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Intonation in Speech and Thought Reporting

How Thomas Hardy Came to Notice such Things, Revising Afterwards *and Finding Punctuation Unaccommodating*

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Abstract

Directly reported speech and thought are not only deictically and syntactically, but also prosodically less well integrated with the quotative expression than indirect reports. Though not an established result of the longstanding linguistic and philosophical scrutiny of the modes of speech and thought reporting, it was yet something Thomas Hardy noticed, revising his poem *Afterwards* for re-publication and struggling with some crucial wordings and with punctuation in circumstances where quotative and report had distinct illocutionary force, with the one a question and the other a statement.

1 A Dilemma of Quotation

Lined up in (1) are five straightforward examples of *oratio recta*, the 'direct' mode of speech and thought reporting, distinct on all relevant syntactic and deictic criteria from the 'indirect' mode:

(1) i. *When the May month flaps its leaves like wings, will the people say, "He was a man who used to notice these things."?*
ii. *When a hawk comes crossing the shade on the upland thorn to alight, will a gazer think, "To him this must have been a familiar sight."*

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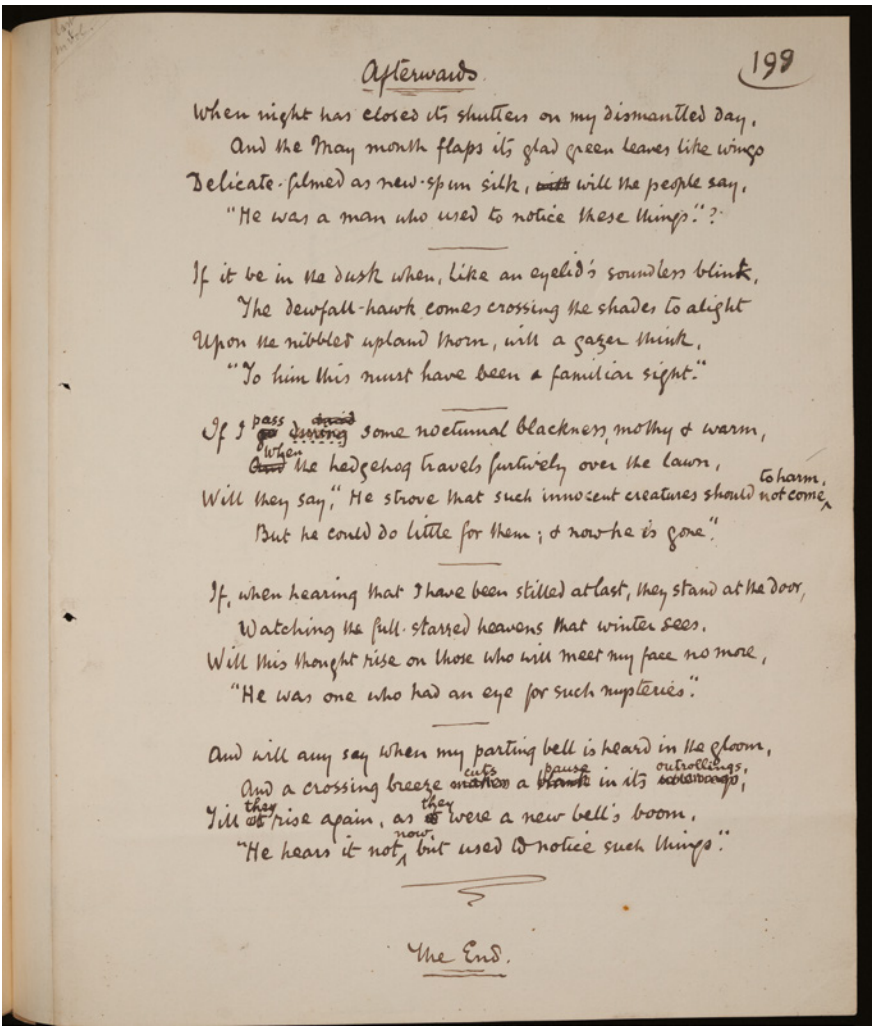
iii. *When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn, will they say, "He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm, and now he is gone"*

iv. *When hearing that I have been stilled at last, will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more, "He was one who had an eye for such mysteries."*

v. *And will any say when my parting bell is heard in the gloom, "He hears it not now, but used to notice such things."*

