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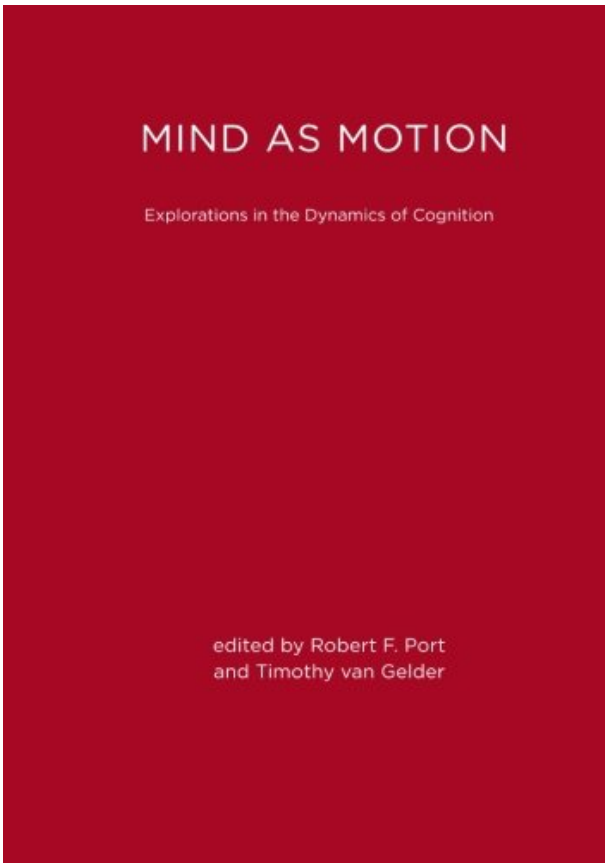

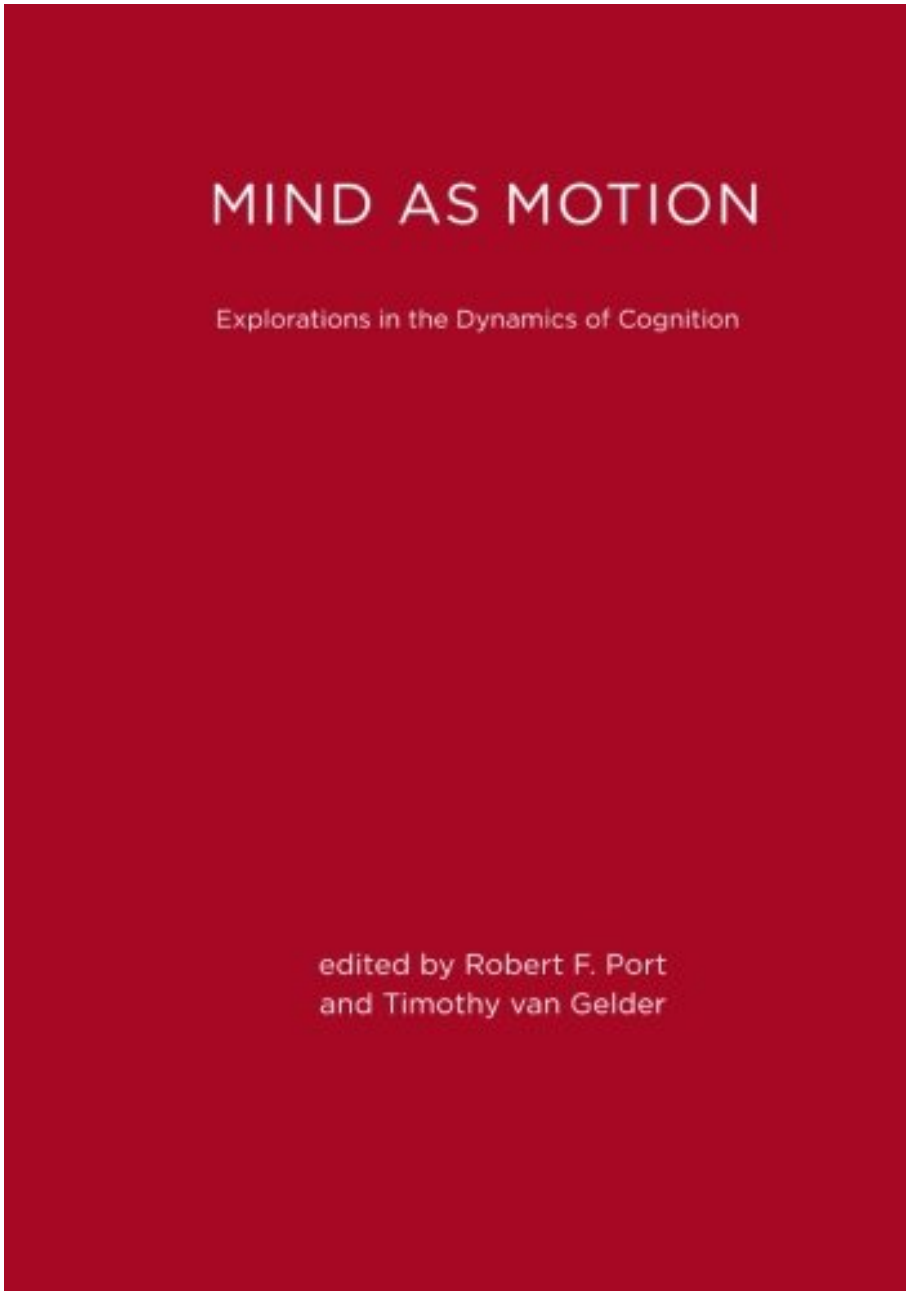

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About the Author
Robert F. Port is Professor in the Departments of Linguistics and Computer Science at Indiana University, and Timothy van Gelder is Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, Australia.

