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SURELY AS A MARKER OF DOMINANCE AND ENTITLEMENT IN THE CRIME FICTION OF P.D. JAMES

Abstract

In this study I make the claim that the pragmatic marker *surely* is used in British English to externalise a speaker's bid for dominance at a particular point in interactive discourse. In so doing the speaker positions himself/ herself towards other speakers within the contextual setting. The position of *surely* in the sentence as well as the position in which it occurs in the sequence of talk contribute to the different strengths and types of stance in context. The data used are drawn from three of the crime fiction novels of P.D. James. This material allows the reader access to the illusion, first of interaction similar in some ways to naturally occurring talk and second, to that of entering characters' minds. Self-questioning is one of the functions served by *surely* in the novelist's representation of thought.

Key words

Pragmatic marker; surely; *dominance; entitlement; stance; discourse; fiction; P.D. James*

1. Introduction

At a recent conference in Spain during which I read a paper on the historical evolution of *surely*, question time produced an immediate comment from a young British delegate sitting in the front row. It was as follows:

(1)   "I don't like people who use *surely*; they make themselves superior to you. When I was at school, the headmaster used to stand by my desk looking down at me and would say '*Surely* you can do better that that!'"

This anecdote is neither fictional nor attested in writing. It is an account by a reliable source of an event that occurred more than once. Both the young man's spontaneous comment and the unequal power relations evident in the scenario point to the subjectivity of *surely* and the sense of entitlement on which uses such as this are based.

In this respect the anecdote illustrates Brazil's (1985) postulate of a general condition of shared understanding of which participant is in control of the discourse at any one time. Teachers, doctors, interviewers are the ones who ask questions; traditionally they are the ones in control, although students, patients and interviewees may compete for control. Where there is no prior distribution of roles, there may be an ongoing, albeit incipient, competition for dominance (1985: 131). The dominant speaker, Brazil claims, has the choice of superimposing or not superimposing on an utterance an increment of communicative value that he terms 'dominance'. This is achieved in Brazil's account by prosodic means. The non-dominant speaker does not have this choice, unless s/he is making a bid for dominance.

In effect, evidence is provided by the London-Lund corpus of a rise-fall tone and heavy stress accompanying initial *surely* in an almost identical sequence: *but, "s^urely# you can*, in which the quote-like sign stands for heavy stress and the hatch # marks the end of a tone unit (5-2k). For much of the time, Brazil notes, role distribution is probably not an issue. But when it is, conspicuous adoption of the tone, whose use is reserved for 'superior' participants, externalises the speaker's claim to that role (Brazil 1985: 131).

In this ongoing research, I put forward the claim that in present-day British English the pragmatic marker *surely* can be used to externalise and index dominance in varying degrees in interactive discourse. In Brazil's terms, it may be considered, in purpose-driven, language as an 'incremental' step in an utterance. I would go further and claim that part of the purpose in using *surely* is to index the current speaker's authority and entitlement.

2. Materials and scope of the study

In this study I am interested in ascertaining whether the role of *surely* as stated above is reflected in the discourse of P.D. James' crime fiction and to what effect. To this end my data have been gathered from three of P.D. James's crime fiction novels, randomly selected, namely *Shroud for a Nightingale* (SN), *The Murder Room* (MR) and *Innocent Blood* (IB).

For my current purpose fictional dialogue has both advantages and disadvantages. One disadvantage is what Norman Page calls "the inevitable gap – wider or narrower at different times, but never disappearing entirely – between speech, especially in informal situations, and even the most 'realistic' dialogue in a work of literature" (Page 1988: 7).

On the other hand fictional dialogue is, again according to Page, "often characterised by a greater density of features which may well be found to appear, only

much more thinly distributed, in real speech…" (1988: 11). I consider it a further advantage in James's fiction that both dialogue and narrative provide abundant clues in their choice of lexis as to how certain utterances might be interpreted and responded to. By contrast, much recorded natural dialogue in corpora, unless video-recorded or annotated for prosodic features, provides an insufficiently clear reflection of the interactive situation, including those personal and social factors that influence the relationships between the participants and that will be reflected in their talk.