When you read them with your grammarian's glasses on, where you will probably hesitate is at an ostensibly not-so-straightforward mere formality: the final punctuation marks – one (unquote: 1.iii), or two (full stop and unquote: 1.ii, iv, v), or even three in a row (full stop, unquote, question mark: 1.i). The examples are in fact adapted from a poem-in-process, *Afterwards* (originally appearing in the collection *Moments of Vision and Miscellaneous Verses* of 1917[1]), and on the evidence of the original holograph as revised for future editions, reproduced below alongside the final published version, the poet, Thomas Hardy, was hesitating here, too, evidently sensing a problem. His punctuation, carefully kept in my simplified adaptations in (1), wasn't consistent! The thoughts and words given in quotes, spelling out how the lyrical ego would like to be remembered by posterity, and in particular by those who had crossed his path in his prosaic every-day life, were all statements, and declarative clauses were due a full stop, inside the unquotes – but he hadn't put one in the third stanza, corresponding to example (1.iii), perhaps an oversight. The main clauses with the quotative expressions (*say*, *think*/*thought rises*) were all questions – ordinary Yes/No or polar questions to be precise, rather than Wh or information questions or some non-canonical kind of question – for alas!, how could one be posthumously certain, and interrogatives merited a question mark at their end. This is what example (1.i) attempts, last line of the first stanza in the poem. But somehow Hardy seemed unconvinced, for he had originally omitted the question mark in the following four stanzas. In subsequent revisions, he further changed the wording of the interrogative quotative clauses to epistemically modalised declaratives in the second and third stanzas: "will a gazer think [?]" → "a gazer may think" (1.ii), "will they say [?]" → "one may say" (1.iii), probably in order to avoid having to juxtapose a full stop for the reported clause with a clashing question mark, as demanded by the reported clauses coming with quotatives that are questions.

1 Thomas Hardy, *Moments of vision and miscellaneous verses*. London: Macmillan, 1917.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When night has closed its shutters on my dismantled day,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the people say,
"He was a man who used to notice these things"?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the nibbled upland thorn, will a gazer think,
"To him this must have been a familiar sight."

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy & warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
Will they say," He strove that such innocent creatures should not come to harm,
But he could do little for them; & now he is gone."

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
"He was one who had an eye for such mysteries."

And will any say when my parting bell is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
"He hears it not now, but used to notice such things."

The End.

Thomas Hardy's revised holograph version of *Afterwards*
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In reading editions of Hardy's poetry just about all punctuation variations were tried, and even the two critical editions – Gibson[2] and Hynes[3] – failed to

2 James Gibson, *The variorum edition of the complete poems of Thomas Hardy*. London: Macmillan, 1979, p. 553.

3 Samuel Hynes, *The complete poetical works of Thomas Hardy* vol. 2, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, pp. 308–309.

agree on which punctuation marks to put inside and outside final unquotes when direct-speech statements were introduced by quotatives which were Yes/No questions or declaratives with almost interrogative force owing to added modals.[4] Only the one variation that had been Hardy's own first thought according to the holograph version of the last line of *Afterwards*'s first stanza curried favour with no editor: *Will the people say, "He was a man who used to notice these things."?* (1.i).

Afterwards

When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
'He was a man who used to notice such things'?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,
'To him this must have been a familiar sight.'

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, 'He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them; and now he is gone.'

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
'He was one who had an eye for such mysteries'?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
'He hears it not now, but used to notice such things'?

4 Collating the Gibson and Hynes editions, Martin Ray omits from comparison "minor differences of punctuation". The punctuation difference at issue here isn't entirely minor, but instructively bears on the poem's sound gestalt, as to be argued presently. Martin Ray, "A collation of the Gibson and Hynes editions of Hardy's poems", in: *The Hardy Review* 4 (2001), pp. 127–140, here p. 127.

