

# CV of Dr. Pascale Willemsen

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## PERSONAL INFORMATION

Email: Pascale.Willemsen.Philosophy@gmail.com

Website: www.PascaleWillemsen.com

GoogleScholar: <https://scholar.google.de/citations?hl=de&user=GKzVajQAAAAJ>

OrcID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4563-1397>

Areas of Specialisation:

Philosophical Moral Psychology, Philosophy of Action, Metaethics, Experimental Philosophy

My research interests are in philosophical moral psychology, metaethics, philosophy action, normativity in language, as well as experimental philosophy. I am currently working on thick ethical concepts from a psychological, linguistic, and metaethical perspective. With the help of experiments, I investigate how thick concepts communicate evaluative content, whether this evaluation can be separated from the concept, and how and to what extent thick concepts are perceived to provide reasons for actions. I am further involved in projects concerning the relationship between agency, moral responsibility and free will; the folk concept of lying; the ethics of omissions; and the relationship between moral responsibility and causal responsibility.

## ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

**University of Zurich**, since September 2019

*100% Postdoctoral Researcher* at the SNSF Eccellenza Research Group of Kevin Reuter

Advisor: Prof. Kevin Reuter

Habilitation Project (working title): *Morality – Through Thick and Thin*

**Ruhr-University Bochum**, April 2018 to August 2019

*100% Wissenschaftliche Mitarbeiterin* in Philosophy, Chair for Philosophy of Mind,

Managing Director and Student Consultant for the Master's Program Cognitive Science

Advisor: Prof. Albert Newen

**University College London**, October 2017 to March 2018

*100% Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher* at the Department for Experimental Psychology

Advisor: Prof. David Lagnado

**Ruhr-University Bochum**, June 2017 to September 2018

*100% Postdoctoral Researcher* in Philosophy, Chair for Philosophy of Mind

Advisor: Prof. Albert Newen

## EDUCATION

**Ruhr-University Bochum**, January 2014 to June 2017

*PhD in Philosophy*

Dissertation Topic: "Investigating the Role of Causal Responsibility for the Attribution of Moral Responsibility"

Advisors: Albert Newen (first advisor), Edouard Machery (second advisor)

Defence: 16 June 2017

Grade: *summa cum laude* (highest possible distinction)

**Yale University**, August 2015 to November 2015

Visiting Fellow at the Department of Philosophy and the Program of Cognitive Science

Host: Joshua Knobe

**London School of Economics and Political Science**, September 2012 to August 2013

*M.Sc. in Philosophy of Science*

**RWTH Aachen**, October 2007 to September 2012

*M.A. and B.A. in Philosophy and Linguistics and Communication Studies*

## **TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

Experimental Philosophy and Questions in Moral Philosophy and Psychology

BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, MSc. Psychology, and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English, block seminar, Summer 2019

Introduction to Moral Psychology

BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, MSc. Psychology, and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English, Winter 2018/19

Philosophical Thought Experiments and Experimental Philosophy

BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English, Winter 2018/19

Handlungen, Ereignisse, und ihre Erklärungen (Actions, Events, and Their Explanations)

BA Philosophy, first year, taught in German, Winter 2018/19

Experimental Philosophy of Responsibility – Perspectives from Ethics, Metaphysics, and the Law

BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy and MSc. Cognitive Science, and Law, taught in English, Summer 2018

Happiness, Well-Being, and Morality

BA Philosophy, MA Philosophy, MSc Psychology and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English, Summer 2018

Moderne Handlungstheorie (Modern Philosophy of Action)

BA Philosophy, taught in German, Summer 2018

Experimental Philosophy of Morality

MA Philosophy and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English, Summer 2017

Agency and Moral Responsibility

MA Philosophy and MSc. Cognitive Science, taught in English, Summer 2014

## **MEMBERSHIPS IN PANELS AND REVIEWING ACTIVITIES**

### **Memberships**

Co-founder and member of the scientific board of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany, together with Albert Newen and Kevin Reuter (founded in 2015),

<https://sites.google.com/site/xphigroupgermany/home>

### **Reviewer**

Cognition; Erkenntnis; Ethical Theory and Moral Practice; Ergo; Journal of Applied Philosophy; Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition; Quarterly Journal of Experimental Psychology; Philosophical Psychology; Philosophical Studies; Springer Publishing

## **Public Reviewing Activities**

Since 2020: Expert reviewer in philosophy for *Schweizer Jugend forscht* (young scientists' competition)

## **WORKSHOP AND CONFERENCE ORGANISATION**

Co-Organiser: Experimental Philosophy Online Workshop 2020, organised by the Strategic Partnership between the Charles University Prague and the University of Zurich (Institute of Philosophy), and local XPhi Groups in Europe

