructures of human history."[8] Research is therefore "value-free" with regard to the "good" and "bad" implications of religious perspectives.[9] In contrast, in *The Phenomenon of Religion* (1973), Smart developed his method of *bracketed expression,* whereby the scholar inserted the subject's expressions of religion into his or her understanding of "religion" as a phenomenon of study without concern for the truth value of the expression's content. The scholar would therefore be "agnostic" about the truth or validity of a religious perspective.[10]

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[5] Graham Harvey, "2.8: Field Research: Participant Observation," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*. Edited by Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler. New York: Routledge (2014): 224.
[6] Harvey, "2.8: Field Research: Participant Observation," 224. See also: Emma Bell and Scott Taylor, "Uncertainty in the study of belief," in *International Journal of Social Research Methodology 17*(5) (2014): 544.
[7] Philosopher of religion James L. Cox argues that bracketing is the equivalent of the Husserlian *epoché* in both Smart and Berger's work. See James L. Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion: Key Figures, Formative Influences, and Subsequent Debates.* London: The Continuum International Publishing Group. (2006*):* 160-161.
[8] Peter Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*: *Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books Editions (1990): 180.
[9] Berger, *The Sacred Canopy*, 180.
[10] Ninian Smart, *The Phenomenon of Religion*, Oxford: A.R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd., (1978): 31. Berger emphasized that his term was not to be "misinterpreted as atheism *tout court*" (1990:180). Smart challenged Berger, stating the term was a rhetoric device for keeping "a total account or explanation of religion" within the boundaries of sociology, as it "comments on the 'true state of affairs'" and thus "effectively indistinguishable from atheism *tout court*" (1978:58-59). Scholars continue to debate and align themselves to "atheistic" versus an "agnostic" methodologies with this same debate; for example: Porpora (2006) and Bell and Taylor (2014).

8.1.3 Rationale

The rationale for this study's alignment of Stausberg & Engler (2014) and methodological agnosticism was their use of bracketing. As previously defined, the process of bracketing means that the researcher cannot assume the meanings ascribed to past and present experience, nor can they prioritize one participant's experiences as "more truthful" than another's. This aligns with this study's treatment of *die Schuldfrage* as a broad concept, and this study's two-stage analysis of participant life history interviews (see chapters 10 and 11).

8.2 Methodology: Amadeo Giorgi's Empirical Phenomenology

8.2.1 Description

The methodology for this study was Giorgi's *empirical phenomenology,* a four-step conceptual framework for studying "human experiential and behavioral phenomena".[11] First, the researcher assumes an attitude of *phenomenological reduction* ("positing as existing whatever object or state of affairs is present to her") and reads all interview transcriptions "to get a sense of the whole."[12] Second, the researcher breaks the transcripts into *meaning units*; shifts in meaning(s) of the specific phenomenon under study within each participants interview responses.[13] Here, Giorgi stresses that the process of identifying meaning units is arbitrary, and the meaning units themselves carry no theoretical weight; "…there are no 'objective' meaning units in the description as such."[14] Third, the researcher "transforms" the meaning units into

[11] Amadeo Girogi, "The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method," In *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology 43* (2012):4.
[12] Giorgi, "The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method," 4; and Amadeo Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach.* Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press (2009): 128.
[13] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 128-130. It is also important to remember that the participants' linguistic representation of the experience *not* the same as the experience itself; "Description is the use of language to articulate the intentional objects of experience" (Girogi, "The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method," 5-6).
[14] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 130.

phenomenologically sensitive expressions; individual descriptions that capture something of the theme(s) and/or structure(3) of the specific phenomenon under study. Giorgi describes this step as "the heart of the method," and the most laborious.[15] There are no criteria for number of transformations required for a given study. Fourth, the researcher synthesizes the findings from step three into a report.[16] These four steps are unpacked within the specific context of this study in Ch.11.1. To do so, this study drew upon for three resources: Giorgi's, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach* (2009); Giorgi's, "The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method" (2012); and sociologist of religion James V. Spickard's, "2.15: Phenomenology" in *The Routledge Handbook to Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (2012).

8.2.2 Background

Giorgi's thought was informed by philosophical phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), and the research specialization, the phenomenological theory of science. In *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology: A Modified Husserlian Approach* (2009), Giorgi argues Husserlian and scientific phenomenology are compatible based on four principles. First, Husserlian phenomenological inquiry is more comprehensive than traditional empiricism, as it considers *real* and *irreal* objects simultaneously, thus broadening what can be deemed "empirical" in a given study.[17] Second, scientific phenomenological theory is not sufficiently researched, and therefore requires a systematic framework to expose its gaps.[18] Third, Husserlian phenomenology can provide this systematic framework, as it gives priority to consciousness with

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[15] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 130.

[16] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 145.

[17] In Husserlian phenomenology, a *real* object is in time and space, is regulated by causality, and is independent of consciousness. Conversely, an *irreal* object is any object that lacks one of these characteristics, e.g., ideas and meanings. See: Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 67.

[18] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology,* 68.

the assumption that nothing can be expressed without first being given to someone's consciousness, and a systematic framework must consider both.[19] Fourth, the possibilities that surround the experiences given to consciousness are left open to new "horizons."[20]

8.2.3 Rationale

The application of Giorgi's empirical phenomenology as this study's methodology provided the technical and philosophical support required by the study's emphasis on participants' experiences and descriptions of personal and family experiences of *die Schuldfrage* within a contemporary context.[21] Here, it is important to note that Giorgi proposed his framework as a method, but this study used it as a methodology (see definitions in Ch.9.1). As life history interviews seek participants lived lives and their reflections on them, Giorgi's four-step framework provided a systematic means to engage, transform, and synthesize descriptions of *die Schuldfrage* and *metaphysische Schuld* within the data.

8.3 Method: Life History Interviews and Field Research

8.3.1 Description

The method for this study was life history interviews conducted over field research. Life history interviews are engaged across anthropological, historical, and sociological sciences, with specific applications to phenomenological, ethnographic, and biographic studies. They are often applied in combination with field research, focus groups, expert interviews, and archival work.[22] In religious studies, life history interviews explore descriptions of participants' religious lives in

[19] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology,* 68.
[20] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology,* 68.
[21] Spickard, "2.15: Phenomenology," 334.
[22] See: Grimes, "Negotiating Religious Life Histories in North American Religious Studies"; Plummer, *Documents of Life 2*; L. L. Langness, *The Life History in Anthropological Science: Studies in Anthropological Method,* edited by George and Louise Spindler. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965; and Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life 2*: *An Invitation to Critical Humanism.* London; SAGE Publications, Inc., 2001.

relation to their reflections on them. Such research seeks to understand religious phenomena from participants' points of view, to interpret the meaning of participants' experiences, and to analyze the participants lived world.[23] As most research concentrates on religious founders, saints, philosophers, and theologians, the lives of everyday practitioners are relatively undocumented and unstudied.[24]

This study drew upon three resources to understand life history interviews as a method: anthropologist of religion Robert Grime's, "Negotiating Religious Life Historis in North American Religious Studies" (1998), Plummer's, *Documents of Life 2: An Invitation to Critical Humanism* (2001), and anthropologist Lewis L. Langness', *The Life History in Anthropological Science* (1965).[25] This information was supplemented with essays from Stausberg and Engler's (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion* (2014), and interview processes and strategies from educational psychologists' Svend Brinkmann and Steinar Kvale's, *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing* (3rd ed.).

8.3.2 Background

Sociologist and critical humanist Ken Plummer contextualizes life history research topics within one of three possible streams; biography, how a life history is told, or the relationship between a life history and the lived life.[26] Key questions in such study include: why do people tell stories of their lives; what would make them tell their stories differently; can some stories *not* be told; what influence does the researcher have on the life history that the participant tells; and

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[23] L. L. Langness, *The Life History in Anthropological Science: Studies in Anthropological Method,* edited by George and Louise Spindler. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1965): 4-5.
[24] Ronald L. Grimes, "Negotiating Religious Life Histories in North American Religious Studies," in *International Journal of Practical Theology 2*(1) (1998): 65.
[25] Grimes, "Negotiating Religious Life Histories in North American Religious Studies," 65-85; Plummer, *Documents of Life 2*; Langness, *The Life History in Anthropological Science*, 4-5.
[26] Brinkmann, and Kvale, *InterViews*, 14; and Plummer, *Documents of Life 2*, 40-41.

once the life history has been researched, reported, and disseminated, who is its author?[27] As this study explores participants lived lives in relation to past and present phenomena, it is situated in the third stream.

8.3.3 Rationale

Life history interviews is an ideal method to study participants' reflections on religious phenomena in relation to their lived lives. During fieldwork, both researcher and participants can access each other in-person and therefore establish rapport, share resources, and engage in participant and field observation.[28]

[27] Plummer, *Documents of Life 2*, 40-41.
[28] Grimes, "Negotiating Religious Life Histories in North American Religious Studies," 69-72.

Chapter 9: The Interviews and Field Research

This study's life history interviews were conducted in English and German over two weeks' field research in Berlin, Germany from November 8-24, 2016. There were eight participants, with self-identified genders as four male and four female. All interviews were recorded (sound only) via iOS app, Voice Record, and averaged 60-90 minutes long. If in-person meetings were not possible, interviews were conducted over Skype.

9.1 Participant Recruitment

All participants were recruited using snowball sampling over email. Participant criteria were as follows: ages 18-65, family experiences to the Axis alliances of WWII, and self-identified as "Christian". There were no criteria in relation to geographic location, church attendance, number of years identified as "Christian", or specific beliefs/branch of Christianity. Given the size and timeline of the study, there was little research benefit to categorizing participants geographically, denominationally, or demographically with the research question's focus on *die Schuldfrage*.

9.2 Interview Process

Interviews were semi-structured with five questions. This approach allowed each interview to take its own direction while maintaining focus on the research question.[1] Participants were given interview questions during recruitment, and could decline to answer any question they wished. Given the metaphysical emphasis of the theoretical framework and the empirical emphasis in the methodology, a structured interview process may have unintentionally shaped participants' responses.[2] For interview questions, see Appendix: "Interview Questions."

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[1] Davidsson Bremborg, "Interviewing," 310-311 and 319.

[2] In contrast, a highly-structured interview approach is Plummer's *action model for life history* in *Documents of Life 2* (2001: 41-44): All participants are organized into three major groups: 1) producers of stories (storytellers and coaxers); 2) the products of stories (objects and texts); 3) consumers and interpreters of stories (readers and

9.3 Ethical Considerations

This study was approved by the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board (CFREB) in November 2016. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, the personal nature of the research data, and the historical settings under question, the researcher acknowledged that participants could experience emotional distress during the interview. This risk was unavoidable, but no greater than one would encounter when holding a similar conversation in everyday life. As such, recruitment materials acknowledged that this study could not guarantee participants' total anonymity, and included a list of counselling resources in Berlin, Germany. Participants could decline answers to any interview question(s) during the interview, and/or withdraw from the study up to March 1, 2017. Participants could also opt for an alternative interview method: education scholar Hanne Kirstine Adriansen's (2012) *timeline interview technique*.[3] Lastly, the participants could conduct a follow-up session to review their responses one week later. No participants took the last two options.

