**Preface**

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This book pursues a project that in a way had started twenty years ago when in I argued that the linguistic facts do not support propositions as the entities that propositional attitude reports are about, but what I call ‘attitudinal objects’, entities like claims, requests, thoughts, desires, hopes, decisions, and intentions (Moltmann 2003a, b, 2004). Thanks to my colleagues at the IHPST in Paris at the time, Jaques Dubucs and Wioletta Miskiewicz, I became aware that a closely related notion to that of an attitudinal object had played already a central role in the philosophy of the Polish early analytic philosopher Twardowski (Twardowski 1911, Dubucs / Miskiewicz 2012). Twardowski distinguished entities like claims, requests, judgments as ‘products’ from ‘actions’ of claiming, requesting, and judging. Only products, for Twardowski, are bearers of truth or satisfaction conditions and play a role in logic and the humanities in general. Twardowksi’s work became a major inspiration and encouragement to pursue the approach of an ontology of attitudinal objects further. The interest in Twardowski’s view as well as in related cognitive approaches to propositions in the history of philosophy and in contemporary philosophy of language subsequently led to the edited volume *Act-Based Conceptions of Propositional Content. Contemporary and Historical Perspectives* (Moltmann and Textor 2017).

The present project involves two major deviations from my earlier work on attitudinal objects. The first concerns the semantics of attitude reports. In Moltmann (2003a, b, 2004, 2013a), I had pursued a Russellian-style multiple-relations analysis of attitude reports, that is, on which John believes that Mary is happy is taken to describe a four-place belief-relation holding among John, the property of being happy, and Mary. Moreover, attitudinal objects such as ‘John’s belief that Mary is happy’ were conceived as relational ‘qua objects’, entities of the sort ‘the propositional constituents Mary and happiness qua being related in the (four-place) belief-way to John. This particular view was subsequently given up, in part because it faces similar problems to a structured-propositions view of propositions, in part because some of the specific linguist support for it turned out to be in error. Instead I then adopted the view that *that*-clauses act semantically as predicates of attitudinal objects (Moltmann 2014, 2017a, b, 2018b, 2020a). This view plays a central role in this book as well; though another function of *that-*clauses will be distinguished on which they have nominal status and denote entities as internal arguments of the embedding predicate, for example facts,.

The second deviation from the earlier work concerns an ontological category close to that of attitudinal objects, namely modal objects, entities like needs, obligations, permissions, offers, invitations, and laws. Modal objects were not recognized by Twardowski and in fact they do not fit Twardowski’s understanding of a product as being temporally coincident with the act that produced it. Modal objects fit much better a view on which products are abstract artifacts generated by (or ontologically dependent on) acts.

The notion of a modal object, as I will argue in this book, also covers the notions of a fact and of a state of affairs. Facts, states of affairs, as well as ‘thin’ generic assertions, I will argue, can act as denotations of *that*-clauses when they have nominal status rather than the status of predicates of attitudinal objects.

In this project as in earlier work (Moltmann 2014, 2017a, b, 2020a), the ontology of attitudinal and modal objects is combined with truthmaker semantics as recently developed by Fine (2017, 2018a, b, 2020a, b). This is not an arbitrary choice; rather the ontology of attitudinal and modal objects provides specific new motivations for truthmaker semantics.