> *Afterwards*, as given in Gibson[5], where all changes from the holograph, punctuation and other, are acknowledged. Hynes[6] differs in putting the full stops outside the unquotes in the last lines of the second and third stanzas. Where he had full stops, Hardy himself always had them inside the unquotes (double, in his handwriting), as behoves declaratives. Both Gibson and Hynes omit them when quotative clauses are interrogatives, and – as if the quoted clauses had no illocutionary force of their own – only keep (external) question marks in this illocutionary configuration.

Hardy's lines seemed to have landed him and his future editors in a hopeless dilemma. In English writing the conventional marks separating a quotative clause and a reported clause, the latter enclosed within quotes (usually double) or otherwise set off typographically, are a comma, as used here, or a colon. Question marks come at the end of a question. The question is, where do Hardy's questions end? At the very close of the stanza, after the reported clauses, which are themselves statements? This was the logic Hardy acknowledged in his first stanza, cumulating final declarative and interrogative punctuations, in that order. But then the thought must have risen on him that it wasn't all logic. Language is organised meaning and sound, and sound includes prosody, and when he was reading out his stanzas aloud he must have noticed that, among possible further signals of quotation (such as resets of the pitch register, with the pitch range tending to be higher after the quotative, or changes of voice quality or of speech rate), his intonation already wanted to rise on the key stressed words coming last in the core part of the Yes/No interrogative quotative clauses – *say*, *think*, *say*, *rise*, *say* in the holograph version; when revised to declaratives, *think* and *stay* in the second and third stanza would have falls instead. These distinctively interrogative rises could probably be delayed until further stressed syllables in focal words in the more complex quotative clauses, such as *face* or *more* in the fourth stanza or *gloom* or even *boom* in the fifth, where sustaining a high all the way from *rise* and *say* would have been unfeasible. Delaying these interrogative signals until the reported clauses at the end of the last line of each stanza instead (holograph version) – i.e., to only rise on the stressed syllables /ˈnəʊ/ of *notice*, /ˈmɪl/ of *familiar*, /ˈgɒn/ of *gone*, /ˈmɪs/ of *mysteries*, and again /ˈnəʊ/ of *notice*/ – didn't seem right, either. Crucially, there was no way he could recite the reported clauses SIMULTANEOUSLY as the declaratives which they themselves were (final falls) and, in the first, fourth, and fifth stanzas (and second and third in the holograph version, too), as parts of questions as per the preceding quotative clauses

5 Gibson, *The variorum edition of the complete poems of Thomas Hardy* (see note 2), p. 553.
6 Hynes, *The complete poetical works of Thomas Hardy* (see note 3), pp. 308–309.

(final rises). This was probably a thought Hardy had entertained, as suggested by the combined final full stop and question mark in the first stanza, but by the second stanza it must have been abandoned.

Metrically largely unconstrained, Hardy could of course have rewritten these resounding final lines of the five stanzas as indirect speech – again simplifying:

(2) i. *When the May month flaps its leaves like wings, will the neighbours say that I had been a man who used to notice these things?*
ii. *When a hawk comes crossing the shade on the upland thorn to alight, a gazer may think that to me that must have been a familiar sight.*
iii. *When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn, one may say that I had striven that such innocent creatures should come to no harm, and now I was gone.*
iv. *When hearing that I have been stilled at last, will the thought rise on those who will meet my face no more that I had been one who had an eye for such mysteries?*
v. *And will any say when my parting bell is heard in the gloom that I hear it not now, but used to notice such things?*

Punctuation would not have been troublesome at all here: following English standard punctuating conventions, there are final question marks whenever a quotative clause is a question (2.i, iv, v), and full stops when a statement (2.ii, iii). As poetry, however, *oratio obliqua* would surely have been substandard Hardy in the present context.

2 Integration and Intonation

As far as SYNTAX and DEICTIC SHIFTING go,[7] there was nothing in any way problematic about having and keeping direct speech in *Afterwards*. The sole challenge came from INTONATION.