Support: *Experimental Philosophy Conference* as a member of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany, 19 – 21 September 2019, University of Bern

Local Organiser: *EuroCogSci 2019*, 02 – 04 September 2019, Ruhr-University Bochum

Co-Organiser: *9th workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK*, 14 – 16 June 2018, University College London

Main Organiser: Book symposium on Edouard Machery's book "Philosophy within its proper bounds", 18 December at Ruhr-University Bochum

Organiser: One-day workshop on *Experimental Philosophy of Morality and Causation—Perspectives from Philosophy, Psychology, and Law*, 13 June, Ruhr-University Bochum

Lead Organiser: 1.5-day workshop on *Experimental Philosophy: Methods & New Directions & 1-day conference on Empirical Moral Psychology*, 18 – 20 November 2016, Humboldt-University Berlin

Co-Organiser: *First Conference on Experimental Philosophy in Germany, Investigating the Nature and our Understanding of Causality, Morality, Language, Mind, and Aesthetics*, 26 – 28 November 2015, Ruhr-University Bochum

## **APPROVED RESEARCH PROJECTS**

€19,200 postdoctoral research fellowship for a six-month stay at the University College London, Research School Plus at Ruhr-University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG) (2017)

€22,800 full PhD Fellowship, Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (€1200 per month, November 2015 – June 2017)

## **PRIZES, AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS**

CHF8,000 for organising a methods workshop on "Developing corpus analysis as an interdisciplinary tool in cognitive science", Graduate Campus University of Zurich (2019)

Dissertation Prize for outstanding interdisciplinary dissertations at Ruhr-University Bochum, Gesellschaft der Freunde der Ruhr-Universität Bochum (2018)

£2,000 for organising the 9th Annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK (together with Lara Kirfel), Mind Association (2018)

£4,000 for organising the 9th Annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK (together with David Shanks and Lara Kirfel), Experimental Psychology Society (2018)

£375 for graduate student travel stipends for the 9th Annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group UK (together with Lara Kirfel), Analysis Trust (2018)

€2,810 granted for organising an interdisciplinary workshop on experimental philosophy of morality and causation, Research School Plus at Ruhr-University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG) (2017)

€4,000 granted for a research stay of Karolina Prochownik (PhD student from Krakow University, Poland) at Ruhr-University Bochum, Research School Plus at Ruhr University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG) (2016)

€3,260 granted for a research stay Prof. Justin Sytsma (University of Wellington, New Zealand) to Bochum, Research School Plus at Ruhr University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG) (2016)

€10,000 International Realization Budget for international activities, Research School Plus at Ruhr University Bochum, German Research Council (DFG) (2014)

## PUBLICATIONS

(\* indicate joint first-authorship)

### Monographs

- (1) **Willemsen, Pascale (2019)**. *Investigating the Role of Causal Responsibility for the Attribution of Moral Responsibility*. Paderborn: mentis.  
ISBN-13: 978-3957431523

### Peer-Reviewed Journals

- (6) Viebahn, Emanuel; Wiegmann, Alex; Engelmann, Neele; **Willemsen, Pascale (2020)**. Can you lie by asking a question? An empirical investigation. In press with *Ergo*.  
Pre-print available here: <https://osf.io/jfyn8>
- (5) **Willemsen, Pascale**; Kirfel, Lara (2018). Recent empirical work on the relationship between causal judgments and norms. *Philosophy Compass*.  
doi: 10.1111/phc3.12562  
Link: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/phc3.12562>
- (4) **Willemsen, Pascale**; Kaspar, Kai; Newen, Albert (2018). A new look at the attribution of moral responsibility: The underestimated relevance of social roles. *Philosophical Psychology*. (peer-reviewed)  
doi: 10.1080/09515089.2018.1429592  
Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09515089.2018.1429592>
- (3) **Willemsen, Pascale (2016)**. Omissions without expectations – A new approach to the things we failed to do”, in *Synthese*. (peer-reviewed)  
doi: 10.1007/s11229-016-1284-9.  
Link: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11229-016-1284-9>
- (2) **Willemsen, Pascale**; Reuter, Kevin \* (2016). Is there really an omission effect? *Philosophical Psychology*, 29(8). (peer-reviewed)  
doi:10.1080/09515089.2016.1225194.  
Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09515089.2016.1225194>
- (1) Wiegmann, Alex; Rutschmann, Ronja; **Willemsen, Pascale \*** (2017). Empirically investigating the concept of lying. *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*.  
doi: 10.1007/s40961.017-0112-z.  
Link: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s40961-017-0112-z>

