



# **Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death**

*Richard Sorabji*

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Drawing on classical antiquity and Western and Eastern philosophy, Richard Sorabji tackles in *Self* the question of whether there is such a thing as the individual self or only a stream of consciousness. According to Sorabji, the self is not an undetectable soul or ego, but an embodied individual whose existence is plain to see. Unlike a mere stream of consciousness, it is something that owns not only a consciousness but also a body.

Sorabji traces historically the retreat from a positive idea of self and draws out the implications of these ideas of self on the concepts of life and death, asking: Should we fear death? How should our individuality affect the way we live? Through an astute reading of a huge array of traditions, he helps us come to terms with our uneasiness about the subject of self in an account that will be at the forefront of philosophical debates for years to come.

“There has never been a book remotely like this one in its profusion of ancient references on ideas about human identity and selfhood . . . Readers unfamiliar with the subject also need to know that Sorabji breaks new ground in giving special attention to philosophers such as Epictetus and other Stoics, Plotinus and later Neoplatonists, and the ancient commentators on Aristotle (on the last of whom he is the world's leading authority).”—Anthony A. Long, *Times Literary Supplement*

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