3. Positions and functions of *surely*

As in a previous study in which tokens were taken from the BNC (Downing 2001), the current tokens of *surely* were sorted according to the different positions that *surely* is able to occupy in present-day English. Present-day *surely* is flexible with regard to position in the clause in that it can occur initially, internally and finally within a sentence or utterance. These are illustrated in examples 2, 3 and 4 respectively.

When initial, as in (2), *surely* has the status of a disjunct and has within its scope the whole of the following clause or sentence. "Initial position can readily be associated with this principle of 'inclusiveness'. The adverb establishes the modal theme of the utterance and gives it prominence through an extensive association with the modal auxiliary" (Bolinger 1972: 34), quoted in Hoye (1997: 201). In speech, initial *surely* is tonic and may take up a whole tone unit, depending on the force the speaker wishes to give it. Position, stress and the fact that *surely* has become largely desemanticised enable the *surely*-user to take up a position of greater or lesser strength vis-à-vis the addressee, in order to challenge or contradict a prior utterance and to make a counter-claim. Paraphrases such as 'as may be confidently supposed', 'as must be the case', 'may not one be sure that…' are suggested by the Shorter OED 1973 edition, but one should be aware that these are purely orientative and are not idiomatic substitutes for the word itself.

(2)   "Annie and I thought we might open a restaurant close to the campus of one of the modern universities. Annie's quite keen except that she feels we should do something socially useful."
        "Surely few things are more socially useful than providing the young with decent food at reasonable prices."
        "When it comes to spending a million, Annie thinks internationally. She has something of a Mother Teresa complex." (MR 42)

Clause-internal *surely* as in (3) follows the subject and precedes the main verb. The modal auxiliaries *must, can, will, ought, should* frequently combine and interact dynamically with *surely*. The position adopted by *surely* tends to be post-modal and is attested as such in my data. Pre-modal position is not common, but is

attested in the BNC in elliptic utterances as in "…as they *surely* must". I suggest that this order is conditioned by information structure; the modal has necessarily to receive end-weight otherwise *surely* is left in final position as a parenthetical: "…as they must, *surely*", thus producing a different kind of meta-message.

   Clause internal *surely* tends to be less forceful than initial *surely*. It reaches out to the address, seeking agreement or collaboration. With the subject pronoun *we*, the dialogic dimension of *surely* is preponderant, while *there* as subject is more impersonal or tentative. Semantically, *surely* can index various degrees of confidence in medial position, 'almost certainly' being an acceptable paraphrase:

(3)   "Mr Dalgliesh, there's one thing I want to say. I feel … I am *in loco parentis* to my students. If ever any question…if you should begin to suspect that any one of them is involved, I can rely on you to let me know? … There would *surely* be the question of a solicitor. (SN 92)

Final *surely* is parenthetical, and functions as a question tag, as in (4). Like grammatical question tags, it seeks confirmation or agreement. In addition, parenthetical *surely* can be interpolated in other positions within the clause, as in (5).

(4)   "Who was her friend here? She *must* have had someone she confided in, *surely*? (SN)

(5)   Kate didn't reply. He couldn't mean, *surely*, that Mrs. Faraday was a woman incapable of such a murder. (MR)

The present more limited and genre-specific source material yielded the same overall distribution of *surely* according to its initial, medial and final positions as did the wider coverage of genres of the BNC in the 2001 study. Initial *surely* predominates, followed by clause-internal *surely* and lastly, final, parenthetical *surely*.[1] Instances of *surely* in elliptic sentences, which were not previously considered, are also found to be worthy of note within their interactional settings in the present study, as in (6):

(6)   And the records are destroyed so quickly? *Surely* not. (MR 287)

4. Background

Until recently, s*urely* has received little attention in comparison with other adverbs of modality and stance. This scarcity of comment may be due in part to its relatively infrequent use in comparison with *certainly*, which is now used as a handy emphasiser in all types of context. The fact that *surely* has not become entrenched as a pragmatic marker in everyday American usage as deeply as it has in England may also be significant.[2] But the major reason why *surely* is sparsely

used lies, I suggest, in the specific stances that users of *surely* take up, ranging from antagonistic and challenging to persuasive and agreement-seeking. Such stances are not likely to be repeated throughout a conversation with the frequency that emphasisers are. Furthermore, one possible variant to initial *surely* is the negative *yes-no* interrogative sentence, which, as we shall see later in example (7), is used to challenge an interlocutor and can co-occur in the same stretch of discourse with *surely*.