## Peer-Reviewed Conference Proceedings

- (3) **Willemssen, Pascale**; Reuter, Kevin (2020). Separability and the Effect of Valence. *Proceedings of the 42th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society 2020*, pp. 794-800. (peer-reviewed)  
Link: <https://cognitivesciencesociety.org/cogsci20/papers/0141/index.html>
- (2) Stephan, Simon; **Willemssen, Pascale**; Gerstenberg, Tobias (2017). Marbles in inaction: Counterfactual simulation and causation by omissions. *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society 2017*, pp. 1132-1137. (peer-reviewed)
- (1) Wiegmann, Alex; **Willemssen, Pascale** \* (2017). How the truth can make a great lie: An empirical investigation of lying by falsely implicating. *Proceedings of the 35th Annual Conference of the Cognitive Science Society 2017*, pp. 3516-3521. (peer-reviewed)

## Chapters in Edited Volumes

- (2) **Willemssen, Pascale** (2020). The relevance of alternative possibilities for the attribution of moral responsibility. In *Oxford Series in Experimental Philosophy*, Oxford University Press. (peer-reviewed)  
doi: 10.1093/oso/9780198852407.003.0011  
Link: <https://books.google.de/books?hl=de&lr=&id=LwfcDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA232&dq=Willemsen+The+relevance+of+alternative+possibilities+&ots=laR7Fcckwa&sig=izv3N2Rlr3GvhaYGe6bIhaPcajI#v=onepage&q=Willemsen%20The%20relevance%20of%20alternative%20possibilities&f=false>
- (1) Sytsma, Justin; Bluhm, Roland; **Willemssen, Pascale**; Reuter, Kevin (2018). Causal attribution and corpus analysis, In: *Methodological Advances in Experimental Philosophy*, Bloomsbury Publishing. (invited)  
doi: 10.5040/9781350069022.ch-008  
Link: <https://www.bloomsburycollections.com/book/methodological-advances-in-experimental-philosophy/ch7-causal-attributions-and-corpus-analysis>

## Preprints of Unpublished Work

- (2) **Willemssen, Pascale** (2020). Direct and derivative moral responsibility. An overlooked distinction in experimental philosophy.  
doi: 10.31234/osf.io/bz38e  
<https://psyarxiv.com/bz38e/>
- (1) **Willemssen, Pascale**; Wiegmann, Alex (2017). I must although I can't?!? Suggestions for a two-level theory of 'ought implies can'.  
doi: 10.31234/osf.io/hyq9u  
<https://psyarxiv.com/hyq9u/>

## TALKS

- (31) *Experimentally Investigating Thick Concepts*  
Technical University Berlin (Germany, held online), *invited talk* (February 2021)
- (30) *Direct and derivative moral responsibility: An overlooked distinction in experimental philosophy*  
Practical Philosophy and Political Theory research seminar, University of Gothenburg (Sweden, held online), *invited talk* (January 2021)
- (29) *Thick Concepts and Reasons for Action*  
Charles University of Prague (Czech Republic, held online), *invited talk* (December 2020)
- (28) *Do Thick Concepts Provide Reasons for Action?*  
Workshop on Meta-Ethics and Meta-Epistemology, Vienna (Austria, held online), *invited talk* (November 2020)

- (27) *Separating the Evaluative from the Descriptive. An Empirical Study of Thick Concepts*  
Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society (Toronto, held online) (July 2020)
- (26) *Separating the Evaluative from the Descriptive. An Empirical Study of Thick Concepts*  
Empirical Moral Psychology, Salzburg (Austria, held online) (July 2020)
- (25) *Direct and Derivative Moral Responsibility. An Overlooked Distinction in Experimental Philosophy.*  
Online Experimental Philosophy Conference Europe (June 2020)
- (24) *Being virtuous without being good? An Experimental Study on Thick Concepts*  
Experimental Philosophy of Language and Metaethics, Bochum (Germany), *invited talk* (2020)
- (23) *Experimentelle Moralphilosophie. Anspruch, Leistung und Grenzen*  
Anspruch und Methode der Philosophie, Cologne, *invited talk* (2019)
- (22) *Philosophical Intuitions about Frankfurt Cases – What XPhi Can and Cannot Contribute*  
Conceptual Analysis, Conceptual Engineering, and Experimental Philosophy, Zurich (2019)
- (21) *Let's lay it on thick! On the relevance of thick ethical terms for metaethics and moral psychology*  
Experimental Philosophy Conference, Bern (Switzerland) (2019)
- (20) *Don't Chmess with Me! – Why Moral Philosophy Needs Moral Psychology*  
First Workshop of the Emmy-Noether Group EXTRA, Bochum (Germany), *invited talk* (2019)
- (19) *What the Hell Is Causal Responsibility?*  
University of Bern (Switzerland), *invited talk* (2019)
- (18) *The Relevance of Alternative Possibilities for Moral Responsibility*  
American Philosophical Association, New York City (USA), *invited talk* (2019)
- (17) *Omission Impossible. Why We Cannot Omit to Perform Impossible Actions*  
Experimental and Naturalistic Perspectives on the Philosophy of Law, Bochum (Germany), *invited talk* (2018)
- (16) *The Relevance of Alternative Possibilities for Moral Responsibility*  
Moral Psychology – From Neurons to Norms, Beirut (Lebanon)(2018)
- (15) *The Relevance of Alternative Possibilities for Moral Responsibility*  
3rd Annual Bochum – Rutgers Workshop, New Brunswick (USA), *keynote talk* (2018)
- (14) *Alternative Possibilities and Moral Responsibility*  
2nd Bi-annual Workshop of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany, Osnabrueck (Germany), *invited talk* (2017)
- (13) *The Pragmatics of Lying*  
Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology, Hertfordshire (UK) (2017)
- (12) *Omissions and Causal Explanations*  
The Experimental Philosophy of Morality and Causation – Perspectives from Philosophy, Psychology, and Law, Bochum (Germany)
- (11) *I must although I can't!? A pragmatically grounded two-level theory of 'ought implies can'*  
Experimental Moral Psychology and Philosophy, Berlin (Germany) (2016)
- (10) *The philosophical trilemma of moral responsibility for omissions – and how to solve it*  
Georg-Elias-Müller-Institute for Psychology, University of Göttingen (Germany), *invited talk* (2016)
- (9) *Why you can be blamed for the things you did not do*  
Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology, St. Andrews (UK) (2015)