7 The linguistic and philosophical literature on speech and thought reporting is immense. To reference only a few titles made allusion to here, specifically concerned with the non-transitivity of *say*-verbs and the syntactic and semantic-pragmatic juncture between quotative and directly-reported clauses, while largely neglecting intonation: B[ede] Rundle, "Transitivity and indirect speech", in: *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series* 68 (1967/68), pp. 187–206; Donald Davidson, "On saying that", in: *Synthese* 19 (1968/69), pp. 130–146; Barbara H. Partee, "The syntax and semantics of quotation", in: Stephen R. Anderson/Paul Kiparsky (eds.), *A festschrift for Morris Halle*, New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, pp. 410–418; Pamela Munro: "On the transitivity of 'say' verbs", in: Paul J. Hopper/Sandra A. Thompson (eds.), *Studies in transitivity*, (*Syntax and Semantics*, 15), New York: Academic Press, 1982, pp. 301–318; Frans Plank, "Über den Personenwechsel und den anderer deiktischer Kategorien in der wiedergegebenen Rede", in: *Zeitschrift für Germanistik* 14 (1986), pp. 284–308; Herbert H.

In indirect speech, quotative expressions and the clauses representing what is being reported are syntactically and deictically more closely integrated than in direct speech, and reported clauses, usually introduced by the general-purpose complementiser *that* (or *whether* in questions) are more resolutely subordinated syntactically and more reliant on the quotative main clause for establishing deictic reference (e.g., of personal pronouns, with 3rd person changing to 1st person forms for referring to the lyrical ego, or of verbal tense, with past turning to pluperfect in the present cases). In direct speech reporting, perhaps more appropriately to be conceived of as demonstration than reproduction, quotative and reported clauses are structurally more independent of each other than traditional grammar would have it, in English and elsewhere. There is a wide range of verbs available for speech and thought reporting (and quotatives need not be verbal, either: e.g., *like*): ones dedicated to this purpose and most common (*say* and, preferred for inarticulate utterances, *go*; *think*); numerous manner of speech and thought verbs (*whisper*, *mutter*, *moan*, *bellow*, *howl*, *croak*, *chuckle* …; *believe*, *reason*, *infer*, *conclude*, *wonder* …); all sorts of verbs serving such a function among others (*repeat*, *reply*, *insist*, *argue*, *continue*, *swear*, *nod*, *smile* … ANY verb, effectively). Although *say* and *think* and others might be, and sometimes have been, categorised as transitive verbs, on the grounds of taking nominal or pronominal direct objects (of in fact a rather limited range, *Did he say something? It's difficult to say these long words. What do you think? I think nothing of such things.*) and functionally equivalent complement clauses (*He said/thought that Hardy wrote novels*), their transitivity is by no means as assured as that of verbs of certain other semantic classes, such as verbs of creation, of effectuating change of state or position, annihilation, or sense perception (*build*, *paint*, *destroy*, *eat*, *give*, *buy*, *send*, *hear*, *see*, *observe* …). In English, verbs are not overtly categorised as intransitive or transitive, as they sometimes are in other languages where transitivity is, for instance, expressed by the verb agreeing with a direct object when it is accompanied by one (schematically: *Featherstonehaugh he-said-them/loved-them these long words*; *He-said-it/believed-it that Hardy wrote novels*). In English, higher or lower degrees of transitivity are adding up from a number of properties of the overall structure of clauses, with verbs themselves as one factor among many. Used in indirect speech constructions,

Clark/Richard J. Gerrig, "Quotations as demonstrations", in: *Language* 66 (1990), pp. 764–805; Steff Spronck/Tatiana Nikitina, "Reported speech forms a dedicated syntactic domain", in: *Linguistic Typology* 23 (2019), pp. 119–159. For the view of transitivity as a property of clauses rather than just verbs, Paul J. Hopper/Sandra A. Thompson, "Transitivity in grammar and discourse", in: *Language* 56 (1980), pp. 251–299, was trailblazing.

full- or part-time *verba dicendi* and *cogitandi* do add up to an appreciable overall transitivity count, contributed to among other factors by the complement report clauses introduced by complementisers *that* or *whether*; used in direct speech constructions, they don't.

