

# *Copernicus as a Source for the Kantian Transcendental Turn. On Kant's Tricentennial (1724), 550 Years After the Birth of Copernicus (1473)*

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*I start from what I call Ptolemaism, that is, the objection according to which Kant is more akin to Ptolemy and his geocentrism than to Copernicus – an objection common among the proponents of neorealism (Meillassoux, Ferraris, Gabriel). I argue that this objection also points to an anthropocentrism, subjectivism, and even a speciesism in Kant's proposal regarding the conditions that make knowledge possible, essentially at the core of his transcendental approach to analyzing knowledge. Besides clearing up the fundamental misunderstanding of this interpretation, based on Copernicus' work and Kant's own words, I will attempt to show the close connection that the philosopher himself saw with the astronomer, and how this extended to crucial passages in his Critique of Pure Reason, like the Transcendental Deduction, especially in its 1787 reformulation. Finally, in challenging the anthropocentrist objection, I unveil the meaning of the references to human nature and knowledge and how, in the author's project, these references involve the transcendental perspective – this time clarified alongside the observational strategy of the revolutionary Copernican perspective.*

*Keywords: Kant, Copernicus, Transcendental Deduction, Neorealism, Anthropocentrism.*

## 1. Introduction

It is not uncommon to come across assertions about Kant's subjectivism, often linked to a supposed and unsuccessful analogy with Copernicus. In this analogy, Kant is portrayed as more Ptolemaic than Copernican, more geocentric than heliocentric, and thus, more reactionary than revolutionary. Over the past two decades, such statements have become not only frequent but nearly unanimous among proponents of the so-called neorealism<sup>1</sup>. This move-

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Maurizio Ferraris, *Good Bye, Kant! What Still Stands of the Critique of Pure Reason*, SUNY Press, Albany 2013 (original in Italian 2004) and Maurizio Ferraris, *Manifest*