- (8) *I must although I can't!?: A pragmatically grounded two-level theory of 'ought implies can'*  
Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology, St. Andrews (UK) (2015)
- (7) *Omissions and expectations. Two studies on how moral and causal judgments depend on expectations*  
Department for Cognitive and Decision Sciences, Causal Cognition Lab, University College London (United Kingdom), *invited talk* (2016)
- (6) *Omissions without Expectations – A New Approach to the Metaphysics of Things We Failed to Do*  
First Conference of the Experimental Philosophy Group Germany, Bochum (Germany) (2015)
- (5) *Is there really an omission bias?*  
Buffalo Annual Experimental Philosophy Conference 2015, Buffalo (USA) (2015)
- (4) *Is there really an omission bias?*  
Annual Conference of the European Society of Philosophy and Psychology, Tartu (Estonia) (2015)
- (3) *Are Omissions on Par with Actions?*  
6th Conference of Experimental Philosophy Group UK, Nottingham, (UK) (2015)
- (2) *Why Social Norms Matter for the Attribution of Moral Responsibility*  
The Moral Domain: Conceptual Issues in Moral Psychology, Vilnius (Lithuania) (2014)
- (1) *Dennett's Concept of Rationality*  
XXIII. Congress of the German Society for Philosophy 2014, Münster (Germany) (2014)

## OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

- (5) Author for Philosophie.ch, a Swiss philosophy blog  
<https://www.philosophie.ch/artikel/warum-ist-das-philosophisch-relevant-und-warum-ueberlaesst-du-diese-arbeit-nicht-lieber-den-psychologen>
- (4) Author for Praefaktisch, a German philosophy blog  
<https://www.philosophie.ch/artikel/warum-ist-das-philosophisch-relevant-und-warum-ueberlaesst-du-diese-arbeit-nicht-lieber-den-psychologen>
- (3) Philosophical expert and interview partner for Quarks, a German popular scientific tv show:  
<https://www1.wdr.de/mediathek/video/sendungen/quarks-und-co/video-organspende--was-hilft-bei-der-entscheidung-100.html>
- (2) Radio interviews with national German radio stations (WDR3, Deutschlandfunk, RadioKöln)  
*On the relevance of social hierarchies in professional contexts moral responsibility attribution*
- (1) Press Releases  
<https://news.rub.de/presseinformationen/wissenschaft/2018-02-20-philosophie-warum-der-chef-immer-schuld-ist>

## LANGUAGES

German: Native Speaker

English: Fluent

French: Basic Knowledge

Zurich, 04.01.2021

## **ACADEMIC REFERENCES**

### **Prof. Joshua Knobe**

Department of Psychology  
Department of Philosophy  
Yale University  
Joshua.Knobe@yale.edu

### **Prof. Edouard Machery**

Center for Philosophy of Science  
University of Pittsburgh  
machery@pitt.edu

### **Prof. Albert Newen**

Institute for Philosophy II  
Center of Mind, Brain and Cognitive Evolution  
Ruhr University Bochum  
Albert.Newen@rub.de

### **Prof. Kevin Reuter**

Institute of Philosophy  
University of Zurich  
Kevin.Reuter@philo.uzh.ch

### **Dr. Alex Wiegmann**

Institute for Philosophy II  
Ruhr University Bochum  
Alexander.Wiegmann@rub.de