

# Action on Action: Understanding how Humans Discern Meaning in Motion

In 2001: *A Space Odyssey*, Arthur C. Clarke foretold the advent of HAL, a computer system who could interpret our actions and, not liking their import, could choose to take steps to eliminate us. Yet in the reality of 2008, we know remarkably little about how any device—whether organic or inorganic—can redescribe dynamic motion in terms of actors' goals and intentions. What machines currently do is religiously record human action, but they can't make sense of it. Only humans can do that. And from a remarkably early age: infants as young as 3-5 months of age already inject meaning into motion. As well, parents take steps to help them do so, producing a special form of motion for infants—"motionese"—with exaggerated structure that is riddled with clues to meaning. Things go wrong with the unfolding of this crucial human cognitive skill for action processing—as appears to be the case in autism, for example—developmental havoc ensues. Deficits in action processing compromise development in a profound way, from social functioning to language acquisition. Dr. Dare Baldwin will report on efforts within cognitive science to flesh out, in detail, how humans acquire the skills enabling them to accomplish the everyday interpretive feat that is human action processing.



## Dr. Dare Baldwin

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## ~COLLOQUIUM~

Friday, November 7, 2008

3:00 p.m. in Boyle 155, COCC Campus

Presented by **Dr. Dare Baldwin**

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