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Mind as Motion is the first comprehensive presentation of the dynamical approach to cognition. It contains a representative sampling of original, current research on topics such as perception, motor control, speech and language, decision making, and development. Included are chapters by pioneers of the approach, as well as others applying the tools of dynamics to a wide range of new problems. Throughout, particular attention is paid to the philosophical foundations of this radical new research program.

Cognitive science has traditionally been dominated by an AI-based computational paradigm in which cognition is taken to be the manipulation of internal symbols. Even as the potential of this paradigm continues to be explored, limitations are becoming increasingly apparent. Researchers throughout cognitive science have been casting around for alternative theoretical frameworks. Out of this flux has emerged the dynamical concept, according to which cognitive processes are the behavior of nonlinear dynamical systems and are best studied using the mathematics of dynamical modeling and dynamical systems theory.

Mind as Motion provides a conceptual and historical overview of the dynamical approach, a tutorial introduction to dynamics for cognitive scientists, and a glossary covering the most frequently used terms. Each chapter includes an introduction by the editors, outlining its main ideas and placing it in context, and a guide to further reading.

Contributors: Randall Beer, Geoffrey Bingham, Catherine Browman, Jerome Busemeyer, Claudia Carello, Fred Cummins, Jeffrey Elman, Marco Giunti, Louis Goldstein, Stephen Grossberg, Devin McAuley, Mary Ann Metzger, Alec Norton, Jean Petitot, Robert Port, Dana Redington, Steven Reidbord, Elliot Saltzman, Esther Thelen, James Townsend, Michael Turvey, Paul van Geert, Timothy van Gelder

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About the Author
Robert F. Port is Professor in the Departments of Linguistics and Computer Science at Indiana University, and Timothy van Gelder is Professor in the Department of Philosophy, University of Melbourne, Australia.

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Wonderful Overview of Cognitive Dynamics But a bit too combative...
By Let's Compare Options Preptorial
The Authors networked at an Indiana University conference, and their list of experts produced "the" state of the art overview of Cognitive Dynamics (CD). The authors begin by creating a tempest in a teapot by trying to tack against the wind of "computational models" of cognition. With a kind of "my math is better than yours" logic, they fault "cognition as computer" by using a continuous vs. discrete differential to argue that computer models of the brain or cognition don't take time into consideration.

In my day job I teach computers to model dynamical systems for physics. I can't split hairs as finely as these authors, because when you transition from dynamical systems math to the circuits that "do" it in assembly, Python, C, etc., you ARE computing. Maybe not in the strict sense of defining what a computer IS, and then arguing against your own definition, but when a drum beat gets fast enough, it becomes a tone. A particle can be superpositioned as a wave. The authors seem to have been tricked by t1,t2,... ...tn in thinking that "computation" can't handle time dynamically-- of course it can! Just speed it up guys.

Subtracting the political bantering, the articles chosen are fairly representative of the research still being done in CD, including especially in language and decision making. The math behind Dynamical Systems (at least from my viewpoint as an Engineer) is far more complex than most psych liberal arts grads usually encounter. The interesting thing is that DST has been used for a couple decades now in the "foundation" cognitive fields-- neurons, synapses, etc.-- basically, electronics, where those of us who teach computers to think work. The seminal book on that topic, with plenty of clinical and "phase oscillation" DST depth, is Rhythms of the Brain

The authors again trash talk computation by jabbing at utility functions, but when you look deeply at their model of choice, by introducing somatics, the environment, time, etc. the actual math comes suspiciously close to economists modeling those same utility functions with dynamical systems, that the authors trashed as "computation." Can't we all just get along?

This book is a must read if you have a vision of the future that says math will eventually permeate everything. The authors are a bit unfair in comparing computational models to an earth centered universe, because they leave out algorithms in their discussions. When you integrate dynamical systems algorithms, especially with advanced Python, FPGA and VHDL libraries and circuits (which are, by the way, used all the time in AI today-- to model physics engines that learn, for example), the "competitive" model distinctions fade and integrate much more than they did in 1998. For example, the authors say that computation doesn't take time into account in an iteration example (discrete/continuous zing): it seems they need to watch a more recent chess playing computer "think"-- constrain the time with a couple inequalities, and watch the change!

Not that they, and especially others like Noe (Out of Our Heads: Why You Are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness) don't have a valid point-- we are far more than little humunculi computers under a bell-- but we're also far more than the math beneath dynamical systems, with time, with bodies, and with environments. We need all the models, including AI, then still don't get much more than the tip of the iceberg of cognition, if we're willing to add a dash of humility to this most important of all topics. We are getting quite close, with AI USING DST, to making automated, animated characters that are very hard to differentiate from humans. From that standpoint, this volume is a bit dated, but still very important.

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