An early mention of the adverb *surely* in the literature was that of Biber and Finegan (1988). Yet, among the adverbs grouped by these scholars under the heading 'The surely adverbs', *surely* is in fact the odd man out. It is not interchangeable with other adverbs of the group in the way that *clearly* and *obviously* are. Nor can it be paraphrased as '*It is sure that...' in line with 'It is obvious/ evident/ clear that...' Furthermore, nor can it be paraphrased by 'I am sure that' without an important loss of implied meaning and attitude. Thus, if the headmaster had said "I am sure you can do better than that" he would be putting across a gentler message, almost of reassurance, whereas *surely* in such cases as (1) projects the meta-message of surprise and disappointment, annoyance or indignation even, depending on the accompanying tone and on the context in which it occurs. It is noteworthy that in the subsequent *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, edited by Biber et al. (1999), *surely* is not discussed nor does it appear in the lexical index.

Hoye's *Adverbs and Modality in English* (1997) devotes space to *surely* among other adverbs. The concept of 'speaker orientation' is relevant in that "overt marking of the speaker's intrusion and his authority to comment on the relevance of what he is saying are given a prominence which tends to override purely syntactic considerations of scope" (Hoye 1997: 202). Nevertheless, in this work the pragmatic functions of *surely* are restricted to that of seeking agreement.

Later work on *surely* has centred mainly on its meaning as a modal adverb and the degree of certainty it is thought to express within the field of modal certainty (Aijmer 2002; Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer 2007). In the latter volume, the notion of doubt figures largely as the meaning of *surely*, a meaning that I would not prioritise, as will be explained shortly. Attention has been paid to the comparison of *surely* with *certainly* and other modal adverbs. Parallel corpora have been used to ascertain the translation 'equivalents' of *surely* and *certainly* among others. While it is true that "languages which express certainty in the same way develop a similar range of new functions by means of grammaticalisation", among them the function 'uncertainty' (Aijmer 2002), it would seem that in the case of the Spanish cognates of *surely* the nuances are different (Downing 2006). While the semantic values of the cognates and *surely* are sometimes close, neither *seguro* nor *seguramente* fulfils the functions of pragmatic markers as *surely* does. In fact, despite the use of national corpora of English and Spanish naturally-occurring spoken data rather than translations, no lexical counterpart to English *surely* was revealed among the Spanish cognates or elsewhere to carry out the pragmatic functions of *surely* in initial and parenthetical positions. Consequently,

I resorted to negative-interrogative counterparts, which worked well for the data used. In clause-internal position a degree of similarity is present, but without the dialogic overtones of *surely*.

5. Characterising *surely*

Present-day *surely* is attitudinal. It is also covert. As a result of semantic bleaching through grammaticalisation it is not what it seems. For this reason it has to be recovered procedurally by inferencing on the part of the recipient. Its syntactic behaviour has also amplified, spectacularly in the 18th and 19th centuries. Consequently, *surely* is now opaque in comparison with other so-called adverbs of certainty. It indexes, rather than encodes, a strong belief in the self-evident plausibility of the statement qualified, a belief based on the speaker's experience, and right, especially in the face of imaginary or possible dissent (adapted from the Shorter OED, 2002). Knowledge, status and entitlement, common sense, even, are I claim, additional attributes that condition the use of *surely* at a particular point in the discourse. Furthermore, the use of *surely* can foreground the speaker's expectation that his or her status as the controller of the discourse at that point will be recognised by the co-participants in interactive discourse. This point is well captured in example (7).