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viewers), all of which Plummer argues are engaged in *life history actions* around lives, events, and happenings. Plummer therefore views life history telling as a social process, as occurring specific local contexts, and as connecting to wider cultural narratives.

[3] Hanne Kirstine Adriansen, "Timeline Interviews: A Tool for Conducting Life History Research," in *Qualitative Studies* 3(1), 2012: 40-55.

Chapter 10: The Interview Analysis

Upon return from field research, the researcher transcribed all interviews and translated all German content into English. Any errors in translation or interpretation are subsequently hers alone. Two interviews were conducted entirely in German, and the remaining were a mix of German and English. Direct quotes translated by the researcher are identified in the footnotes. All others quote the participants' English statements directly. Interview analysis occurred in two stages, as outlined below.

10.1 Analysis Stage I: The Participants' Life History Interviews

First, the researcher assumed an attitude of phenomenological reduction, and read all interview transcriptions to get a sense of the whole. The researcher therefore treated the interview transcriptions as their own phenomenon, and based analysis *exclusively* on the transcripts given. Second, the researcher reread the interview transcripts to select the passages most relevant to the research question. Of the 166 pages originally transcribed, 113 were included in the analysis. Next, the researcher determined the meaning units, marking whenever the participants' descriptions of interview questions experienced a transition in meaning.[1] Here, the researcher sought shifts in meaning, events, persons, and/or historical period.[2] Third, the researcher transformed the data, "still basically in the words of the subject," into statements and expressions relevant to the participants' experiences of *die Schuldfrage*.[3] As Giorgi described, this was the most difficult and the most creative part of analysis. In the researcher's experience, this was also

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[1] Girogi, "The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method," 4-8.
[2] Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 145. Giorgi stated that in the case of psychological phenomenological analysis, a sentence is not a meaningful unit by which to break descriptions down; "[A] sentence is a unit of grammar and not necessarily sensitive to psychological reality...[nor] the primary way that a psychological reality reveals itself in expressions." (Giorgi, *The Descriptive Phenomenological Method in Psychology*, 128). This was true for this study as well.
[3] Girogi, "The Descriptive Phenomenological Psychological Method," 5.

where her presuppositions were the most methodologically apparent. Fourth, the researcher reported on participant's life history interview responses individually. Each report was structured along participants' reflections on key themes: *die Schuldfrage* and themselves, relevant family history, religious beliefs and *die Flüchtlingskriese.*

10.2 Analysis Stage II: The Application of Jaspers' *Metaphysische Schuld*

In stage II, the researcher took the three constructs of *metaphysische Schuld* (*die Schuldfrage* as unavoidable, reflection on *die Schuldfrage* as means of self-transformation before God, and *die Schuldfrage* as a violation of the solidarity amongst men as human beings) and applied them to results of analysis stage I to discern thematic and structural overlap and disagreements.

PART IV: ANALYSIS

This section reports this study's analysis of participants' life history interviews in relation to Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld*. Chapter 12: "Stage I: Participants' Life History Interviews" reports participants' life history interview responses, and presents the results of applying Giorgi's empirical phenomenology to discern the themes and experiences that emerged across participants' described experiences of *die Schuldfrage*. Participants are listed in the order they were interviewed. Chapter 13: "Stage II: The Application of Jaspers' *Metaphysische Schuld,*" presents the results of applying Jaspers' concept of *metaphysische Schuld* to participants' interview responses to explore shared (and differing) themes and concerns.

Chapter 11: Stage I: The Participants' Life History Interviews

11.1 "Daniel"

Daniel was born in a Bavarian village split between East and West Germany in 1953. Part of the "68-ers," Daniel questioned his parents' generation for their (in)actions preceding and during National Socialism.[1] Daniel stated his parents made such claims as: only a small group knew about the atrocities, Germans were looking to use the government "differently," and National Socialism was the better alternative to communism.[2] As Daniel responded:

> But still, we, you know, the younger generations, did not trust our fathers anymore. We had the feeling: *You really messed up.* I don't know if you know that book *Die vaterlose Gesellschaft* (1998). It was a big success in Germany, so a 'fatherless society' because the sons did not trust their fathers; *We cannot believe you anymore.* So, in a way the 68-er movement was sort of an 'angry sons' movement who just had to protest what their fathers think ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

For Daniel, the 68-ers therefore did not feel guilt, but *shame*; a "pervasive" and "collective" sense of belonging to a "seriously flawed culture."[3] This shame carried *responsibility* for their parent's generation, and required public repentance and education to ensure, "something like that doesn't happen again."[4] Daniel argued that such responsibility was difficult for any collective, but the legacy of his generation's efforts were evident in practices such as: building memorial sites (e.g., *das Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas,* ["The Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe"]), educating future generations (school field trips to concentration camps), recognizing scapegoat and "apocalyptic" rhetoric (e.g., anti-Semitic and anti-refugee political platforms), and exercising vigilance for the emergence of "populist" and "apocalyptic" movements; Daniel defined such movements as "…[of whom] had an enemy identified, and who

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[1] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16th, 2016.
[2] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[3] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16th, 2016.
[4] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16th, 2016.

promised the country to be great again," e.g., *der Alternativ für Deutschland* ["Alternative for Germany," abbreviated as: "the AfD"], *der Rote Armee Fraktion* ["The Red Army Faction"], and Donald Trump [1946 –] as president of the United States of America).[5] However, Daniel argued that agreeing on the terms of these practices is as difficult today as decades ago. To illustrate, Daniel described how some Germans prefer the term *Shoah* to *Holocaust*:

> Of course, the term *holocaust* is a terrible term. So many Germans don't use the term Holocaust because they would rather talk about *shoah* because holocaust refers to the situation of Leviticus 15 and 16 and this means that holocaust is the animal which is sacrificed to God and was a term coined by Elie Wiesel (1928-2016) who said maybe we choose to think about the Shoah as a holocaust. But if those who performed the Holocaust call it holocaust then it becomes very awful because then it would be the Germans who chose to sacrifice the Jews to God and this would be a terrible term ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

Such contentions contributed to a major debate in Daniel's youth on how Germans were to conceptualize WWII and the Holocaust within world history. However, as Daniel noted, the two dominant sides of the debate could not avoid the responsibility and shame implicated in belonging to the collective that instigated the atrocities under question. On the one side, adherents argued to place WWII's events and actors within a *historical perspective*; e.g., attention to chronology and artefacts. Daniel noted this relativized their characteristics and impact, thus distancing them from a sense of responsibility. On the other side, adherents claimed WWII and the Holocaust were unprecedented in human civilization. Daniel responded that this problematically bolstered them as, "a metaphysically evil thing," incomparable to other atrocities with similar characteristics; e.g., Russian gulags.[6]

For Daniel, Christianity defined the differences in morality and politics between his parents. Daniel described his mother as, "a devout Christian," raised in a Protestant household active in

[5] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16th, 2016.
[6] These issues came to an intellectual head in *der Historikerstreit* ("The Historian's Debate") in 1986-1989.

die Bekenntniskirche ("The Confessional Church").[7] While Daniel's mother grew up around Hitler resistance, Daniel claimed her Christianity informed her politics most; "It was interesting for us as children to see that my mother was a dearly devout Christian and she had an inner compass obviously not to run into that political disaster."[8] In contrast, Daniel described his father as unreligious (attending church only as part of community life), and as a "whole-hearted" supporter of Hitler:

> My father had seven brothers and three of them stayed away from Nazism but four of them thought, *Yeah, that's it.* It was quite embarrassing to see that, but you also have to say, *Ja…* Again, accept what has happened and not judging first and running away, but then when you take responsibility you can know what to do ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

In 1942, Daniel's father was captured by the Americans while fighting in Africa. He spent three years in a prisoner of war (POW) camp in Oklahoma. He reported, "a good life", and "respectful" treatment, unlike reports of POW internment in Russia, Britain, and France.[9] After WWII, American troops were stationed in their village at the West/East German border. Their presence subsequently provoked intergenerational reflections on whether the end of WWII was a "defeat" or "liberation" for Germany.[10]

In light of the multiple debates that defined Daniel's generation, Daniel studied theology as a way to reconcile what his parents meant to him:[11]

> So, on the one hand, we had the piety of the mother, and the other hand the critical distant approach of the father, and if you like, theology is always both. You have to bring something but you also have to have a critical view to ask: *What is this? What drives me?* So, I always found the kids in a way [try] to integrate what the two parents meant to them. They want to pay tribute to both in a way ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

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[7] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[8] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[9] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[10] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[11] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.

For Daniel, this questioning meant that human reason was essential when considering *die Schuldfrage* in relation to questions of God. As Daniel stated:

> I mean, the funny thing is that while the Germans did all that, at the same time many Germans said: *Can there be a God after Auschwitz?* This was a big debate and I sometimes find this a little bit crazy because will you just leave God out of that game? I mean, you did it, so you'd better first talk about yourself: *How can I still believe in myself after what I have done?* ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

Thus, to take responsibility for dark periods of one's personal biography or collective histories, one had to develop an image of God without expectations of *intervention*; punishing the wicked, giving direction, etc. For Daniel, regardless of the specifics of this image (e.g., God as hidden or embodied in a Christ-like figure), it functioned to give the individual hope their questions could be answered.[12] This hope took the form of daily prayer and self-criticism, asking: "Lord, am I doing the right thing?"[13] Prayer therefore functioned to lament and to accuse, but without belief in God, such questions were "senseless," as: "What could one expect as an answer? But if one believes in a god who is benevolent and wants this world to be a kingdom of God, then one can ask: *What was on your mind?*"[14]

To the interview question of whether Daniel had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Daniel replied: "No, I think this is a very wrong view that in a way out of guilt Merkel acted like that."[15] Daniel argued this claim with two points. First, the number of refugees entering Germany was irrelevant because under German law, they had the right to enter the country, "period." However, this was not to suggest there would be no impact. To illustrate, Daniel compared contemporary responses to responses to the similar "refugee crisis" after WWII, and its impact on Germany's religious landscape:

[12] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[13] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[14] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[15] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.

> Suddenly, you had hundreds of Protestants in a little Catholic village and then they built a second church and then the Catholics are saying, *what is this?!* Now we have this thing with the Muslims and they build mosques and many Germans are saying: *A mosque?! This is Islamicization and it's like a wave!* But this is Nazi language and all these identity movement from Hungary to Austria to Netherlands and France [are causing problems] ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

Second, Germany had learned from WWII what "apocalyptic politics" looked like; "We hate it and we have learned out of it and just cannot stand it."[16] For Daniel, the core issue of such platforms was their hypocrisy:

> We have 5 million Muslims here. We will not get rid of them. Then Merkel says, *Islam belongs to Germany*, which is absolutely right, but then all these right wings protest saying: *No, we are a Christian country*. But they are only Christian insofar as they are against Muslims. They are not really Christians. They just use Christianity as a cultural label to fight against the Muslims ("Daniel," Research Interview, November 2016).

