One of the persistent conundrums in Hegel scholarship concerns the precise relation between Kant and Hegel. It is clear from Hegel’s many pronouncements, from early on in his *Faith and Knowledge* until the last edition of the Doctrine of Being from 1832, that Kant features prominently among the central influences on Hegel’s thought. However, commentators have more often sought to divorce Hegel’s logic from transcendental philosophy than they tried to explain the precise nature of Hegel’s allegiance to Kant. Nobody of course denies that Hegel is a post-Kantian *in some sense*, but one has the impression that generally this is explained away in temporal terms without it being qualified what is specifically post-Kantian about Hegel’s thinking in any meaningful sense. One prominent exception in the literature is, as is well-known, the work of Robert Pippin, starting with his magisterial *Hegel’s Idealism* from 1989. Pippin has often been criticised, mistakenly, for propounding an a-metaphysical reading of Hegel, or indeed for a ‘Kantianising’ reading of Hegel, as if this meant that the real, speculative, or, if you will, ontological Hegel had to be bowdlerised for a modern philosophical public less enamoured of good old metaphysics.

In his new book, Pippin makes it clear that his reading of Hegel is neither ‘Kantianising’, nor a-metaphysical. This is not a correction of his earlier views in light of the criticisms, but rather a further elaboration on and clarification of the claims already made in *Hegel’s Idealism*. Pippin’s Hegel is as much of a metaphysician as you would want, albeit one that has fully taken on board Kant’s ‘revolution in the way of our thinking’ (cf. 123). One of the central claims of *Hegel’s Realm of Shadows* is in fact that the *Science of Logic* is a metaphysics full stop, in the sense of Aristotelian metaphysics, an account of the intelligibility of Being itself, but importantly, ‘not an account of any special ontological domain or object’ (299). At the same time, more than any other commentator, Pippin is able to parse in detail those passages in Hegel—which are too often taken at face value by other commentators—that show the intimacy between Kant’s and Hegel’s thinking and demonstrate that Hegel is, in spirit if not the letter, a Kantian through and through. In
other words, there is no need for any ‘Kantianising’. Explaining this paradox, Hegel as both an Aristotelian and a Kantian, lies at the heart of *Hegel’s Realm of Shadows*.

A central tenet of Pippin’s reading of the *Logic* is the idea that it concerns an account of ‘the determinate moments of “any thinking of the knowable”, such that they count as the determinate moments of the knowable itself’ (8), that ‘what I think when I know (think truly) that something is the case is simply what is the case’ (47), or, as Hegel himself writes, that “‘thinking in its immanent determinations and the true nature of things are one and the same content” (SL 21.29)’ (48), or simply put, that ‘the forms of thought are the forms of things’ or ‘the forms of being’ (47, 276). The idea here is not that thinking isomorphically maps onto or corresponds to some self-standing, prior given, independent being or reality (51), or that reality and thinking are, as somehow independent entities, co-determining, but rather that reason’s own determinations are what Being, or any thing, truly is. A thing is not something outside its being determined by reason. Rather, ‘what a thing is, in truth, is its intelligibility’ (257), and ‘to be anything is to be a determinate something’ (59), hence an intelligible something.

Secondly, Pippin stresses the notion that Being is an activity, in both the Aristotelian (*energeia*) and Kantian (apperception, spontaneity) senses of ‘activity’. This is the element where Hegel’s Aristotelianism and Kantianism come together. The central Aristotelian idea that the truth of a thing is its intelligibility also informs Kant’s transcendental thought, albeit that given his focus on the possibility of modern scientific knowledge, Kant is more modest in respect of the idea that the forms of our knowledge are ‘the forms of being’ *simpliciter* (265) and therefore restricts possible knowledge to what can be linked to empirical experience. This latter aspect is of course where Hegel departs from Kant.