5.1. Surely as a covert question

Surely occurs in declarative clauses which function like negative-interrogatives, particularly when *surely* is initial. Thus, (1) '*Surely* you can do better than that' could be paraphrased as 'Can't you do better than that?' Another alternative is a positive declarative followed by a negative question tag: 'You can do better than that, can't you?' For this reason initial *surely* utterances are often found in print followed by a question or an exclamation mark. The variants differ in abruptness and so in degrees of politeness, as they are softened or heightened by prosodic features in speech within specific contexts. Readers of written or printed text are able to assign the relevant intonation pattern to achieve information focus.

It has been suggested that negative-interrogatives are based on contradictory assumptions. Quirk et al (1985: 808) distinguish these as the 'old expectation' and the 'new expectation', respectively. In (1) '*Surely* you can do better than that' the old expectation is positive, that you can do better than that; but evidence, visual in this case, suggests the contrary, that you cannot do better. The old expectation tends to be associated with the speaker's hopes and wishes, while the new assumption appears to contradict this. For this reason, negative-oriented questions tend to express disappointment or annoyance. Consequently, one would expect the same to occur with *surely*- prefaced declaratives. They often do, as in (1) and (7), but not always, as we saw in (2), where the reply prefaced by *surely* aligns with the previous utterance while querying Annie's judgement.

It is for this reason of similarity of function with negative questions that *surely* lends itself to expressing surprise and opposition towards the speaker of a prior utterance, in the form of a contradiction, a challenge or a counter-claim.

6. Contextual patterns of *surely*

In this section I wish to test my claim that *surely* is essentially the confidence marker of a speaker who challenges, contradicts or tries to persuade a prior speaker in interactive discourse. At the same time s/he makes a bid for the recognition of entitlement at a particular point in the discourse by virtue of his/her status, authority, experience or superior knowledge of the current subject. Such attributes confer entitlement; they also create expectations as regards knowledge, performance and the like on the part of others.

Surely is triggered by the sudden awareness that opposition from a co-participant to the speaker is imminent or is already occurring (Downing 2001), or conversely, the current speaker reacts to an immediately prior utterance or visual evidence which s/he considers in some way inadequate or goes against her own beliefs and expectations as in (1) and (2).

The fictional exchange comprising examples (7) and (8) respectively illustrates two patterns of use: First, in reply to an initial request by a police Sergeant, *surely* introduces a forceful challenge on the part of a senior surgeon, who adopts the role of dominant speaker. Second, this is followed by a counter-claim made, more judiciously, by the first speaker, who effectively takes over the dominant role.

Pattern 1a: Confident, authoritative speaker, initial *surely* expresses surprise, disbelief at prior speaker's request. Challenge; seeks acquiescence. (7)

Pattern 1b: Denial of acquiescence by confident speaker with his own authority in a different but relevant sphere. Counter-claim, medial *surely* expressing confidence, though not absolute certainty. Seeks acceptance. (8)

(7)   Sergeant Masterson said: 'I wonder, Sister, if I could see the ward report book covering the period when Nurse Pearce was on the ward? 'I'm particularly interested in her last week here.
        Mr Courtney-Briggs broke in roughly:
        'Aren't they confidential records, Sister? **Surely *the police will have to apply for a subpoena before they can make you produce them?'***

(8)   'Oh, I don't think so sir'. Sergeant Masterson's voice, quiet, almost too respectful, yet held a tinge of amusement which wasn't lost on his hearer. ***'Ward nursing records* surely *aren't medical in the proper sense***. I merely want to see who was being nursed here during the period and if anything happened which might be of interest to the Superintendent.

