



# Dynamics in Action: Intentional Behavior as a Complex System

*Alicia Juarrero*

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## **Dynamics in Action: Intentional Behavior as a Complex System** Alicia Juarrero

What is the difference between a wink and a blink? The answer is important not only to philosophers of mind, for significant moral and legal consequences rest on the distinction between voluntary and involuntary behavior. However, "action theory" -- the branch of philosophy that has traditionally articulated the boundaries between action and non-action, and between voluntary and involuntary behavior -- has been unable to account for the difference.

Alicia Juarrero argues that a mistaken, 350-year-old model of cause and explanation -- one that takes all causes to be of the push-pull, efficient cause sort, and all explanation to be prooflike -- underlies contemporary theories of action. Juarrero then proposes a new framework for conceptualizing causes based on complex adaptive systems. Thinking of causes as dynamical constraints makes bottom-up and top-down causal relations, including those involving intentional causes, suddenly tractable. A different logic for explaining actions -- as historical narrative, not inference -- follows if one adopts this novel approach to long-standing questions of action and responsibility.

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