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Nota di contenuto

Light will be thrown -- Darwinian principles -- The origin of novelty -- Guided variation -- The units of culture -- Memes or minds.

Sommario/riassunto

Maria Kronfeldner critically evaluates two influential approaches to cultural change that explain creativity and diffusion as an evolutionary process by drawing an analogy between the Darwinian approach to creativity and the theory of memes, or memetics. The Darwinian approach to creativity maintains that a process of blind variation and selection creates novelty in culture. Memetics goes further by claiming that we can ignore or even eliminate the human mind as the main causal force in the explanation of creativity and culture. In a penetrating analysis Kronfeldner shows analogical reasoning from evolutionary biology to cultural change lacks the necessary descriptive adequacy, explanatory force and heuristic value to be successful. Indeed she shows that both the Darwinian approach to creativity and memetics are mere reformulations, in Darwinian language, of what has been known already and offer no new explanatory tools. The book provides an acute philosophical examination of Darwinian creativity and memetics from within the respective evolutionary approaches including debates from genetics, evolutionary biology, psychology, anthropology, science studies and philosophy.