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Autore	Black Brian <1970->
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Sommario/riassunto

This groundbreaking book is an elegant exploration of the Upanisads, often considered the fountainhead of the rich, varied philosophical tradition in India. The Upanisads, in addition to their philosophical content, have a number of sections that contain narratives and dialogues—a literary dimension largely ignored by the Indian philosophical tradition, as well as by modern scholars. Brian Black draws attention to these literary elements and demonstrates that they are fundamental to understanding the philosophical claims of the text. Focusing on the Upanisadic notion of the self (tman), the book is organized into four main sections that feature a lesson taught by a brahmin teacher to a brahmin student, debates between brahmins, discussions between brahmins and kings, and conversations between brahmins and women. These dialogical situations feature dramatic elements that bring attention to both the participants and the social contexts of Upanisadic philosophy, characterizing philosophy as something achieved through discussion and debate. In addition to making a number of innovative arguments, the author also guides the reader through these profound and engaging texts, offering ways of reading the Upanisads that make them more understandable and accessible.