11.2 "Judith"

Judith recalled her earliest encounter with *die Schuldfrage* at age six the 1970s. Judith described feeling implicated in something heinous that she didn't understand; "As I child, I had this feeling…this feeling of: *What about the Jews? Where are the Jews?* Although I had never heard anything."[17] Throughout her interview, Judith argued that *die Schuldfrage* was a useful concept because the German people are "guilty" for the Holocaust, but that Jaspers' specific thesis from *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) was too "abstract" to offer *practical solutions*; actions that an individual could perform independently on an as-needed basis, that had no risk of confusion about whether the individual understood the practice (or not), and that enacted a three-step process of *forgiveness* and *atonement* (first, one brought their guilt to Jesus; second, one asked Jesus for his forgiveness; third, one asked the wronged person for their forgiveness).[18]

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[16] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[17] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[18] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

Judith's recollections of her family history directly impacted her interpretations of *die Schuldfrage.* Judith described her family history as, "fractured from the beginning," based on four characteristics. First, Judith's maternal grandfather and their family were under threat during WWII. Judith's grandfather was a rancher who was known to have anti-Hitler views. One day, a village preacher told him that when the war was won, their land would be taken away and their family sent to a concentration camp.[19] Second, Judith's father was displaced during WWII. Judith claimed her father's displacement was his "punishment" for Germany's "guilt" for the Holocaust: "My father was a refugee. He was a refugee and lost everything. To this guilt comes the punishment, which he has lost everything and never got back home. His family, with 8 children, fled through all of Germany from the Russians."[20] Third, Judith's parents came from different religious backgrounds. Her mother was Catholic and her father was Evangelic, which Judith described as, "an explosive combination."[21] Fourth, Judith's parents were *nominally Christian*, meaning they were baptized but didn't attend church. Judith argued that given this history, *die Schuldfrage* did not apply to her. However, she nonetheless encountered it when travelling:

> I wince for the introduction that I am from Germany. My grandfather was a resistant! My grandfather, he paid a high price for his family because he was beaten down. They had the preacher in the concentration camp and they wanted to take away his farm. He was under threat. And this is something I cannot understand because it has two aspects. It has my personal aspect, and my identity as a German because we do not have this identity because we [Germans] have this shame ("Judith," Research Interview, November 2016).

At age 17, Judith moved to Israel. Judith stated, "I liked to get to know this people. How do they see things? What happened?"[22] Overall, Judith had positive experiences and felt the Israelis

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[19] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[20] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[21] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[22] "Judith". Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

saw her differently from other Germans. Judith recounted one exception in an encounter with an Austrian: "There was a story in a *kibbutz*. There was an Austrian, young man who was always with all the ladies. I refused him and he retaliated by calling me a Nazi. From an Austrian!"[23] Upon her return to Germany, Judith moved to Berlin and converted to Christianity. Judith recounted her conversion as follows:

> With the words of Paul, Jesus came into my room, and took me into his arms. That is of course very personal and one can say it sounds a little bit crazy […]. It was like a vision or maybe physical, I don't know but the core point of that was that I knew I knew I knew that Jesus was real ("Judith," Research Interview, November 2016).

With conversion, Judith's understanding about guilt and forgiveness shifted in focus from reconciling on her relationship with the "wronged" person, to reconciling on her relationship with Jesus: "We need to redeem or to reconcile every day because I am not a perfect person. I make mistakes so I need that for my relationship to Jesus."[24] As outlined previously, Judith's "practical solutions" sought divine before human forgiveness. Judith supplemented this process by reading the New Testament and praying daily. Judith did not provide further details, but stated "The Parable of the Unforgiving Debtor" captured her understanding best (Matthew 18:21-35).[25]

Judith had previously encountered questions of God in relation to WWII and the Holocaust, but felt there were two aspects that people do not consider. First, Judith stated WWII was not "on God's heart," but the consequence of "human will"; "People have their own will and this own will they do evil things and this is the reason that it could happen because people felt better or feel more important or powerful. This is a fallen world and this is the reason why then things

[23] "Judith". Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[24] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[25] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

could happen like that."[26] Second, Judith compared what she called, "the mainstream Christianity" to "the Jewish people" to argue that they mutually affirmed that WWII happened because of "disobedience":

> There is a mainstream Christianity because they say, and the Jewish people have the same thing in mind, that it happened because we were not obedient. It was written in Deuteronomy and Jeremiah that you always can read where Jeremiah was concerned and it was like, *you are not obedient so you will get consequences*, like a punishment. But the Jews also say the same. When you read all the famous books from Buber to whomever they say is important in this literature, *Yeah, we were guilty and punishment will come* ("Judith," Research Interview, November 2016).

Judith argued that their similarities ended there. On the one hand, "the mainstream Christianity" considered questions of WWII, the Holocaust, and God in "a bigger frame": a combination of guilt (which brought punishment), human will (which exists in a fallen world), and "a god of history" (which exists based on bilateral national developments between Germany and Israel).[27] On the other hand, "the Jewish people" said the Holocaust was forewarned;[28]

> I read a lot of books from Jewish people and it was interesting that many Jewish people wrote it down that there was a warning…Yes, a warning to leave the country and a lot of people, they didn't. There was a lot of emigration and a lot of people say: *Oh, no, we do not believe it,* because they had this environment where they had relationships and friendships to Germans where they never thought they would betray them or bring them to difficult situations. And it was also written in Hitler's book. It was written by Hitler very clear when he came up, very clear. So, this was the first emigration wave of people and a lot of people say no. There was a warning ("Judith," Research Interview, November 2016).

To the interview question of whether Judith had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Judith replied: "This is a very interesting question because my father was a refugee." Here, Judith once more viewed her contemporary context

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[26] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[27] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Judith claimed this bilateral development as follows: "It is interesting when Germany or BRD [*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*] rises and Germany was divided into two states. It was very interesting, it was 1948, it was the same time when Israel was pronounced out."
[28] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

through her understanding of her family history. Judith emphasized the cultural differences between her father, a German, and the refugees, of whom are predominately from Muslim countries. For Judith, this resulted in a "culture clash," stating: "There is a proudness [in the refugees' Islamic beliefs] to conquer. Not the persons, but the idea is the problem." Judith did not further define this "idea," but claimed the "problem" existed based on the sexual violence that occurred on 2015/2016 New Year's Eve in Cologne.[29] Judith stated this event was upsetting to German society because it reminded people of post-WWII sexual violence: "Yes, it was so upsetting, it was so hard because it reminds people of all these rapes from the Russians." Judith recounted some social disruption in light of the New Years' Eve events. Whereas politicians wanted to "play down these problems," some people voiced anger. Judith claimed that while the German constitution allows refugees to enter, Judith argued they must, "behave as guests."[30] For Judith, this meant they could practice their religion, but "they have to respect us because we want to respect them too." Judith justified her position based on Germany's immediate postwar situation:

> We know as Germans how horrible it is when you must leave because you have nothing, and you must rebuild again. This is my mind, this is my thought right now, and I do not want to be very liberal about that. It is not normal to say: *You can have my husband and you can have my house!* This is too abstract, this is too crazy, and this is violence ("Judith," Research Interview, November 2016).

11.3 "Klaus"

Klaus was born and raised in Germany. Klaus encountered Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946) at various points during his secondary and post-secondary schooling, but stated he did not study it deeply. He understood Jaspers' impact as creating debates on whether *die Schuldfrage* was "a

[29] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[30] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

historic or a political question."[31] From the late-1980s to mid-1990s, Klaus and his family lived in South Africa. For Klaus, reflecting on the respective histories of German National Socialism and South African Apartheid was significant in his childhood:

> To me, then, I saw first-hand the experience, the full of apartheid, and the transition from white supremacists in government to interracial and free representative democracy and also, followed fairly closely the way how reconciliation panned out afterwards. And then moving back to Germany and having German roots was always something I compared to each other ("Klaus," Research Interview, November 2016).

For Klaus, the most important difference was Germany's lack of discussion about National Socialism and its impact during the 1950s and 1960s. Klaus argued three reasons for this. First, "the guilty party was the majority of society," meaning it was easier to supress discussion.[32] Second, the number and diversity of victims was so large that it was difficult for everyone to voice their experiences, and subsequently, to be memorialized. Klaus stated:

> The Jewish remembrance is very prominent and up until much smaller groups are remembered in the public sphere. I think that is something that should be addressed but continues to be very difficult when on the one hand, looking at just the blank numbers, which is a language in and of themselves, and then looking at each individual case, not a number, it's an individual's life that was exterminated ("Klaus," Research Interview, November 2016).

Third, the administrative and bureaucratic transfer of power from National Socialism to post-war occupation resulted in many high-ranking Nazi officials continuing in equivalent positions. Klaus stated this included major federal ministries such as *der Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz* ("The Federal Ministry of Justice and Consumer Protection") and *der Auswärtiges Amt* ("The Federal Foreign Office").[33]

All four of Klaus' grandparents were born in the 1920s. During the interview, Klaus did not distinguish between his maternal and paternal families. One grandmother remains, but never

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[31] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[32] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[33] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

speaks of her WWII experiences. Her husband (Klaus's grandfather) spoke little of WWII outside that he had escaped being drafted into *der Wehrmacht* despite being of age, and he was imprisoned for three days for "some connection."[34]

Klaus's other grandparents spoke about their WWII experiences more openly. Klaus' grandfather was drafted into *der Wehrmacht* at age 17, and described his WWII experiences as "an adventure."[35] Klaus recalled that his grandfather was a prisoner of war twice, first by the Russians and then by the British. Under the Russians, he didn't want to be released because then, like many ex-soldiers in a Russian occupation zone, he would be forced to clear landmines; "A lot of people died along the way. There was a lot of retribution of throwing people into the minefields without protection or schooling on how to do it because they were seen as an enemy soldier."[36] Klaus stated he didn't know further details, but his grandfather was captured (or surrendered) for a second time by the British in Germany or Northern Austria. Because his grandfather spoke English, he translated for the British lieutenant; "[…] and then fled from there and headed into the Russians, ran into the Russians, and then fled again, and then ran into the Americans, and that's how he told the story, in a very adventurous way."[37]

Klaus recalled that his grandfather never spoke of *die Schuldfrage*, but would argue that *der Wehrmacht* was "not infiltrated by National Socialist ideas."[38] This argument continues to be difficult for Klaus to reconcile. Klaus stated this was a "widely-held view that was shown to be false" with *die Wehrmachtausstellung* ("The German Wehrmacht Army Exhibition") in 1999, and with historical and archival discoveries of the continuation of high-ranking Nazi officials in

[34] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[35] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[36] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[37] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[38] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

equivalent positions after WWII.[39] However, in specific to his grandfather, Klaus wondered if these views were rooted to losing the family home in Königsberg, Prussia. Given the complexities of postwar occupation, Klaus' grandfather returned to the region only for a brief visit in 1991.[40]

For Klaus's other grandmother, her WWII experiences centered on her membership in *das Bund Deutscher Mädel* ("The League of German Girls," abbreviated as "the BDM"). After her mother (Klaus's great grandmother) passed away, she raised her six younger brothers. The BDM provided her opportunities be with peers; "[…] to get out of the house and even if it was only an hour long other girls offered her support to help her younger brothers was freedom for her."[41] Klaus did not think she was involved in politics, but recalled how she described her generation as "seduced" by National Socialism.[42] She and Klaus' grandfather met in 1946/47, they became pregnant, and she left her family.

