



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

Fabrizio Palombi

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The Star and the Whole: Gian-Carlo Rota on Mathematics and Phenomenology, authored by **Fabrizio Palombi**, is the first book to study Rota's 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 Rota's cultural biography and examines his philosophical style, his criticisms of analytical philosophy, and his reflection on Heidegger's thought. The second chapter presents a general picture of Rota's 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 Husserl's 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.

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