But the point on which Hegel absolutely agrees with Kant is the idea that reason is self-legislating (148)—Pippin interestingly suggests that Kant’s principle of *heautonomy*, first introduced in the Third *Critique*, is for Hegel in fact applicable to the whole of philosophy (262)—and that it is reason that thus, in virtue of its own activity, provides an account of the determinacy of any particular thing. It is from within thinking accounting for its own determinate moments, i.e. functions of thought or categories, that any object or thing can be determined as what it truly is. Pippin aptly puts it thus: ‘It is in thinking thinking thinking that thinking thinks anything that can be thought, or being’ (258). The ambition of Kant’s Deduction, after which *mutatis mutandis* Hegel’s own account is modelled, at least in spirit (see 48, 57, 61, 122, 267–8), is to account for the minimally required conditions for the possible knowledge of objects in virtue of an analysis of the
capacity to judge. The clue which Kant had already presented in the mid-70s, in the so-called *Duisburg Nachlass*, on the basis of which such an analysis should proceed is the idea that ‘the principles of the possibility of experiences ... are at the same time principles of the objects of experience’ (RefI 4757, Ak 17:703; cf. CPR, B197/A158 and A111). The central philosophical insight that is expressed *in nuce* here, and what makes up the Kantian revolution in the way of our thinking about reality, concerns the identity claim that is contained therein, an identity of thought and object, mind and world. And this identity claim, taken up again in the well-known clue-section of the Metaphysical Deduction and argued for in detail in the first half of the Transcendental Deduction in its B-version, has Hegel’s particular interest: ‘Objectivity is what the object [*der Gegenstand*] ... has in the concept, and this concept is the *unity of self-consciousness* ... its objectivity or the concept is itself none other than the nature of self-consciousness, has no other moments or determinations than the “I” itself’ (*The Science of Logic* [SL], ed. Di Giovanni, Cambridge University Press, 2010, 515/12.18–19, trans. emended). The objecthood of any thing is nothing but the unity of its concept and therefore a determination of the ‘I think’, i.e. the unity of apperception: an object *is* truly how it is conceived, grasped in its intelligibility as such. There is nothing subjectivistic, in the psychological sense, about this. It concerns conceivability or intelligibility. Though most Kantians would baulk at this identification of object and apperception or self-consciousness, this is in fact exactly the argument in §§16 and 17 of the B-Deduction. Hegel understood this early on and better than anyone else.

Of course, Hegel finds fault with Kant’s focus on the role of pure intuition, but this is—and herein I disagree on some points with Pippin’s reading—more a question of perspective than a fundamental disagreement about determinacy: pure intuition is never meant to provide an external warrant for our knowledge claims, in addition to the activity of judging. It is the prerogative of the understanding, in virtue of its function as figurative synthesis, to provide determinacy, never intuition, empirical or pure. The real divergence between Kant and Hegel circles around the question of *real possibility*: for Hegel the actuality that conceptual determinacy generates out of itself (‘the concept... gives itself its own actuality’, 296) is all the actuality that we need, the actuality of the categorically determinate thing as what it in truth is, whereas for Kant actuality must be connected to what is *empirically* perceivable. Objective validity is, for Kant, real possibility only if it is connected to empirical intuition. For Hegel, real possibility is a result of complete a priori conceptual determinacy (Hegel obviously does not think that the *Logic* or conceptuality generates the world *materialiter* (319)).
But isn’t this all too much ‘Kantianising’ after all? Can this apply to the first book of Hegel’s *Logic* which in the first instance concerns the logic of *being* itself, and don’t judgement, self-consciousness, thought etc. appear only much later in the *Logic*, i.e. in the Doctrine of the Concept? Are we not trying to foist a *transcendental* conception of knowledge on the Doctrine of Being? The ‘movement’ of concepts is suggested by some commentators to be internal to the concepts themselves insofar as the concept ‘being’ *itself* shows that it is or ‘becomes’ (in the logical sense) the concept ‘nothing’. Sometimes it is even suggested that it is pure *Being* itself that ‘becomes’ Nothing, but this is unintelligible, as if ‘we ha[d] Hegel inviting us to watch *being* think about, go into, itself’ (53n.32). Either way, it is thus these commentators argue that ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ are basically equivalent, which leads immanently to consecutive concepts and gets the dialectic going; no thinking or judging on the part of a subject is at issue at this point. This ‘objectivist’ (131, 135) way of reading the movement of concepts is explicitly opposed to a strategy that ostensibly considers thought or judgement to be the ‘vehicle’, as it were, of this transition between concepts, as such a strategy seems to fail to capture the immanent logic at work and to be too external, creating a gap between thought, on the one hand, and being, on the other, that was supposed to have been closed by the account in the *Phenomenology*.