Unlike prototypical transitivity-enhancing verbs the reporting verbs here present themselves as semantically complete without a direct object or complement, as if they had demonstrative pronouns *that* or *thus* lexically incorporated as part of their meaning ('say-that', 'think-so', 'go-thus', 'whisper-that/thus'). Some analytic philosophers have been taking things further, and indeed too far, suggesting that *verba dicendi* and *cogitandi* are INtransitive also when INdirectly reporting. They aren't on any understanding of transitivity; the supposed evidence that the complementiser *that* is historically derived from the homonymous demonstrative pronoun in the course of a syntactic resegmentation from *Gailei* [*said/thought* ***that***] [(*namely:*) *the earth moves*] to *Galilei* [*said/thought*] [***that*** *the earth moves*] rather points to the conclusion of continuingly transitive constructions, with the verbs themselves incomplete, whether they are requiring a demonstrative or a complement clause for semantic completion.

So, since quotative clause and reported clause in *oratio recta* are not the tightly joined integral wholes they are in *oratio obliqua*, how does this show in prosody and in particular in intonation? Intonation on the one hand reveals attitudes, moods, emotions, but on the other is also part of grammar, and its roles here include those of structuring the flow of information in discourse (with sentence accents assigned to what is in focus) and to distinguish illocutionary forces, like those of statements (declarative, DEC) and questions (interrogative, INT). Now, as speech and thought are reported, quotative and report clauses can differ in their illocutionary forces:

(3) INT–DEC
direct: *Will the neighbours say*[*?*]*: "He used to notice these things."*
indirect: *Will the neighbours say that I used to notice these things?*
DEC–INT
direct: *The neighbours will ask: "Will he notice these things?"*
indirect: *The neighbours will ask whether I will notice these things.*

From grammatical integration, with prosody following the lead of syntax and deixis in indirect speech, it would seem to follow that both parts are comprehended under just one intonation contour, that appropriate for the main clause's illocutionary force, though not signalled in this clause itself, but on the final stretch of the subordinate clause, beginning with where its

focus lies: Yes/No interrogative with INT–DEC, rise on /ˈnəʊ/ of *notice*, and declarative with DEC–INT, no rise after /ˈnəʊ/ of *notice*. Relative autonomy, with prosody corresponding to syntax and deixis as in direct speech, would suggest independent intonation contours for both parts, each according to its own illocutionary force: Yes/No interrogative with quotative in INT–DEC, rise on *say*, and with report in DEC–INT, rise on /ˈnəʊ/ of *notice*; declarative with report in INT–DEC, no rise after /ˈnəʊ/ of *notice*, and with quotative in DEC–INT, no rise on *ask*. Thus, the intonation contour of the respective quotative main clause would not extend over the subordinate clause with the report.

This neatly complementary picture may be somewhat idealised, owing to the simplified account of intonation contours given here in terms of 'rises' and 'falls'.[8] These contours consist of accents on words in focus, bitonal High and trailing Low tone and Low and trailing High as the rule in English declaratives and Yes/No interrogatives respectively, plus a tone at the final boundary of the containing intonational phrase, standardly Low in declaratives and High-rising in Yes/No interrogatives. Depending on how syntactically complex sentences are divided up into intonational phrases in actual delivery, the distinction in demarcation indicated in writing through a colon or comma plus quotes and unquotes (*oratio recta*) vs. nothing (*oratio obliqua*) may be exaggerated and may not be such an abrupt one in informal speech.[9] In careful recitation of poetry, and in composing poetry in the first place, it probably is. Also, quotative clauses, when contributing little else of semantic substance, may get their intonation contours flattened in hurried conversational speech, with subdued High level pitches in Yes/No interrogatives rather than actual rises. Not in measured poetry recital, though: just listen to such fine readers as Richard Burton and Jeremy Irons, whose recordings of *Afterwards*, over various

8 An authoritative survey to turn to for subtler and more insightful general accounts of intonation than those in terms of 'rises' and 'falls' is Carlos Gussenhoven, *The phonology of tone and intonation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, covering English and other languages, including Bengali, whose intonational grammar had been pioneeringly analysed by Bruce Hayes/Aditi Lahiri, "Bengali intonational phonology", in: *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 9 (1991), pp. 47–96.