Klaus declined to discuss his religious beliefs during the interview, but talked at length about responsibility and *die Schuldfrage*. For Klaus, it was important for Germany and all Europe to determine *who* was responsible for WWII and the Holocaust.[43] Klaus contended that Europe embraces the positives of each other (e.g., the *European* Enlightenment), but the negatives are left to individual counties. Klaus defined his position as follows:

> I think it's difficult to have a pan-European idea and to not say: *Well, I am also responsible as a European* without a pan-European idea of the negative aspects. If we want to have that, we can't say things that happened later. Particularly in terms of National Socialism it is difficult because there were operations in France, Poland, Eastern Europe as well, but what about things that happened after the Second World War? Spanish, Portuguese, Greek dictatorships? And just to distance oneself from that and say

[39] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[40] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[41] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[42] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[43] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

> that was Spanish, Portuguese, Greek fault at that time, I find that very difficult ("Klaus," Research Interview, November 2016).

For Klaus, there was a complex connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese*, but he had not encountered discussion about it. Klaus stated he had encountered two questions in mainstream media: 1) how did Germany's response to WWII displacement compare to its response to the immigration out of former East Germany; and 2) what effects are occurring in light of the statistics that those seeking to enter Germany are predominately from Muslim countries? Klaus emphasized that there was no "positive" discussion of *die Schuldfrage*, whereby Germans expressed a sense of greater responsibility to others given the atrocities committed under National Socialism. In response, Klaus reflected that this could be because many the persecuted groups came from within German society without a clear geographic, cultural, or ethnic difference.[44]

11.4 "Heinrich"

Heinrich was born in a Franconian village in the 1950s. He had detailed knowledge of Jaspers' *Die Schuldfrage* (1946), and specifically understood metaphysical guilt as *eine Unterlassungssünde* ("a sin of omission").[45] Heinrich qualified that within the context of WWII, this meant "a lack of civil courage," and argued that any such "lack" had to be relativized:

> [Metaphysical guilt] in such a totalitarian state as the Nazi regime was, must be relativized. If a man showed civil courage in this situation and expressed himself only verbally against the ruling regime, he was often immediately denounced and had to pay for it frequently with his life ("Heinrich," Research Interview, November 2016. Researcher's translation from German).

[44] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[45] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

For Heinrich, it was also important to understand the NSDAP's quick and total assumption of power. Heinrich emphasized that Germans were forced to enter party groups and organizations, and anyone who was incompliant faced threats:

> One thing is very important: the assumption of power up to the complete social control was so fast that the Germans were also completely taken over. As a girl, you had to be in the Nazi organization for girls, as a farmer in the Nazi organization for farmers. If you were not a party member, as was the case with my grandparents, you were immediately treated with the utmost distrust. Children were raised by their teachers to spy their parents ("Heinrich," Research Interview, November 2016. Researcher's translation from German).

This control was prominent in Heinrich's retelling of his maternal family's WWII experiences. Heinrich described his maternal grandparents as well connected in Bavaria's religious, political, and social circles, but they did not join the NSDAP because of "criticism of Hitler from a Christian perspective."[46] Heinrich recounted that his grandfather was jailed briefly for these views, and that the family was in a sensitive position, as the regional *Ortsgruppenleiter*, "an extreme Nazi" was attached to them.[47] Heinrich's grandfather belonged to a delegation of Protestant church leaders of whom worked for the bishop of high-ranking Nazi officials. When *die Deutsche Christin* ("The German Christians") sought control in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, his grandfather's delegation resisted, which led to the arrest of *der Bayerische Landesbischof* ("the Bavarian regional bishop").[48] At the end of WWII, the Americans occupied the region, and the family had to vacate their house to allow American soldiers to live in it. Once again, Heinrich emphasized his family's Christian views as a source of separation and protection from the climate of the time; "While all furniture was thrown into the street in the house of the Nazi *Ortsgruppenleiter*, everything remained safe with us. In the house of the *Ortsgruppenleiter*

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[46] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[47] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Der *Ortsgruppenleiter* is equivalent to a modern-day *Bürgermeister* ("mayor"). Researcher's translation from German.
[48] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

hung the image Hitler and with us hung the cross.[49] Heinrich stated that his maternal family viewed the end of WWII as liberation, not a defeat. During the immediate postwar period, Heinrich's grandfather co-founded *die Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern* ("The Christian Social Union in Bavaria," abbreviated as, "the CSU") and is today considered one of the founding fathers of the region.[50]

Heinrich's paternal grandparents and their children (Heinrich's father and his sisters) faced physical rather than social threats. When Heinrich's father was 15 years old, they fled Silesia on horseback. However, his grandfather mounted on a different cart as the rest to the family and went missing. For the remainder of WWII, Heinrich's father and grandmother were interned in Bavaria and came to Franconia via detours. The fate of Heinrich's grandfather was not discovered until decades later, when Heinrich's aunt did intensive research and determined he was killed by advancing Polish occupiers.[51]

Heinrich characterized his upbringing as Evangelical Lutheran. Heinrich's father abandoned the family at age three, and his parents divorced in 1959. Shortly after, Heinrich started boarding school, where he became a member of *die Windsbacher Knabenchor* ("the Windsbach Boys Choir") and spent much of his childhood training and touring Europe.[52] In 1976, Heinrich was on holiday at Whitsun and converted to Charismatic Christianity. Heinrich described the impact of his conversion as, "a dramatic turn of life," and contextualized it within the rise of the David Wilkerson and the Jesus People, and the Lutheran Charismatic movements in Germany.[53] Next,

[49] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[50] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[51] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[52] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[53] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

joined *Youth with a Mission,* where he recalled reflecting on personal guilt and forgiveness for the first time:

> I was able to reflect a lot of things in my life and also realized personal guilt, for which I gave forgiveness in a life consolation. In doing so, however, I had no sense of condemnation, but from the very beginning I saw God as the God of love, who likes to forgive. I also learned to forgive, especially my father, who had left us at the age of three and a half years because of other women, only reported back when I was 12 years old, and then asked to see us. To Jesus, therefore, I immediately had a reference, even to the Holy Spirit, to God as Heavenly Father because of my prehistory later ("Heinrich," Research Interview, November 2016. Researcher's translation from German).

Soon after, Heinrich left his career as a banker to study Protestant theology at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Bavaria. In this time, Heinrich discovered that one of his paternal aunts joined *die Evangelische Marienschwesternschaft Darmstadt* ("The Evangelical Sisterhood of Mary in Darmstadt") in 1945. *Die Marienschwesternschaft* sent her to Israel, where she founded the *Beit Avraham*, a care home for former Jewish prisoners of concentration camps. She directed this house for decades.[54] After his studies, Heinrich founded a Protestant *Freikirche*, which has since grown to one of the largest in his region.[55]

In the late 1970s, Heinrich went to Israel to work with *der Jesusbrüderschaft Gnadenthal* ("The Jesus Brotherhood in Gnadenthal"), facilitating reconciliation initiatives between Arabic and Jewish communities in the region.[56] Upon Heinrich's return to Germany, he visited the Dachau, Auschwitz, and Flossenbürg concentration camps for the first time. Heinrich recalled that he was heavily impacted by *die Schuldfrage* during these visits. Heinrich stated that while this Germany "was different from what I knew, and grew up in," he felt it was important for him to first understand himself individually as "German", and second, to understand himself as part of a German collective. Heinrich described these reflections as follows:

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[54] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[55] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[56] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

> I feel guilt not only individually, as Jasper emphasizes, but also see me as part of a collective personality. Peoples are guilty of one another and have hurt each other. God forgives. As an individual, I cannot entirely steer clear of the history of my people. I therefore see myself responsible for placing myself before God as my people, as Nehemiah did in the Old Testament. However, it has become important to me not to stand by the past, but to live a different future from the forgiveness and grace of God ("Heinrich," Research Interview, November 2016. Researcher's translation from German).

As outcome, Heinrich felt his individual responsibility was, "to break the speechlessness of previous generations and to ask questions."[57] Today, Heinrich enacts this responsibility in many ways, such as arranging for Israeli youth to come to Nürnberg; "to experience a different Germany."[58]

To the interview question of whether Heinrich had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Heinrich responded: "The reaction of Merkel to leave more than a million refugees almost uncontrolled to our country, I feel extreme."[59] For Heinrich, Merkel's response was testament that *die Schuldfrage* has not been managed in-depth. As consequence of a lack of "healthy national consciousness," Germany had become a multicultural country with a *Wilkommenskulur* ("welcoming culture") similar to the United States or Canada, but the unique burden of *die Schuldfrage* had caused a desire to please the world.[60] Heinrich claimed that no other country would have responded as Germany has, and the challenging conditions (specifically: the burden on public facilities, the intercultural demands of the predominately Muslim newcomers, and the bureaucratic issues in classifying individuals into *refugees* or *migrants*) involved in accommodating so many newcomers were damaging social

[57] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[58] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[59] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[60] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.

unity. Heinrich stated these problems are exasperated by political correctness, which resulted in people resenting a lack of transparency media reports.[61]

11.5 "Paul"

Paul began his interview by stating, "Ok, one, I have never felt guilty. I also never felt that my parents were guilty."[62] Paul justified this claim based on his perception of the German political climate in 1930s-1940s:

> I just think that in difficult times as there were in the 30s and 40s, populist people like for example Donald Trump in the West has very easy gain to convince people who are not really capable of seeing the whole picture to follow them by giving simple answers to complex problems. In Germany in that time, Germany felt guilty or they didn't feel good for losing the First World War like that, so there were always these rumors that Germany was really responsible that we lost WWI – and he [Hitler] gave an easy answer to that ("Paul," Research Interview, November 2016).

