**Abstract**

**What is the Self?**

The self has been one of the most widely studied phenomena in psychology, yet there is no consensus about what it is, and indeed some scholars have boldly proposed that there is no such thing. This talk argues the reality of the self as a social adaptation at the interface between the physical body and the social system. It reviews evidence that human groups function best on the basis of differentiated identities. The conclusion is that the self emerged not from the inner requirements of the brain or psyche but rather from the requirements of organized groups.