The building blocks of attitude reports

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The standard analysis for attitude verbs and verbs of speaking treats them as modal operators, quantifiers over possible worlds, that is. This makes those verbs look like typological freaks. Unlike normal quantifiers, attitude verbs and verbs of speaking belong to the open class vocabulary of natural languages. They are lexical, rather than functional, elements. If attitude verbs were quantifiers, they would also be anomalous in lexicalizing restrictions on quantifier domains that go beyond the familiar sortal restrictions. The non-existence of quantifiers like rainways in (1) is not an accidental lexical gap of English. Such quantifiers are not likely to exist in any natural language:

(1) * Ortcutt rainways wears galoshes.
       Intended: Ortcutt always wears galoshes when it rains.

As others have observed, modals embedded under attitude verbs and verbs of speaking often look redundant, rather than truly embedded, as expected on the standard analysis:

(2) Die Legende sagt, dass Ortcutt ein Spion gewesen sein soll
       The legend says that Ortcutt a spy been be said is
       ‘The legend says that Ortcutt reportedly was a spy’.

Finally, sentential complements of attitude predicates can be severed, suggesting neo-Davidsonian separation of those complements. This would unimaginable on the standard analysis. A modal operator can't be separated from its propositional argument.

(3) a. Ralph worried constantly that Ortcutt was a spy.
    b. Ralph's constant worry was that Ortcutt was a spy.
    c. Ralph’s constant worry that Ortcutt was a spy was almost obsessive.

In my talk, I will not question the assumption that our reports of the content of what people think or say have the logical form of quantified statements. I will argue, however, that the modal quantification that is characteristic for those reports does not come from the embedding verbs. It originates in the left periphery of the embedded complements. The embedding verbs themselves have a Davidsonian or neo-Davidsonian semantics like any other verbs. Their sentential 'complements' are severable adjuncts, hence compose via conjunction. As a consequence, apparently embedded modals are no longer in the scope of another modal operator. Why did we think they were 'redundant'?