Here, Paul claimed contemporary Germany was noticing familiar symptoms in the United States with Trump being elected as US President: "I always have to come back to Donald Trump because that is something which is always moving us right now. You know, as a normal person you can do a lot of things but as a president you just can't and that is the same there, you know?"[63] Paul unpacked his statement in how on the one hand, a "normal" person could say they did not have the courage to intervene without major consequences. On the other hand, people, groups, and institutions of power exist under an expectation that they could, and *would,* use their position to guide (or if necessary, to provoke) people in difficult times.[64] However, groups and institutions are not autonomous entities, but are made up of individuals. It was most dangerous

[61] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016. Researcher's translation from German.
[62] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[63] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016. *Die Judenvernichtung* was Paul's specific word choice for the Holocaust.
[64] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

when a populist person took power and convinced its members that they have knowledge (or access to knowledge) of a bigger picture.[65]

For Paul, the core issue of *die Schuldfrage* was *die Judenvernichtung* ("the elimination of Jews") because once one removed the distinct actors and events of WWII, most contemporary people would agree that "this was definitely something which we should we feel guilty about just so we make sure it doesn't happen again."[66] Growing up, this "Jewish aspect" came up the most within society, often from *der Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* ("The Central Council of Jews in Germany").[67] Paul claimed that in these instances, *shame* was a more accurate descriptor than guilt because the Holocaust happened without a person, group, or institution intervening.

Paul's first encounter with *die Schuldfrage* occurred at a dinner party during his studies at a Canadian university in 1985. He described the topic of discussion as: "How you can live with the heritage of WWII and all your guilt and whatever."[68] For Paul, this conversation was difficult given that WWII and *die Schuldfrage* were not often discussed. As Paul stated:

> In my personal perception, we just were talking about that within the family. We didn't talk about that across other families. There was just no general discussion. There was maybe some discussion in schools, in high schools that this was obviously addressed but other than that it sometimes came up in the political system but there was never a big discussion in the background about that. It was always something you asked your parents: *What did you do at that time? How could do that?* And whatever. But then on the other side you know…Germany started to grow very quickly and economically be very successful and things were moving and then I think…it didn't really feel…or at least I can only say for me…I didn't really see the necessity that I have to deal with that on an intense level ("Paul," Research Interview, November 2016).

Paul's parents met in the early days of WWII. Paul stated his father was "forced" to become a member of the NSDAP at risk of losing his position in a manufacturing company. However, Paul

[65] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[66] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016. *Die Judenvernichtung* was Paul's specific word choice for the Holocaust.
[67] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[68] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

expressed doubt about the truth of this claim: "It was a nice excuse if you are able to say that 30 years later, but at the time the people were very excited about it."[69] During WWII, Paul's father fought in Russia. He was severely injured and was interned in a military prison for four years. Still a POW, he was moved to France to work on a farm for another four years. Paul's father became friends with the French farmer, and visited him throughout his life. Paul's mother waited for his father to come back, but Paul did not recall further details.[70]

Paul recalled that religion was "always around" growing up, and his brother became a minister. Paul described that his interests in science and engineering prompted him to adopt image of God that did not intervene in human affairs. Paul captured his beliefs as: "I guess if you look at that more from a scientific view that God is not something living up there in the sky but something in how people should deal with each other and treat each other, then I support that very much."[71] Here, Paul reasserted this argument of the importance of human over divine intervention throughout his interview. To illustrate, Paul stated that he had not encountered questions of God in relation to WWII and the Holocaust, and asserted that his response to such questions would be the same as any question about divine intervention: "…the question in return should be: *Well, why didn't you do anything about it?* Because you more or less are the representation of God on this world. He is not going to tell you more or less what to do. You are going to do it all yourself."[72] Along this reasoning, Paul argued that "guilt" (by any conception) was never useful for four reasons. First, guilt was about "accusing," and not about "finding a solution." Paul stated that as a scientist, he knew he could not change things in the past, but he could change things in the future. As such, he sought to prevent "extremist situations, be they by

[69] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[70] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[71] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[72] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

religion or culture," by travelling and talking to diverse people. However, while exposure to new perspectives was the best way to understand both past and present, Paul stated one had to be vigilant about where they got their information from; "…It is so difficult to find out whether information is correct or not because the moment information is created it already is not objective anymore. It always has some kind of subjective aspect to it."[73] Second, guilt could be used as an excuse not to change something. It was not enough to admit guilt without taking steps to ensure the transgression did not happen again. Therefore, it was very important for Germans to remember WWII and the Holocaust from a historical perspective.[74] Third, guilt was not emotionally or practically useful. For Paul, parents could feel guilty for their children's actions because parents influence what children do, but it didn't make sense the other way around: "I have all the bad habits of both of my parents together? So how can I change them going back? They're family and they are there and I can't judge what the situation was like in 1935 or 1936. I didn't live then and they don't remember anymore and I think that's very dangerous."[75] Fourth, guilt relied on human memory, which was faulty. Here, Paul urged that people idealize things by trying to remember or forget them, but either way, the person was living in the past. Rather, one should try to talk about the past without *verniedlichen* (to belittle, trivialize something), and resisting people whom deny it. Paul captured his stance as follows:

> We have to realize that is there. It is ridiculous to claim that this did not happen but I think that it should not have too big of a part of our life today and our life of the future. That's difficult to express to you, but not in my language. It's a very fine line. It's always important for us to have that in our heads that something like that happened and that's the reason why we have developments like AFD and we really have to go against that and fight that. The most frustrating thing to see is that many people, and there you might be right, they still feel somehow guilty and these people claim it was completely different, it takes the guilt away from them, and that's why they follow them ("Paul," Research Interview, November 2016).

[73] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[74] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[75] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

To the interview question of whether Paul had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Paul responded that he had not witnessed such discussions. He had encountered associations with the refugee situation with the fall of the GDR. He had also encountered individual opinions that Germany had a "duty" to respond because "they were the bad guys."[76] Paul's response to the latter was that it was not a predominant position throughout society, and that it would be a poor justification for Germany's humanitarian work to date. As Paul stated: "What we are trying to do is show humanity and it is amazing that other countries in the world are not showing that. There are some people that have problems and if we can afford the possibility to help them, then we have to do that, period, and it doesn't matter what it was in the past."[77]

11.6 "Hannah"

Hannah began her interview for this study by stating it was difficult for her to talk about *die Schuldfrage* because she was born and raised in East Germany until age 10. As such, her childhood experiences were in an environment that considered itself opposite to West Germany:

> Being guilty was something the others were, so to say. I grew up in a state which defined itself as anti-fascistic and communist and so on so the concept of guilt of a whole society just came to me later and because it was not in the political discourse so to say when I was socialized. As it is…it is something which at the beginning was a little bit *fremd*. It was in Western Germany, a *selbstverständlich* part of public discourse. So, I was confronted with it in a situation in which I was myself a foreigner… I think guilt is not talked about so often in public as is responsibility. So, with the term responsibility I can cope much more and much more easy than with guilt ("Hannah," Research Interview, November 2016).

Hannah described her family as "atheist" on both sides. Hannah's paternal family lived in Berlin for generations. Hannah's paternal great grandfather was born in 1895, worked as a

[76] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[77] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

painter, and fought in WWI and WWII. In 1933, he could not legally own his business unless he became a NSDAP member. At this time, his business was struggling, and he three of his original four shops had closed. He decided to apply for party membership, but never completed the application. He was sent to the Russian front, but returned quickly because of snow blindness. He was 43 years old at the time. At the end of WWII, someone denounced him to Russian occupiers, and he was taken to Saxenhausen, where he died of pneumonia.[78]

At the time of interview, Hannah's paternal grandmother was 90 years old and living in Berlin. Hannah stated that her grandmother did not remember much about WWII, but that she often spoke about Russian occupation and the sexual violence that occurred: "She witnessed the rapes in the courtyard of the house she was hiding in because before the Russians came she was told to take her family and some girlfriends into hiding in the flats. She hid in the flats behind the board and they heard the screams of the women who hid in the cellar."[79]

Of Hannah's maternal family, her grandfather served in *die Kriegsmarine* (the navy of Nazi Germany) at age 15. Towards the end of WWII, he and his twin brother fought in Italy and Egypt. They were captured by the British and separated during internment. At the end of WWII, Hannah's grandfather returned to Berlin, but his brother immigrated to the US. As Hannah described:

> It is very strange because he was on the one behind the wall but his twin made a political career in a completely different environment. It's very funny when my father tells me how it was when the twin would visit and he was working in politics. He was an advisor to one of the US senators and we had to be careful of who was looking in. So, these Cold War stories were what is important to me because I am younger, and also there you can look for layers of guilt because my stepfather, for example, he was a soldier at the wall. He was one of the people standing there and um, I don't know, maybe in the worst case shooting people. So, this is what is nearer to me than the historical epoch and where I have more insight into what my parents and grandparents did in various extremes. So, my mother's family who was in the hierarchy in the GDR, and my father's family who

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[78] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[79] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.

> always did the opposite with the brother in America and freedom and democracy. So, we have these oppositions in one family ("Hannah," Research Interview, November 2016).

Hannah's parents divorced when she was three years old. Eventually, she lost contact with her father's family.

Hannah recalled her first significant encounter with religion as in kindergarten. Her best friend came from a Christian household. He talked about his beliefs at school, and she accepted him despite the school system teaching that religion was something East German society had "conquered" as "the opium of the people."[80] In second grade, he moved to West Germany. From then on, Hannah associated religion with buildings; meaning, an abstract institution separate from any conceptualization of "god".[81] For Hannah, the most interesting part of her life was "the change in 1989;" the Berlin Wall came down, her mother remarried, her family moved often, and she started grammar school in the new post-unification curriculum.[82] Hannah described this year as follows:

> Before it had been established and you were believing in being part of society and now suddenly with this change you had to be this individual. In Germany, we say *selbstvervirklichung*; everyone can do whatever he or she wants and they can be everything. It was strange and it was adventurous and it was also frightening. When you are a child and you only have so much capacity to understand, what is going on everything seems so stable and you can rely on just…um…shattered and I think with this you now had to adapt to a completely new world view in a way. And because there were family problems it was a time of floating around. On the one hand floating but on the other hand creative energy because you can look and you can react ("Hannah," Research Interview, November 2016).

Hannah described her most important "reaction" as discovering Protestant and Catholic religious education courses in the new grammar school system. Hannah expressed that given all of society's changes in 1989, it was difficult for a teenager to make a rebellious statement. These

[80] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[81] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[82] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.

courses resisted her atheist upbringing, and granted her newfound intellectual freedom; "…it was freedom because I didn't belong to a religious community. I could look everywhere and to me it was much more an intellectual adventure."[83]

When Hannah finished grammar school, she faced "a difficult situation" and was pushed out of home. She found work as a doctor's assistant in an area "of the [former] GDR where a lot of very politically responsible people lived."[84] Hannah described that in this position, she realized that many people who came there were looking for people to talk to. During this time, she was deciding between studying medicine and studying theology. Hannah chose theology to cope with the "basic difficulties of being human," as she experienced them in the doctor's office.[85] Hannah began her studies at university, and had difficulties at first. She soon realized many of her peers has been part of a pastor's family or had a long socialization of being in a religious community. Looking back, Hannah expressed that it was the best decision for her:

> At first, it was only an intellectual coming close to a possibility of what it means to believe in God and meanwhile I think it has changed to a *Haltung*; to an attitude? A position? It allows me to simply accept the twirlings of life. I think changed in a way, my dealing with theological things, by dealing with biblical things, by dealing with the topics to do with religion and I have changed from being very eager and always having to feel responsible for my own, or always fighting on my own so…um...now it is a feeling of its, *Ok, let it go. Somehow something will come out of it*. You can't grab things; it will come how it comes. It is not a religiosity where we always talk about God, but it is a religiosity which has resulted in a certain being in the world and I think this being in the world has to do with trying to look more left and right ("Hannah," Research Interview, November 2016).