Sister Brumfet, mottled and shaking with anger, which left small room for fear, found her voice.
'Nothing happened on my ward. Nothing! (SN 165)

In examples (7) and (8) each speaker has authority and status in his own domain. The reader will expect Masterson, as a detective sergeant on a case, to have the right to request documents. Mr Courtney-Briggs, as an eminent surgeon, and by virtue of superior knowledge in the hospital domain, though not a member of the hospital staff, assumes a dominant role through belief in his right to question the handing over of ward records to a police sergeant. Yet, despite the latter's politeness, he addresses the Sister "roughly". He calls into question the legality of the request, first by a negative yes/no question, then by an initial *surely*, likewise functioning as a question, both of which centre on the putative non-entitlement of the police to make such a request. Both structures convey surprise, disbelief and authority; they are to be heard as challenging, more so in view of their sequential position in the dialogue. Readers will be alerted by such a display of dominance to the fact that something other than protocol may be behind the surgeon's outburst.

By contrast, Sergeant Masterson makes a counter-claim by using medial *surely* in a voice that is "quiet, almost too respectful", but "with a tinge of amusement" to convey what is an apparently authoritative statement, although without expressing complete certainty. This account may in fact be less true than he confidently puts across, but it is not disputed. In an environment of tension and embattlement *surely* is used by each participant in turn as a weapon that masks their possibly less than perfect knowledge of police rights. Both men display authority via *surely*, but while Courtney-Briggs externalises his claim to the role in a way that is offensive to the hearers, Masterson succeeds in conveying his authority and entitlement by almost exquisite politeness in a way that is unobjectionable. Eventually, Mr Courtney-Briggs opts for retreat and reacts by blandly backing down from his prior claim, to the fury of Sister Brumfet.

Pattern 2: Junior professional, initial *surely*, shocked disbelief, contradicting prior speaker of higher status.

(9)   'They ought to have seen us first. After all, we're Sisters. […] And why isn't Brumfet here? I don't see why she should be treated any differently from us'.
Sister Rolfe: 'Too busy […]'.
'Sister Gearing's voice became petulant.
'That's all very well, but she ought to be here. God knows, we're busy too. Brumfet lives in Nightingale House. She had as much opportunity to kill Fallon as anyone.
Sister Rolfe said quietly 'She had more chance,'

Sister Gearing's sharp voice cut into the silence and one of the Burt twins lifted her head:
'She's had Fallon in her power in the sick bay for the last ten days.'
'But* surely *you don't mean…? Brumfet wouldn't!
'Precisely', said Sister coldly, 'So why make stupid and irresponsible remarks?' (SN 204)

In example (9) the speaker of the *surely* utterance is one of the identical Burt twins, both student nurses under the supervision of Sister Brumfet, who is not present in this scene. Normally equanimous, Burt on this occasion makes a bid for attention in defence of Sister Brumfet. Her two elliptic exclamations are in direct contradiction to Sister Gearing's previous somewhat incriminating remark regarding Sister Brumfet. The discussion is cut short by the more authoritative of the Sisters.

Pattern 3: Self-confident junior participant, medial *surely*, persuasiveness and reasoning in assessment of probabilities.

(10)   'One never does really know another human being. Anything is possible for anyone. I've always believed that. ***And it's* surely *more likely that she killed herself than that someone murdered her.*** That seems absolutely incredible. Why should they?'
'I was hoping you might be able to tell me.'
'Well, I can't. She hadn't any enemies at the John Carpendar as far as I know. 'She wasn't popular. She was too reserved, too solitary. But people didn't dislike her. ***And even if they did, murder* surely *suggests something more than ordinary dislike*.' (SN 98)

The student nurse Madeleine Goodale is interviewed by Chief Superintendent Adam Dalgliesh. The difference of status, authority and knowledge is great. Nonetheless, Nurse Goodale acquits herself well in her analysis of the dead girl's character and the reasons for Fallon's unpopularity. Unprepossessing features are dismissed as irrelevant in an assessment of modal probability in which objectivity covertly masks her own subjectivity. At the same time dialogic intersubjectivity is shown in her two uses of *surely* which, without claiming certainty, make a persuasive suggestion that invites the Superintendent's agreement.

Pattern 4: Dominant speaker interrogating a suspect; parenthetical *surely*, in modal harmony with *must* expressing epistemic necessity, countering the prior statement.

(11)   "How long have you been an intimate friend of Caroline Dupayne?"
Lord Martlesham said unhappily. "I wouldn't say that we were intimate."

