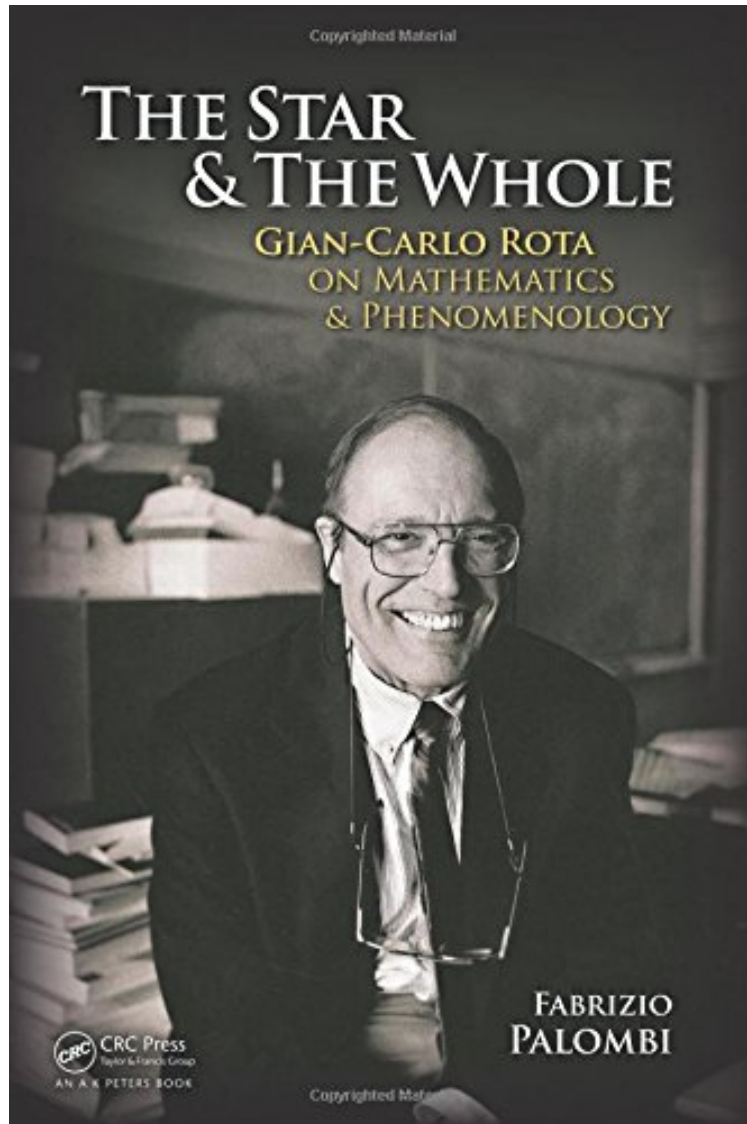


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The Star and the Whole: Gian-Carlo Rota on Mathematics and Phenomenology

Fabrizio Palombi

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Fabrizio Palombi : The Star and the Whole: Gian-Carlo Rota on Mathematics and Phenomenology before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Star and the Whole: Gian-Carlo Rota on Mathematics and Phenomenology:

The Star and the Whole: Gian-Carlo Rota on Mathematics and Phenomenology, authored by Fabrizio Palombi, is the first book to study Rotas philosophical reflection. Rota (1932-1999) was a leading figure in contemporary mathematics and an outstanding philosopher, inspired by phenomenology, who made fundamental contributions to combinatorial analysis, and trained several generations of mathematicians in his long career at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and the Los Alamos National Laboratory. The first chapter of the book reconstructs Rotas cultural biography and examines his philosophical style, his criticisms of analytical philosophy, and his reflection on Heideggers thought. The second chapter presents a general picture of Rotas re-elaboration of phenomenology examined in the light of the Husserlian notion of *Fundierung*. This chapter also illustrates how the star-shape becomes a powerful instrument for understanding the properties of Husserls mereology and the critique of objectivism. The third chapter is a theoretical reflection on the nature of mathematical entities, and the fourth examines the complex relation of mathematical research with technological applicability and scientific progress. The foreword of the text is written by Robert Sokolowski.

This book is a short overview of Gian-Carlo Rotas life and his work. In the current climate in which all research seems to be valued proportionately to its economic impact, the last chapter is of particular interest. Rota has argued that mathematics is threatened by ignorance and hostility towards its practitioners. The last chapter also includes a complete bibliography of all of Rotas philosophical writings. David J. Hand, *International Statistical*, 80, 2012 The book gives a deep look into the philosophical views of Gian Carlo Rota. The first chapter starts with a biography of Rota, which is important to know for understanding the development of his philosophical views. the author gives an elegant explanation of Rotas openly negative attitude towards analytic philosophy. the reader learns about the core of Rotas philosophical studies. The author explains that Rota followed the course of most classical philosophical thought in his analysis of mathematics and of its relation with objectivism. [he also] examines the relation of mathematics to technological applicability and scientific progress. Peeler Mrsepp, *Mathematical*, 2012e This admirable book by Fabrizio Palombi is an attempt to figure out the life, work, and person of Gian-Carlo Rota. we are indebted to Fabrizio Palombi for sifting through Rotas memories and writings to help us understand him and his work. From the Foreword by Robert Sokolowski About the Author Fabrizio Palombi, Professor at the University of Calabria (Italy), was Rotas collaborator and a Visiting Scholar at MIT. He is the editor of Rotas philosophical anthologies *Pensieri discreti* (Garzanti: 1993), *Indiscrete Thoughts* (Birkhuser: 1997), and *Lezioni Napoletane*, (Citt del Sole: 1999), and coeditor of the proceedings of an international conference dedicated to Rota, *From Combinatorics to Philosophy* (Springer: 2009). Palombi is the author of two monographs: *Il legame instabile* (Franco Angeli: 2002), and *Jacques Lacan* (Carocci: 2009).