However, this gap is illusory. These concepts are not self-standing abstract entities (93) as if they could be observed independently or from some ostensibly neutral perspective. Pippin says: ‘The *Logic* is [not] something like the “pure” manifestation of the objective dependence and implication relations among “pure essentialities,” thoughts in the objective sense, logical entities that are in those relations in ways that have nothing to do with anyone “thinking them”’ (131). ‘We don’t observe what happens when one step in a proof “becomes” another; the inference has to be drawn, and drawn for a reason’ (133). Thus, ‘concepts ... are possible “moments” of judgment’ (137). The ‘objectivist’ objection to this is that surely judgements are *about* objects and not identical to them, again creating a gap between subjective thought and the object, which would be incompatible with the rationale of the *Logic*. But, against this objection, at issue in the *Logic* are of course not judgements per se or even possible judgements per se whereby each empirical judgement is seen to be separable from the object judged. The judgements that feature in the *Logic*’s account are speculative judgements, and they function much like Kant’s synthetic a priori judgements, expressing a progressively determinate analysis of the identity that lies in this ‘synthetic a priori’ that constitutes any judgement about an object.
But there is another way of challenging the ‘objectivist’ reading that opposes the possible knowledge/apperceptive activity reading that Pippin espouses: it is itself not capable of explaining how the transition or movement between the categorial concepts is supposed to work if not in virtue of the unity of apperception. Surely, these concepts do not generate the movement or dialectic between them out of themselves on pain of circularity. But suppose they do, then it would have to be the very first concept, ‘being’, which out of itself sets in motion the movement or transition to the next contrary concept, ‘nothing’, and so onwards to all subsequent concepts. But we know that Hegel writes that ‘being has passed over ..., not passes over’ ‘into nothing and nothing into being’ (SL 59–60/21.69). So it is not literally a transition between two apparently self-standing, contrary or even contradictory concepts that have nothing in common, a relation between two wholly ‘different’ concepts. This points to the fact that the relation between them is internal to both of them, i.e. ‘becoming’ takes precedence over the concepts in separation. But it also implies that the transition is not actually a movement from ‘being’ to ‘nothing’ (this is also indicated by the fact that the movement is reciprocal). ‘Being’ and ‘nothing’ are meaningful only in their relation, i.e. in virtue of the successor concept ‘becoming’. It is this realisation in thought of the interdependence between the two concepts or their equivalence—whilst semantically different, both concepts express the same pure indeterminacy—that constitutes the transition, and thus between this and any subsequent, more determinate concept. The transition doesn’t just happen, it is conceptually grasped in thought. The ‘identity within difference’ of the relation between ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ is their unity in thinking them, that is, in their unity of being apperceived. The unity of apperception is the principle of their differentiability. The contrastive relation between the concepts is a function of the unity of apperception; without that unity there is no transition between the concepts, but nor would there be the concepts since they are not self-standing and have meaning only in their relation, as determinations of thought. This is why Pippin is absolutely right to say that, for Hegel, the unity of apperception is the Concept (73–4n.80, 189), or the ‘Absolute’ or ‘absolute idea’ (45, 319), and that categories are ‘moments’ of the unity of apperception as this activity, and nothing apart from this (127) (Pippin helpfully points, in his discussion of the role of determinate reflection, to the ‘mutually presupposing relation’ between the analytic and synthetic unities of apperception, quoting B134 (237), and shows that ‘the “principles” of identification and differentiation are deeply intertwined’ (240)).

Hegel himself, from very early on, identified the original-synthetic unity of apperception with the ‘Absolute’: in *Faith and Knowledge*, he called it ‘absolute identity’,
which is the identity of identity (sameness) and difference, that is, the unity of the thought about some content and the content thought. What is important to note here is that the conceptual content is not separable from the activity of thinking it: ‘The apperceptive or inherently reflexive determination of conceptual content ... is no more external than the ‘I think’ is external to a content thought’ (131). Form and content are formally separable in the analysis of the logic of knowledge, but not in an actual judgement about some object. There is an identity between thought and object insofar as the object’s conceptual determinacy is concerned; and conceptual determinacy is what, as was Kant’s insight that Hegel takes over wholesale, constitutes the objecthood of an object (303). There is nothing more objective about an object than what is determined in virtue of the unity of the object’s concept, i.e. in the unity of apperception.

Similarly, to return to the relation between ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ at the start of the Logic, the thought of the relation or transition between those concepts is what constitutes the relation between ‘being’ and ‘nothing’; there is nothing over above that thought. And given that ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ are nothing apart from their relation, the thought of the relation constitutes what ‘being’ and ‘nothing’ are—inadequate norms for object knowledge, as it happens—and so on for all other subsequent, ever more determinate thought determinations which define a possible object’s determinacy. To then claim that ‘being’ (or ‘nothing’) is still something apart from that thought is to fail to understand what conceptual determinacy is, and what constitutes it. Hence thought’s own determinacy is what an object or a being’s determinacy can be. There is no intelligible being beyond its thought determination, in the same way that it would be nonsensical to ask about the object’s objecthood as apart from how Kant says objectivity is a function of the unity of apperception.

Much more can of course be said of Pippin’s outstanding book. I found for example the discussion of the Wesenslogik and his account of real opposition (243–5), as well as the chapter on ‘Life as a Logical Concept’ (ch. 8), particularly illuminating. In my view, Hegel’s Realm of Shadows is the most important book on Hegel’s Science of Logic since the seminal work carried out in the 1970s by the likes of Klaus Düsing, Hans Friedrich Fulda, Dieter Henrich, and Michael Theunissen.