



CENTRE FOR ASIAN AND  
TRANSCULTURAL STUDIES

SOUTH ASIA  
INSTITUTE



UNIVERSITÄT  
HEIDELBERG  
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SEIT 1386

## Political Science Department Lecture

# Altered Selves and What They Tell Us About Who We Are

**Anil Ananthaswamy**

*Award-winning science writer and former staff writer and deputy news editor for New Scientist magazine*

When you ask the question "Who Am I?", what kind of answer can neuroscience and neuropsychology provide? In this talk, Anil Ananthaswamy explores the idea that our sense of self is a construction, a process that is active moment-by-moment. A construction can come apart, as it does in conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, schizophrenia or even during out-of-body experiences; in each case, certain aspects of our sense of self are disrupted, even destroyed. Examining the ways in which the self is altered lets us understand how the self is put together in the first place, by the brain and body acting in concert.



**Anil Ananthaswamy** is an award-winning science writer and former staff writer and deputy news editor for New Scientist magazine. He is a 2019-20 MIT Knight Science Journalism fellow. He organizes and teaches an annual science writing workshop at the National Centre for Biological Sciences in Bengaluru, India. He writes regularly for Quanta, Scientific American, New Scientist and Nature, among others. He is the author of three books: *The Edge of Physics*, *The Man Who Wasn't There* and *Through Two Doors at Once*. Anil's next book, *Why Machines Learn: The Elegant Math Behind Modern AI*, will be published by Dutton, Penguin Random House, in May 2024. He's currently the journalist-in-residence at the Heidelberg Institute for Theoretical Studies.

**Date:** Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> June 2023

**Time:** 14:15 – 15:45 CET

**Venue:** SAI, Seminar Room 130.00.03, Building 4130