This attitude helps Hannah reflect on the Cold War and WWII, as it gives her means to explain events out of "community necessities"; meaning, it was always the individual that has to be responsible and aware about what is going on in their social and political environments, and

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[83] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[84] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[85] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.

realize they have situation one has to cope with. One was therefore responsible for seeking *truth* independently of one's environment.[86]

To the interview question of whether Hannah had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Hannah responded that she had asked herself this question when Merkel's policy became official in summer 2015. She was teaching a welcome class for young men ages 12-18 who came to Germany without parents. Each class had 15 pupils, and changed every few weeks. At the time, Hannah witnessed the refugee numbers increasing before the policy was official. There was no formal support or infrastructure, and every school coped in their own way. Hannah stated that then, no one talked about *die Schuldfrage* having anything to do with Germany's response because no one cared for the question. During her interview for this study, Hannah stated that she thought it was no question to welcome to refugees, but the official discourse about it was too much for her, and she questioned herself repeatedly about why that was:

> We need a concept, something concrete, we have to cope with these numbers and see that more and more are going to come and we have to work now. And everyone knew this of course and this is what I meant with too much talking about something, which I think, was already *selbstverstandlich*. Talking about this again, I thought: *Why can't we talk about how to handle this? Why do we talk about that we have to do this? That's already clear.* This way of strangeness made me ask if this maybe has to do with the political…with trying to put a political sign trying to say: *We in an exceptional way deal with this crisis!* But, um…I am not sure about this. We have to do something concrete, more than just throw teddy bears ("Hannah," Research Interview, November 2016).

11.7 "Lena"

Lena began her interview by stating she associated *die Schuldfrage* with being German. This association was the product of her personal and family experiences in relation to WWII, and her reflections on them as a sociologist and a Christian. Lena's first encounter with *die Schuldfrage*

[86] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.

occurred in 2004 during her graduate studies in New Zealand. She lived in a campus dorm with Europeans and New Zealanders. One Easter gathering, Lena was in the kitchen when she heard a Māori student doing a Hitler impersonation in the den:

> "For me it was um…this is what I remember that it was like I was frozen, I was petrified and so I came around the corner saying: *What are you doing? You can't talk like that!* And he talked like that again. I said: *You can't say that! You can't do that!* And everybody was looking at me like, *what's going on, why is she so tense?*" ("Lena," Research Interview, November 2016).

Afterwards, Lena reflected on her response and determined three factors to her reaction. First, it happened in New Zealand, far away from anywhere historically and geographically associated with WWII. Second, it occurred in a casual setting, where the Māori student was trying to make their friends laugh. Third, it was Lena's first experience feeling distinctly *German*; feeling a "unique burden of the past" that she had never witnessed in other cultures, and that she could not ignore in the moment ("It was as if evil had entered the room").[87] Lena described the latter as distinctly difficult given her upbringing in East Germany:

> I suppose in that moment I felt really German and I never liked that. I mean, I grew up in the East, in the GDR, and part of my indoctrination growing up was that fascism was on the other side of the German-German border and that therefore everybody in the East was sort of safe from it…that no one could be a fascist in the GDR, that it's just simply not in our genes. After the wall came down and the indoctrination was sort of replaced with true knowledge um…all the atrocities and how they also occurred on the territories of what later became the GDR, that belief that fascism was completely different and couldn't happen to us, that belief was already completely shaken ("Lena," Research Interview, November 2016).

Lena described her maternal family's WWII experiences as *traumatic*; "My grandma must have had primary trauma and my mother grew up with secondary, and this whole family is wacky a little bit, and we lost touch with them."[88] Of her maternal family, Lena spoke of her grandmother, and specifically of life experiences that Lena believed contributed to her

[87] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[88] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.

grandmother's "hard-hearted" character. For instance, before WWII, Lena's grandmother was babysitting her younger brother in their family garden when he fell out of the crib, hit his head, and was handicapped the rest of his life; "… this was sort of a stain on her soul that she carried with her."[89] Growing up, her father (Lena's great grandfather) was "a cruel man," and physically and sexually violent. During WWII, he was believed to be a doctor a concentration camp; "… this is a rumor that we treat as knowledge."[90] As a teenager during Russian occupation, Lena's grandmother witnessed much sexual violence first-hand. Consequently, she displayed "a strange relationship" to anything physical for the remainder of her life, and changed sexual partners often. Lena's mother learned who her birth father was in 2011.[91]

Lena characterized her paternal family's WWII experiences as focused on survival. Lena knew many stories via her grandmother, who was 93 years old at the time of interview.[92] Lena's grandmother was born in 1924, and was 21 years old at the end of WWII. As a sociologist, Lena conducts a life history interview of her grandmother on her birthday each January, and specifically asks for the story of when the Russians approached her village. One night, Lena's grandmother was on her way home from work at a bakery in a nearby town, and she encountered a troop of tanks. A German solider yelled at her to turn back because the Russians were approaching. She returned to the baker's family and together they made their way to the train station. They were afraid of not making it across the bridge in time, as the Germans would destroy it so the Russians could not cross the river. At the station, she ran into her father, who was on-duty as a train porter. He directed her to stay with the baker's family, and to go to another village where the rest of the family would meet her. Once reunited, they moved into a

[89] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[90] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[91] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[92] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.

villa of a wealthy German family who treated them "despicably;" spitting on them, and strictly rationing their food.[93] During bombing raids, Lena's grandmother would sneak into the larder as everyone was hiding in the basement. On one occasion, she looked out a window and saw Dresden burning in the distance: "I don't really know how far away Dresden is, probably at least 50k, I don't know…um…and it's really uncanny the way my grandma talks about this because I swear it sounds like she thought this was pretty."[94]

Such descriptions prompted Lena to be sensitive to how "non-horrible" her grandmother described WWII.[95] To illustrate, Lena highlighted three gaps in her grandmother's retellings. First, there was no sound scape; "The immense noise of um…of bombing, airplanes, fire crackling…you know…all these horrible noises of the war, that's just not part of her narrative at all."[96] Second, there was no clear identification of "who the baddies were."[97] Before Lena's family fled from the Russians, Lena's grandmother would wait for the British and French pilots to walk by after their shift;

> Those were the elegant soldiers and my granny, I swear, she talks about them gallivanting past the larder and riding past on their bicycles and flirting with the officers who are on guard duty or who are hanging out the window on a lovely summer evening and waiting for the soldiers to talk past after their shift had ended…so…there's obviously this really ordinary life and being attracted to men, but they were men in uniforms who were guarding prisoners of war ("Lena," Research Interview, November 2016).

Third, these descriptions did not match her family's experiences, nor the violence typical of postwar occupation, which caused Lena to wonder if there were details her grandmother excludes. For example, Lena's grandmother often spoke of when a Russian officer shot her

[93] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[94] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[95] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[96] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[97] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.

mother in the chest, and of how the wound became so infected that Russians would not molest her. However, she never made a definitive statement of her own safety.

In Lena's paternal family, her father and grandfather were estranged for many years. In 2013, Lena's grandfather died alone in his apartment. He was found in a decomposed state, and her father had to take care of the remains. A year later, Lena and her husband gave her father a canoeing trip for his birthday, as he had always enjoyed the outdoors and had an excellent sense of navigation. During their trip, Lena's father started talking about his childhood, describing for the first time how he would run away from home whenever his father started hitting his mother. From these stories, Lena interpreted that her father acquired his navigation skills out of necessity; "I mean, they lived in a village so of course he knew the forests around, but then he also knew how to navigate at night time, so there was definitely this secondary trauma."[98]

With this story, Lena argued that despite the years since such war-related violence, the effects of it, "a coldness," or "a long shadow," are still felt in her generation. This was a symptom of a "cruelty" and "proneness to really drastic behavior" that Germans were willing to embrace in dire situations.[99] Lena described how her sociological studies and her personal reflections about *die Schuldfrage* have enabled her to emphasize the motives of diverse WWII experiences. Lena imagined that the Nazi era must have been extraordinary in that there was a "tightly-woven web of fear" that governed people's thoughts and actions. This "web of fear" marked the boundaries of her empathy, and Lena often wondered how she would have fared living under National Socialism:

> Would my soul or my spirit have broken under torture or seeing suffering and I um…I hope…I really hope, and that's how my train of thought builds, I really hope that my faith would be really strong and would really surge up just then in that moment of peril where

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[98] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[99] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.

> I would just take strength from it and feel provided for and therefore somehow make it through difficult situations unwaveringly ("Lena," Research Interview, November 2016).

Here, Lena self-reflexively acknowledged that her stance implied there was a certain way a Christian ought to behave. She justified her stance by claiming that God was not a puppeteer guiding people. Consequentially, Lena viewed WWII and the Holocaust as human doings, and God as not responsible. However, she acknowledged that "turning to God" was not easy in fearful circumstances, and any such expectation made Christians sound "superhuman."[100]

To the interview question of whether Lena had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Lena affirmed a connection between the two. Lena qualified that she wanted to rephrase the interview question to: "What does it mean to me that um…what is the specific guilt that Angela Merkel is trying to address in welcoming refugees in?"[101] In response, Lena stated that the specific guilt Merkel is trying to address was the rejection of people from other origins. Merkel's policy came within the context of a strong xenophobia in Germany, and the policy shows an uncharacteristic embracing of multiculturalism by someone from the CDU. For Lena, the title of "humanitarian crisis" was more accurate than "refugee crisis." Lena strongly believed the people want to be at home, and people only get up to leave when there is enough reason to, and for a prime minister to invite people in need was the right thing to do; "At the end of the day, we are a very rich nation and I haven't felt any detriment at all since we opened up the borders and I think we can deal with this."[102]

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[100] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[101] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.
[102] "Lena." Research Interview. Skype, November 26, 2016.

