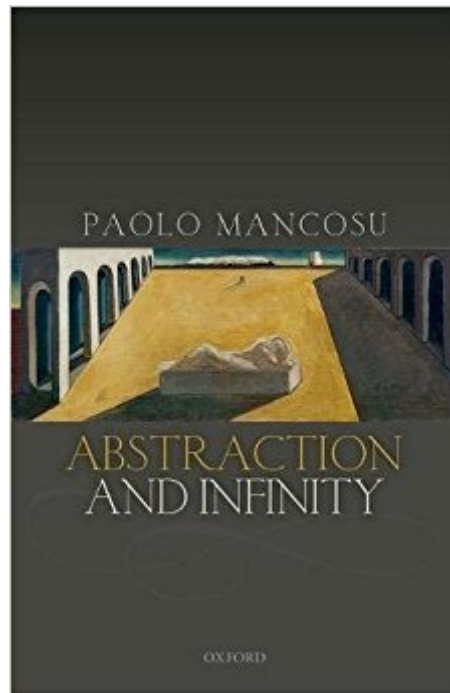




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Abstraction And Infinity



Synopsis

Paolo Mancosu provides an original investigation of historical and systematic aspects of the notions of abstraction and infinity and their interaction. A familiar way of introducing concepts in mathematics rests on so-called definitions by abstraction. An example of this is Hume's Principle, which introduces the concept of number by stating that two concepts have the same number if and only if the objects falling under each one of them can be put in one-one correspondence. This principle is at the core of neo-logicism. In the first two chapters of the book, Mancosu provides a historical analysis of the mathematical uses and foundational discussion of definitions by abstraction up to Frege, Peano, and Russell. Chapter one shows that abstraction principles were quite widespread in the mathematical practice that preceded Frege's discussion of them and the second chapter provides the first contextual analysis of Frege's discussion of abstraction principles in section 64 of the *Grundlagen*. In the second part of the book, Mancosu discusses a novel approach to measuring the size of infinite sets known as the theory of numerosities and shows how this new development leads to deep mathematical, historical, and philosophical problems. The final chapter of the book explores how this theory of numerosities can be exploited to provide surprisingly novel perspectives on neo-logicism.

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Paolo Mancosu is Willis S. and Marion Slusser Professor of Philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley. He is the author of

numerous articles and books in logic and philosophy of mathematics. He is also the author of *Inside the Zhivago Storm: The editorial adventures of Pasternak's masterpiece* (Feltrinelli, Milan, 2013). During his career he has taught at Stanford, Oxford, and Yale. He has been a fellow of the Humboldt Stiftung, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, and the Institut d'Etudes Avancees in Paris. He has received grants from the Guggenheim Foundation, the NSF, and the CNRS.

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