9 For evidence that quotative and reported clauses do form separate intonational domains in direct, but not in indirect speech, an assumption sometimes questioned, see Wouter Jansen/Michelle L. Gregory/Jason M. Brenier, "Prosodic correlates of directly reported speech: Evidence from conversational speech", in: *ITRW on Prosody in Speech Recognition and Understanding*, ISCA Archive, 2004, [https://www.isca-speech.org/archive_open/archive_papers/prosody_2001/prsr_014.pdf].

differences elsewhere, are in basic agreement on where to rise and fall in the relevant reporting passages.[10]

3 Punctuation

There was no reason, then, for its author to find fault with the syntax and deixis of speech and thought reporting in *Afterwards*; it was only punctuation, although often prosodically so astute, which for once wasn't quite up to requirements. In English and similar systems of punctuation, at the end of a quotative clause in *oratio recta*, a colon or a comma are the only punctuation marks envisaged, as if declarative is the only force to be accommodated in the quotative clause, and illocutionary force distinctions are only to be reckoned with in the reported clause. This may be the most common state of affairs, but – and there is much of this kind of illocutionary diversity in Hardy's writing, who was a consummate speech and thought reporter – interrogatives, imperatives, and exclamatives are no impossibility as quotative clauses, too, demanding corresponding intonation contours of their own, just as the direct reports they come with have their own contours.

It is the possible illocutionary heterogeneity of quotative and report that English punctuating conventions aren't up to, despite the availability of marks for distinct illocutionary forces. Phrasing and rephrasing *Afterwards* in the artist's quest for perfection, Thomas Hardy was able to pinpoint this deficiency of dead letters and their punctuations on a page. And his revisions were diagnosing it as what it was: a failure of punctuation to appreciate how fine-tuned syntax and intonation could be co-operating in the two major modes of representing speech and thought not one's own, (direct) demonstration and (indirect) rendering. The solution he himself envisaged, recorded in the holograph version that future editors would be ignoring, had the illocutionary force punctuation of the quotative clause (question mark) external to that of the reporting clause (period for statement), as it were scoping over it in quote and report considered as a whole (as in 1.i above). The actual intonational realisation of "?", however, would be as a rise already at the end of the quotative clause, as in the Burton and Irons readings.

10 *The poetry of Thomas Hardy*, read by Richard Burton; Record LP, New York: Cædmon Records, 1961; *To notice such things*, Jon Lord, with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; Studio album, Avie Records, 2010. Track 10: *Afterwards* read by Jeremy Irons with Jon Lord, piano. Both recordings are available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U95qy5-Cje8 (*Afterwards* at 38:45) and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RpDIRY2kkc. The reading of *Afterwards* at Hardy's memorial service has remained unrecorded.

An alternative, equally unconventional but in line with the relative structural independence of quote and direct report, would be to have its own illocutionary force punctuation with the quotative clause itself (question mark, and full stop perhaps suppressed, with declaratives considered the unmarked member of illocutionary oppositions), before the comma or colon separating it from the direct report:

(4) i. *Will the neighbours say?, "He was a man to notice these things."*
ii. *A gazer may think*(.)*, "To him this must have been a familiar sight."*

A punctuation system like that of Spanish, which demarcates the intonationally sensitive parts of utterances more narrowly, especially through the bracketing use of question and exclamation marks (e.g., *Si no te gusta la comida, ¿por qué la comes?* 'If you don't like the food, why are you eating it?'), does not perforce remedy the deficiency at issue here – as seen in (5):

(5) *El lunes, ¿no dijiste: « prometo que el viernes traeré pizza a la oficina »?*
On Monday, didn't you say, "I promise I will bring pizza to the office on Friday?"

As it is, and this example was noted on a Spanish-for-learners site, the question mark closing the bracket comes too late here, though: rather than after the report, which is a statement, it should come before the colon demarcating quotative and report, *¿no dijiste?: « prometo. … »*, as in the amended English punctuation recommended in (4).

Acknowledgment

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