> **"But you must be, surely.** She's a very private woman, yet she lends you
> her flat and hands out keys to you and to Celia Mellock. (MR 345)

In this context, the Superintendent's use of *surely* reinforces modal *must* in what
is conviction based on logical reasoning and common sense.

7. *Surely* as a resource in free indirect speech and thought

In addition to the use of direct (i.e. quoted) speech as a vehicle for the display of
attitudes of dominance by one or other of the characters, James makes consider-
able use of other techniques for the presentation of speech and thought: indirect
reported speech, free indirect speech and free indirect thought are commonly
used in these novels to give the illusion of entering the minds of their characters.
The following three examples illustrate these techniques.

Example (12) illustrates indirect self-reported speech as the vehicle for heavy
irony ascribed by James to the somewhat unsympathetic character, Sister Rolfe,
here interviewed by Dalgliesh. Medial, post-verbal *surely* is noticeably intersub-
jective, covertly and ironically inviting the Superintendent to accept the plausibil-
ity of her argument.

(12)   She regretted she could offer no witnesses to her own movements before
        or after the meal, ***but that was* surely *understandable***: for some years
        now she had preferred to wash and go to the lavatory in private. Apart
        from that, she valued the free time before the days' work and preferred to
        spend it alone. (SN 111)

Example (13) might appear to be straight narration, but is in fact the expression
of indirect thought from the words "he was surprised" onwards. In this context,
initial *surely* (much more effective than 'Isn't it the case') indexes not so much
a challenge as a bout of self-questioning. The 'old expectation' that he should feel
some emotion is counteracted by the 'new' self-evident fact that he feels nothing.
This clearly gives rise to perplexity, not doubt, at not entertaining appropriate
emotions on the last day of his working life.

(13)   Closing the office door for the last time and entering the empty corridor,
        he (Marcus Dupayne) was surprised and a little concerned at his lack of
        emotion. **Surely *he should be feeling something*** – regret, mild satisfac-
        tion, a small surge of nostalgia, the mental acknowledgement of a rite of
        passage? He felt nothing. (MR 29)

Finally, example (14) illustrates how "the boundaries between the categories are
not rigorously discrete, so it might be more appropriate to consider the presenta-
tion of both thought and speech as a continuum of varying degrees of freedom and

directness" (Simpson 1993: 24). They also merge into the narrative and it is not always easy to distinguish one from the others. In 'A chill of horror swept over her' it is neither thought nor speech but the illusion of sensation that leads the reader to the self-questioning and the final counter- claim in the form of a prayer. The instances of *surely* in this extract index disbelief but with a suspicion of doubt which is implicit, and no doubt inferred by the reader, but is not exteriorized.

(14)   After a few minutes the dreadful shaking ceased and Nurse Dakers grew calmer.
        She began to mutter, her voice hiccuping with sobs.
        'I'm so miserable, so ashamed.'
        The Matron bent her head to catch the words. A chill of horror swept over her. **Surely *she couldn't be listening to a confession of murder?*** She found herself praying under her breath.
        'Dear God, please not. Not this child! **Surely *not this child?*** (SN 75)

8. Concluding remarks

The use of fictional material of the kind provided by James's novels is, I have found, instructive and useful. For one thing, the availability of extensive context leads one to a more refined analysis of *surely*-prefaced fictional utterances. This is because the use of *surely* is highly sensitive to the linguistic and social environment in which it occurs, a fact that is immediately obvious in real life encounters, but is not easy to capture from a transcription. Hence, an occurrence of *surely* in a relaxed environment of conversation between women friends can be seen to produce an instance of initial *surely* which might be better categorised as something less than 'challenge' as its pragmatic function. Such is the case with (2), which if it is a challenge, it is a very friendly one. As seen from Clara's reply the friends are expressing independent points of view rather than dominance: "When it comes to spending a million, Annie thinks internationally. She has something of a Mother Teresa complex." And if there was still any doubt of the possible interpretation of the *surely*-preceded utterance, the subsequent closing of the topic by the author's comment 'They walked on in companionable silence' makes it clear that in the fictional world of the novel, the two friends have mutually dropped the topic without animosity. This reaction, 'agreeing to disagree' represents a fourth option to the three-way choice of responses to challenges, namely those of accepting the challenge, backing down from the prior claim and eventually aligning with the challenger. 'Agreeing to disagree' represents a specific epistemic stance towards the speaker of the prior utterance and falls within the domain of alignment rather than that of disalignment.

