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Titolo	What functions explain : functional explanation and self-reproducing systems // Peter McLaughlin [[electronic resource]]
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Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xi, 259 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Collana	Cambridge studies in philosophy and biology
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Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references (p. 237-254) and index.
Nota di contenuto	Part I: Functions and intentions -- Introduction -- The problem of teleology -- Intentions and the functions of artifacts -- Part II: Analysis of functional explanation -- Basic positions in philosophy of science: Hempel and Nagel -- Etiological view -- Dispositional view -- Part III: Self-reproducing systems -- Artifacts and organisms -- Feedback mechanisms and their beneficiaries -- Having a good -- What functions explain.
Sommario/riassunto	This 2001 book offers an examination of functional explanation as it is used in biology and the social sciences, and focuses on the kinds of philosophical presuppositions that such explanations carry with them. It tackles such questions as: why are some things explained functionally while others are not? What do the functional explanations tell us about how these objects are conceptualized? What do we commit

ourselves to when we give and take functional explanations in the life sciences and the social sciences? McLaughlin gives a critical review of the debate on functional explanation in the philosophy of science. He discusses the history of the philosophical question of teleology, and provides a comprehensive review of the post-war literature on functional explanation. *What Functions Explain* provides a sophisticated and detailed Aristotelian analysis of our concept of natural functions, and offers a positive contribution to the ongoing debate on the topic.
