



# 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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