By contrast, more violent challenges and responses occur in already established environments of disagreement, insinuation or complaint. Such is the case in example (9): the tense atmosphere that surrounds the nurses gathered in a room

waiting, as suspects, to be interviewed by the Scotland Yard Superintendent helps make for the stronger positionings of covert accusation and counter-claim.

Another feature of the novels with regard to the use of *surely* is the fact that James uses point of view with a certain discrimination. All James's main characters are professionals of varying rank. Many of them, although not all, are privileged in that the reader on occasion is enabled to gain access to the events described through the eyes of a certain participant. Interestingly, it appears that *surely*-speakers are the most privileged in this respect. The most significant among this group is Dalgliesh. As his is a figure whose *persona* is forged over a series of novels we learn aspects of his inner self, not only in the scenes directly involved in the hunt for a murderer, but in what would appear to be more trivial details. Some of these are revealed by the short, throwaway signals that we pick up in the middle of a mental depiction, through his eyes, of the district where he lives overlooking the Thames "and he could have imagined this was spring except for the autumnal sea-tang of the river – **surely *half imagined*** – and the keenness of the buffeting wind as he came out of the station" (MR 4). Other figures such as the "poor little murderer manqué" whom the reader follows throughout almost three hundred dense pages of *Innocent Blood* (310) in expectation for him to strike, builds up detail by detail as a more complex character than would have seemed possible at the start.

Yet other insertions of 'thoughts' prefaced by *surely* seem to have as their function that of signalling idle speculation masking an advance warning to the reader of something quite different to be coped with: "She felt it was her responsibility to keep their minds off the accident, *and **surely** it could only have been an accident*" (SN 24). It is in the artifice of fictional thought that a sub-text of doubt can be sometimes detected, as in example (14). In other cases, *surely* is used disingenuously, as it is in real life. Speakers may be concealing their real opinion while putting across another.

To conclude, a complex pattern emerges when we come to take stock of the stances of *surely* displayed under the titles of P.D. James's novels. Evidence suggests that dominance and entitlement can be seen from different angles and as carrying different strengths. Perhaps the main conclusion to be suggested by the data presented is that the speakers using *surely,* based on their own self confidence and self-belief, are shown, via direct speech, to exteriorise their claim by making a bid for recognition of their authority and entitlement. As Du Bois (2000) puts it, we enact our stance in the public space of dialogic interaction. By contrast, indirect speech and thought lead the reader from the stronger stance of challenge to weaker stances of persuasion, tentativeness and self-questioning.

In the novels examined here James's characters who use *surely* are almost all professional people. They are portrayed as confident, knowledgeable, independent, self-assured, aware and articulate. When they make claims and counter the claims of others they often do so by means of *surely*. This is not a necessary or only choice. There are other means, namely negative yes-no questions. Indeed, negative questions are used side by side with the more covert *surely* questions.

Again, without the preface of *surely*, sentences would still make sense but would be plain declaratives, monologic, not inviting comment from other voices. And without *surely*, there would less subtlety, less speculation, less inferencing, fewer leading questions. There would be less suspense. In the words of Leech and Short, "We cannot see inside the minds of other people, but if the motivation for the actions and attitudes of characters is to be made clear to the reader, the representation of their thoughts, like the use of soliloquy on stage, is a necessary licence (1981: 337).

Notes

1   The same order of frequency, namely, the predominance of *surely* in initial position, followed by internal and then final was also attested in Simon-Vandenbergen and Aijmer's (2007) corpus.
2   For an explanation of *surely* as characterising British cultural values, see Downing (2009). The AmE use of *surely* denoting agreement or permission was not attested in my data.

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