11.8 "Clara"

Clara was born in Bulgaria in the 1980s. At age eight, she and her mother immigrated to Germany. Clara took German citizenship at age 20, and described this "bureaucratic act" as the start of her self-identification as a German.[103] Throughout her interview, Clara compared *die Schuldfrage* as she learned it the German school system with *die Schuldfrage* as she reflected on it independently. Both emphasized a special German responsibility to remember the past and prevent similar events from reoccurring in the future. However, they differed in their manner of emphasis. To illustrate, Clara recalled that between grades 5-13, WWII and the Holocaust entered the curriculum three times. All lessons and learning materials were "highly structured and chronological," emphasizing key figures and events between the beginning of the Weimar Republic and the end of WWII.[104] Here, Clara stressed the importance of one's language on one's understanding, e.g., referring to *eine Machtergreifung* (Hitler *seized* power from the people or the parliament), or referring to *eine Machtübergabe* (Hitler *was handed* power by a specific group, and *subjected* the German people to it).[105] In contrast, Clara's personal reflections of *die Schuldfrage* had two streams: her generation's question of whether they could carry "German guilt" despite being born decades after WWII, and her growth in self-identity as a German. Whenever friends asked if she felt German or Bulgarian, Clara stated:

> I have a little joke that I make sometime with some friends that are very close and that is that when it comes to you know, identity questions like: *What are you? Are you German? Are you Bulgarian? How do you feel?* And also in regards to the Holocaust and so on and so forth, then sometimes I like to say that it doesn't matter if I understand myself as being Bulgarian or being German because both countries were fighting together ("Clara," Research Interview, December 2016).

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[103] "Clara." Research Interview. Skype. December 7, 2016.
[104] "Clara." Research Interview. Skype. December 7, 2016.
[105] "Clara." Research Interview. Skype. December 7, 2016.

Clara's grandparents were born in the 1930s. Clara stated she knew little about them beyond that they were poor and lived in the countryside. During her early childhood in Bulgaria, religion played a part of everyday culture (e.g., holidays, specific practices and sayings at life events, etc.). Upon moving to Germany, Clara and her mother were unclear about whether they could stay, and the following four years were hard on her. Clara recalled that while nothing particularly bad happened, her childhood ("You know, all the happy, easy part of that when you don't have to worry about anything...") ended when she came to Germany.[106] During her mid-twenties, Clara studied in Italy for six months. During this time, Clara began thinking of religion "in a more personal way." As Clara described:

> "I like going to churches so when I am in a Catholic country, for instance like in Italy where I studied for half a year it was very nice because basically you have a church on every second street and you can just get in, sit down, have a little bit of time for yourself, think about something, pray a little, light a candle, and then leave again" ("Clara," Research Interview, December 2016).

Clara reported that she never encountered questions of God, the Holocaust, and WWII in her schooling or personal reflections. Rather, as consequences of both, Clara continues to consider the place of *die Schuldfrage* in German identity. Here, Clara described that whenever she pictures the map of Germany in 1945, she remembers that her country was part of the Axis alliance, but were not German nationals. This made her feel disconnected to *die Schuldfrage*, as if one had to have a direct family connection to WWII to be "allowed to feel guilty." Whenever she discussed these themes with Germans, she would respond, "of course I feel responsible and of course I carry guilt as well…" to mixed responses. Clara recalled one such discussion with the father of a German friend, who stated he found it "curious" why she would feel guilty. Clara stated that while he didn't intend to offend her, she felt like he was telling her in a roundabout

[106] "Clara." Research Interview. Skype. December 7, 2016.

way: “You’re not German because if we talk about being German on that level, in terms of feeling guilty and feeling responsible, you can’t do that.”[107] In response, Clara became less open:

> It was not like I was trying to be more German than the Germans just to fit in or to be German. I genuinely felt that but after that I started to be a little bit less open about it anymore because I thought it um…it’s not easy to understand and if people don’t understand it then so be it. I still have my feelings but um…yeah…I don’t expect anyone to understand why and how I feel about that (“Clara,” Research Interview, December 2016).

Clara recalled one instance where she felt “haunted” by WWII and the Holocaust. A few years ago, she was reading American novelist’s Philip Roth’s, *The Ghost Writer* (1979). The protagonist, a student, drives up to a house to meet a professor and instead encounters a fellow student who believes she is Anne Frank. Clara recalled that the story was intentionally confusing, and Roth did not make clear whether the woman was really Frank or was someone with psychological issues of whom *thought* she was Frank. That night, Clara woke up and started crying, feeling guilty, responsible, and helpless. In light of this experience, Clara finds it hard to imagine what “forgiveness” would look like:

> I don’t know who can forgive us, or who can forgive the German people or who can forgive. I mean, Israel? The Jews across the world? God? I don’t know but I don’t feel that in a classical or in any way I understand forgiveness, it doesn’t feel…I mean, if you look at what forgiveness means, learning from your mistakes or not doing something again or becoming a better person maybe those elements are there but it just feels, or at least for me it feels wrong because being forgiven means: *Ok, now it’s over. We’ve been forgiven and we can stop commemorating* (“Clara,” Research Interview, December 2016).

To the interview question of whether Clara had observed any connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* Clara stated that she observed associations with the emergence of *Willkommenskultur* in summer 2015. Clara stated she does not feel Germans speak of contemporary politics in relation to historic events. Clara witnessed brief discussions with the

[107] “Clara.” Research Interview. Skype. December 7, 2016.

emergence of the AfD, but she does not feel threatened by their presence because they are a minority. Given her answer, Clara felt reaffirmed that *die Schuldfrage* is specific to the Holocaust. The primary learning from *die Schuldfrage* is that one has to be careful for prejudice because it starts small. Here, the risk of the Holocaust happening again is "a universal question," and not unique to Germany. For Clara, she sometimes does not feel this lesson has been learned because when it comes up, people sometimes brush it off because they are not capable of, or they do not want to make the transfer of the past lesson to contemporary situation:

> I can sort-of understand because you get taught that so much that some people just can't hear it anymore or some people think; *It's such a horrible thing that I don't think that will ever happen again*, or, *We are miles away from that*, because they maybe think of this end point where you have so many concentration camps and millions of Jews and other people are being murdered but you don't think of you know, 1937, 1938, 1939 where it started happening – or developing – so many there is a disconnect in the minds of many people. I would even say there is a disconnection I my head. When I think of the Holocaust and its role and position in German history and German identity it is a unique singular thing and it is also part of its very definition. It's singular, it's a singularity that there has never been anything like it before and there can never be anything like it again because it is so, so horrible so it is a little bit tricky but um…yeah" ("Clara," Research Interview, December 2016).

Chapter 12: Stage II: The Application of Jaspers' *Metaphysische Schuld*

12.1 ***Die Schuldfrage* as *eine Grenzsituation***

In applying the key variables, concepts, and constructs of Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* as *eine Grenzsituation,* all participants reflected on *die Schuldfrage* as an unavoidable and unchangeable experience in being German. The common life history experiences that informed these reflections were conversations with parents and grandparents, learning about WWII in school, and feeling guilt or shame for being German when travelling abroad. As shown in participants' responses, family discussions and school lessons varied greatly. Here, it's important to note that all participants held these discussions in relation to post-WWII historical discoveries regarding the actors, events, and impacts of WWII. Significantly, these discoveries had more impact on participants' perceptions of their grandparents than their reported perceptions of *die Schuldfrage,* e.g., Lena's questioning "What did granny leave out?" and Paul's doubting claims of "forced" participation in National Socialism.[1] Additionally, all participants perceived these reflections as expressions of a sense of *responsibility* for *die Schuldfrage* in contemporary Germany, despite commonly reporting a lack of public discussion within their life histories. This responsibility meant remembrance, education, and self-reflection to ensure WWII and the Holocaust could happen again.

For Judith, Klaus, Heinrich, Hannah, Lena, and Clara, reflections on *die Schuldfrage* centered on guilt for WWII and/or the Holocaust. Judith and Klaus felt implicated in *die Schuldfrage* in childhood. Their reflections shared a common feature of feeling implicated in something they didn't understand. Heinrich conceptualized *die Schuldfrage* and himself as being "part of [the

[1] "Lena." Research Interview. Berlin, November 26, 2016; and "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

German] people" with theological reflection, travel, and life experience in early adulthood.[2] Hannah, Lena, and Clara reflected on *die Schuldfrage* while identifying as simultaneously Germans and foreigners in their teenage years. Significantly, both Hannah and Lena, as former East Germans, described their first encounters with *die Schuldfrage* after German reunification as confrontations, e.g., Hannah's description of *die Schuldfrage* as "something a little bit *fremd*: in East Germany, but *selbstverständlich* in West Germany.[3] In comparison, Clara expressed *die Schuldfrage* as something she picked up independently the more she identified as a German.[4]

In contrast to the other participants, Daniel and Paul's reflections on *die Schuldfrage* centered on shame. At the start of their interviews, both characterized guilt as *die Schuldfrage's* defining feature, but later qualified that shame described their experiences most accurately. On the one hand, Daniel experienced shame as a "pervasive" and "collective" sense of belonging to a "seriously flawed culture."[5] On the other hand, Paul experienced shame as for the lack of individual, group, or institutional intervention in the Holocaust.[6]

12.2 Self-Transformation Before God

In applying the key variables, concepts, and constructs of Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* as leading to a self-transformation of human consciousness before God, all participants evidenced a sensitivity to the role of Christianity in morality and politics. Whereas Jaspers states, "Morality is always influence by mundane purposes," two participants contextualized their family's resistance to National Socialism in transcendent purposes, i.e., their family's religious beliefs in

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[2] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[3] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[4] "Clara." Research Interview. Skype, December 7, 2016.
[5] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016.
[6] "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.

the 1940s (Daniel and Heinrich).[7] Significantly, the two participants who rejected *metaphysische Schuld* most adamantly reported the most *metaphysische Schuld*-ish reflection in relation to key experiences in their life histories. Daniel and Paul argued for critical and vigilant individual and social self-awareness of the populistic rhetoric that led to National Socialism. Both shared a common experience in doubting the reports of their parents' rationalization for participating in the Third Reich, e.g., Daniel as part of the 68-ers, and Paul doubting his father's "need" to join the NSDAP. Both also rejected the idea of God playing a role in the cause or consequences of WWII and the Holocaust. However, they differed in the experiences that informed their reflections. Whereas Daniel pursued theology to reconcile what his parents and Germany's past meant to him, Paul framed his experiences with what he called a "scientific" lens.[8]

Judith and Heinrich reported a heightened sensitivity to *die Schuldfrage* around the time of their conversions to Christianity in early adulthood. Both reflected on their first experiences thinking about guilt (broadly) and *die Schuldfrage* (specifically), as informed by the idea of a relationship with God as "the god of love and forgiveness."[9] Both also described the consequences of this heightened sensitivity as creating the need reconcile *die Schuldfrage* with God *before* the need to reconcile with their fellow man, e.g., Judith's "practical solutions" for forgiveness and atonement and Heinrich's reflection on "placing [himself] before God as Nehemiah did in the Old Testament".[10] Significantly, two participants rejected the possibility of forgiveness for *die Schuldfrage* (Lena and Clara) for similar reasons. Lena and Clara claimed *die Schuldfrage* had crossed their minds when reflecting on God or spirituality, but both rejected the

[7] Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, 65; "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016; and "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[8] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016; "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[9] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[10] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016; and "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

possibility of forgiveness for WWII and the Holocaust. As consequence, both qualified the importance of using an image of God without an expectation of intervention. Rather, one must seek to pray, read scripture, and/or seek God independently, despite the stresses of one's environment, e.g., Daniel's function of prayer as "to accuse and to lament," Clara's twofold reflections on *die Schuldfrage* as a teenager and young adult, and Lena's ongoing inquiry into her family's life histories.[11]

12.3 Individual and Humanity

In applying the key variables, concepts, and constructs of Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* to participants' reflections on Germany's contemporary situation, five participants reported a connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* and two reported none. Judith, the last participant, reflected on her perceived cultural differences between Germans and the refugees, and connected German experiences of post-WWII violence with key events in *die Flüchtlingskriese* to date.[12] However, given this project's purpose and central claim, the researcher could not clearly discern Judith's answer to this question without compromising her agnostic approach and phenomenological methodology.

