1. An Intertwining of Objects

In what is undoubtedly one of his most complex later works, Über Möglichkeit und Wahrscheinlichkeit: Beiträge zur Gegenstandstheorie und Erkenntnistheorie, Meinong introduces the distinction between implexive being and nonbeing. Meinong uses the concept of implexive being and nonbeing to explain the metaphysics of universals, and as a contribution to the theory of reference and perception.

The word ‘implexive’ derives from the Latin implecto, meaning to plait, weave or twist into, entangle in, involve, entwine, or enfold.¹ J.N. Findlay, in Meinong’s Theory of Objects and Values, translates Meinong’s technical term ‘implektiert’ as ‘embedded’. This fits the etymology and captures the right philosophical sense, once we understand the precise nature of the embedding relation Meinong means to describe.²

Meinong says that incomplete objects (unvollständige Gegenstände) have implexive being (das implexive Sein) by virtue of being implected in complete objects. Similarly, incomplete objects have implexive nonbeing by virtue of being implected in beingless objects. The terminology encourages us to think metaphorically of a

literal embedding of what is incomplete in what is complete. Meinong further extends the concept of implexive being and non-being to the concept of implexive so-being (*implexive Sosein*). A beingless incomplete object is said by Meinong to have a certain constitutive property (*konstitutorische Bestimmung*) in its implexive *Sosein* when it is embedded in another object whose *Sosein* includes the property.³

The concept of implexive being and nonbeing enables Meinong to offer a broadly Brentanian-Aristotelian empiricist object theory explanation of the metaphysics of universals. Berkeley and Hume disproved the existence or subsistence of universals by discovering their essential incompleteness. The universal ‘the triangle’, for example, is neither red nor nonred, scalene nor nonscalene, isosceles nor nonisosceles. The predicational incompleteness of universals does not disqualify them for further consideration, but implies only that they belong among the other beingless objects in Meinong’s extraontology. The problem that remains for Meinong is to explain how universals are nevertheless instantiated in different particular real world entities. Meinong follows Brentano’s lead in Aristotelianizing the metaphysics of universals.⁴ By the concept of implexive