All participants considered the question of the degree they could be "guilty" or "responsible" for *any* historical situation before they were born, National Socialism or otherwise. This question informed participants diverse reflections on their experiences navigating Germany's contemporary situation. Amongst the five participants of whom affirmed a connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* two stated that while they perceived similarities, they had not encountered public discussion of it. Here, Klaus reflected that this could be because

[11] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016; "Clara." Research Interview. Skype, December 7, 2016; and "Lena." Research Interview. Berlin, November 26, 2016.
[12] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

many of the persecuted groups in WWII were German civilians and western Europeans, as informed by his experiences of a distinct lack of "positive" discussion of *die Schuldfrage.*[13] Hannah made similar reflections, as informed by her experiences working at a welcome course for Syrian refugees in summer 2015.[14] Both Paul and Daniel had encountered similar comparisons of *die Flüchtlingskriese* to post-WWII and post-reunification displacement, but interpreted these comparisons as having no connection to *die Schuldfrage*. Both stated that any such connection would take away from the importance of the humanitarian work Germany was doing. Both also contextualized their reflections within their experiences witnessing the rise of similar "populistic" rhetoric in the AfD, and the 2016 election of Donald Trump as President of the United States.[15]

Of the three participants of whom strongly affirmed a connection between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese,* their only similarity was their reflections on the subject. The experiences that informed these reflections varied greatly. Heinrich contextualized his reflections in the administrative and social demands of *die Flüchtlingskreise,* whereas Lena claimed Germany's responses to these same demands evidenced a strong rejection of past xenophobia.[16] For Clara, one's background was not a core reflection, so long as people realized that the purposes of reflecting on Germany's past were to learn from it, and to prevent something like it from happening again.

[13] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.
[14] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[15] "Daniel." Research Interview. Berlin, November 16, 2016; and "Paul." Research Interview. Berlin, November 21, 2016.
[16] "Heinrich." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016; and "Lena." Research Interview. Berlin, November 26, 2016.

PART V: DISCUSSION

This section concludes this study in three parts. Chapter 13: “The Major Findings,” synthesizes the findings from the two-stage data analysis. Next, chapter 14: “The Study’s Limitations,” considers the study’s difficult methodological questions of verification. Lastly, this study closes with chapter 15: “The Potential for Future Research.”

Chapter 13: The Major Findings

The major findings of this study were threefold. First, participants perceived *die Schuldfrage* as an unavoidable and unchangeable feature of being German. Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* was a useful theoretical framework to explore participants' reflections on this feature in relation to key experiences in their life histories, as it provided the conceptual means to identify, structure, and organize participants' diverse experiences and their philosophical and theological reflections on them.

Second, participants' theological strategies to reconcile *die Schuldfrage* centered on ongoing critical self-reflation in relation to themselves, human kind, and God, as informed by prayer, scripture, and historical research. This threefold reflective framework aligned with Jaspers' *metaphyscische Schuld* closely. However, Jaspers' *metaphysische Schuld* fell short in exploring participants' life histories in terms of their perceived causes of *die Schuldfrage*. Whereas Jaspers situates the cause in *Schuld* as a *Grenzsituation,* this topic had the greatest diversity in participant's reflections and the experiences that informed them. Whereas Daniel and Paul situated the cause in populistic rhetoric and human actions in specific historical situations, Klaus and Hannah cause in how the "guilty party" was the majority of society.[1] Heinrich and Lena combined similar historical and social analysis with theological claims of man's sinful and flawed nature.[2] Judith mentioned all of these considerations briefly, but ultimately situated the cause in human disobedience of God.[3] Lastly, Hannah and Clara contextualized cause in

[1] "Klaus." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016; Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016.
[2] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016; and "Lena." Research Interview. Berlin, November 26, 2016.
[3] "Judith." Research Interview. Berlin, November 17, 2016.

conscious of guilt itself with the goal of preventing National Socialism and the Holocaust from happening again.[4]

Third, participants perceived various connections between *die Schuldfrage* and *die Flüchtlingskriese* in reflecting on similar variables, e.g., administrative and bureaucratic challenges of integrating the high number of refugees safely, perceived cultural differences between "Christian Germany" and the "Islamic refugees," and transparency in political and social discussion thereon.

[4] "Hannah." Research Interview. Berlin, November 22, 2016; and "Clara." Research Interview. Skype, December 7, 2016.

Chapter 14: The Study's Limitations

As this study relied on the researcher's interactions with participants, its limitations are primarily in its methodology and methods. Within scholarly context, the researcher's agnostic approach fell within the contentious insider-outsider debate in religious studies (see chapter 8.1). Just as Smart criticized Berger's term *atheism* as denoting an *a priori* interpretation of the nature of things, so does a Smart's *agnostic* term. In this arena, there is considerable scholarly debate regarding when agnosticism becomes advocacy, of which this researcher made no unique contribution.[5]

In regards to Giorgi's empirical phenomenology as this study's methodology, it has the same issue as any phenomenological project: verification. As sociologist of religion, James V. Spickard states in his chapter on Giorgi's empirical phenomenological method in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methodologies in the Study of Religion* (2014):

> "On the one hand, phenomenology is supposed to investigate pure experiences, bracketing away the interpretations that people make of them. On the other hand, anthropological, psychological, and sociological phenomenologists produce different accounts of these experiences. How do we know that these three approaches – and potentially others – are not just (possibly) conflicting interpretations?" (Spickard, "2.15 Phenomenology," 2014:342).

Spickard answers by asking two additional questions. First, *why posit pre-existing subject and objects in attempt to philosophically reduce them in the first place?* Spickard's observation is made more convoluted by the consideration, as phenomenologist of religion David Allen notes, that most phenomenologists insist they use an empirical approach "free from *a priori* assumptions and judgements."[6] Second, *how does a researcher know whether informants are*

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[5] See the special issue on advocacy in *Religion* 44(2), 2014: 193-344.

[6] David Allen, "Phenomenology of Religion," in *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*, edited by John R. Hinnels. 182-207 (London: Routledge, 2005): 196.

reconstructing experiences during interviews? Of course, the answer is: "they don't."[7] Both of Spickard's question provoke questions of verification, as universal structures and meanings are not "out there" waiting to be found, and "phenomenological intuition" does not free a researcher from evidencing why a specific interpretation is most appropriate.[8] To control this potential limitation, the researcher was cognizant of the possibility that participants' life history interview responses could have multiple different phenomena at issue.[9] However, as this study did not conduct historical or biographical research into participants' life histories to investigate the accuracy of participants' interview responses, it's data was limited to the information participants' provided.

In regards to life history interviews conducted over field research as this study's method, it was subject to the major potential limitations of any interview method: 1) generalization once the study reaches theoretical saturation; 2) manipulation on the parts of both the participant and the researcher; and 3) amount a study can cover in a realistic amount of time.[10] These limitations are convoluted by the nature of life history interview data as *stories* ("…discourses that aim to capture the continuous, lived flow of historically situated phenomenal experience, with all the ambiguity, variability, malleability, and even uniqueness that such an experience implies") even though, as Grimes notes, "story" does not refer to one story above others (*"the* story"), nor does everyone conceive of their lives as stories.[11] Consequently, neither the researcher's or the participants' accounts are adequate on their own, nor can one be substituted for the other. To control this potential limitation, the researcher took a self-critical approach. This prompted her to

[7] Spickard, "2.15 Phenomenology," 338.
[8] Allen, "Phenomenology of Religion," 196 and 202.
[9] Spickard, "2.15 Phenomenology," 338.
[10] Anna Davidsson Bremborg, "Interviewing," in *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in the Study of Religion*, ed. Michael Stausberg and Steven Engler (London: Routledge, 2014): 313-314.
[11] Plummer, *Documents of Life 2*, 37; and Grimes, "Negotiating Religious Life Histories in North American Religious Studies," 67-68.

explicitly reflect on and state: 1) the study's epistemological alignment with key debates in the field (see chapters 4.1 and 8.1); 2) the possible historical and theoretical phenomena referenced in relation to *die Schuldfrage* (see chapters 4.2-6.3); and 3) the combination of methodological agnosticism and Giorgi's empirical phenomenology to bracket participants' experiences from their interpretations of them within their life history interviews (see chapter 10).

Chapter 15: The Potential for Future Research

This study was conducted at a unique time in religious studies' scholarly situation. The field is increasingly reflecting and publishing on its methodologies and methods in response to public demands and interests in religion with modern, and largely digital, society. This study therefore has potential for future research on the changing nature of field work and interview methods. Within this context, this study could be the basis for further religious studies (or interdisciplinary) research on Christian German interaction with interactions with refugees as from predominately Islamic backgrounds. Lastly, as the events, actors, and impacts of *die Schuldfrage* become historically distant, this study could be the basis for longitudinal investigation of individual and societal guilt, truth, and reconciliation in both European and North American contexts.

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APPENDIX: Interview Questions

1. Karl Jaspers' concept of German 'Schuld' ['guilt'] for the Second World War has received a lot of religious and cultural attention since 1945. Do you have any thoughts on Jaspers' concept, or the concept of German "guilt" in a broad sense? / *Seit 1945 hatte Karl Jaspers' Die Schuldfrage (1946) viele religiöse und kulturelle Betrachtungen erhalten. Haben Sie Gedanken über Jaspers oder "deutsche Schuld" als einen grosser Konzept?*
2. Tell me about key moments in your life, e.g. moments of religious or intellectual importance/ *Erzählen Sie mir von wichtige Momente in Ihrer Leben, z.B., Momente religiöser oder intellektueller Bedeutung.*
3. How would you describe your religious beliefs, specifically God and guilt? / *Erzählen Sie mir von Ihrer Religiosität. Wie beschreiben Sie Gott? Schuld?*
4. Tell me about your parents and their lives going back to 1933 / *Erzählen Sie mir von Ihren Eltern und ihr Leben seit Anfang der 30re Jahre.*
5. What have you observed about the refugee situation in Berlin? / *Was haben Sie über die Flüchtlingskriese in Berlin beobachtet?*