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A study of pragmatic strategies in the records of the Salem Witch-hunt trials

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Abstract

Earlier studies have shown that the successful survival strategy for defendants at Salem was submission and co-operation (Archer 2002:18). The six defendants here studied were accused at an early stage in the process and were all executed. The present study will make use of speech act theory and politeness theory to study the interactions of the defendants with their questioners, with the aim to relate their ultimately unsuccessful defence strategies to the immediate discourse context. The study will also examine the roles of gender, social status and background in the defendants' choices of strategy.

The present study will focus on two major areas of study within the field of historical pragmatics: politeness and assertiveness. Politeness theory, building upon the seminal work of Brown and Levinson (1987) has shown itself to be a very useful tool in the study of interactions in historical texts, and has been used in a wide range of studies dealing with Early Modern English materials (e.g. Kahlas-Tarkka 2012). Assertiveness is generally associated with power, and has played an important role in the study of gender differences in language, in particular with reference to male and female conversation strategies (e.g. Tannen 1994). However, the discourse situation in a courtroom is very different from that of normal conversation, in that the power relationship is extremely uneven. In Salem, this would have been the case to an even greater extent than in a present-day court. In today's courts, one is presumed to be innocent, whereas in the Salem trials, guilt was the presumption. Because of this, in the Salem trials, unlike most social contexts of today, it appears that choosing assertiveness as discourse strategy was not successful (Kahlas-Tarkka 2007: 1).

The defendants did cooperate in varying degrees, as they did provide answers to the magistrate's questions. Osborn is the only one of the six who volunteered information connecting to witchcraft, and thus openly accepted the premise that dark powers were involved. Bishop, Osborn and Willard were polite in their answers, they did not use counter-questions or show any signs of sarcasm; while Willard, did laugh, the context suggests that he laughed because he was nervous for not being able to recite the Lord's prayer. After studying the records, there is a clear pattern of confession to avoid execution, which must have become known to the public, since later so many confessed instead of denying the charges.

1. Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to study the pragmatic strategies of six accused people, two men and four women, in the Salem Witch Trial documents. Earlier studies have shown that the successful survival strategy for defendants at Salem was submission and co-operation (Archer 2002:18). The six defendants here studied were accused at an early stage in the process and were all executed. The present study will make use of speech act theory and politeness theory to study the interactions of the defendants with their questioners, with the aim to relate their ultimately unsuccessful defence strategies to the immediate discourse context. The study will also examine the roles of gender, social status and background in the defendants' choices of strategy.

The Salem Witch Trials took place in the Puritan village of Salem in the colony of Massachusetts, in a period of fourteen months from March 1692 to May 1693. During this period twenty people convicted of witchcraft were executed, nineteen by hanging and one by *peine forte et dure*, pressing to death. A further 166 people were accused, charged with witchcraft and imprisoned. The surviving court documents, which provide a very full record of the proceedings, give remarkable evidence of discourse strategies and conversational implicatures adopted by the accused in circumstances in which life and death was at stake.

The present study will focus on two major areas of study within the field of historical pragmatics: politeness and assertiveness. Politeness theory, building upon the seminal work of Brown and Levinson (1987) has shown itself to be a very useful tool in the study of interactions in historical texts, and has been used in a wide range of studies dealing with Early Modern English materials (e.g. Kahlas-Tarkka 2012). Assertiveness is generally associated with power, and has played an important role in the study of gender differences in language, in particular with reference to male and female conversation strategies (e.g. Tannen 1994). However, the discourse situation in a courtroom is very different from that of normal conversation, in that the power relationship is extremely uneven. In Salem, this would have been the case to an even greater extent than in a present-day court. In today's courts, one is presumed to be innocent, whereas in the Salem trials, guilt was the presumption. Because of this, in the Salem trials, unlike most social contexts of today, it appears that choosing assertiveness as discourse strategy was not successful (Kahlas-Tarkka 2007: 1).

This study will also make use of speech act theory to examine the dialogues between the accused and their questioners in the trials. Speech acts, first introduced by Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1975), may be defined as utterances that have performative

functions in language and communication, and include such acts as promising, ordering, greeting, warning, inviting and congratulating. The present study will use Searle's (1975: 348), classification of speech acts as a tool for discussing the Salem courtroom dialogues. As one of the main topics of study is assertiveness, the study will focus specifically on one class of speech act that is typically linked to assertive strategies, that is, the directives. Directives are speech acts that are intended to cause the hearer to take a particular action, such as requests, commands and advice; both the frequency of directives and their formal characteristics are highly relevant for studies both of politeness and assertiveness.

The main source material that will be used in this study is the edition by Rosenthal *et al.* (2009), *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*. This edition collects together all the available documents relating to the Salem Witch-Hunt, including much material not included in the previous edition (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009: 15). In Rosenthal *et al.*, the different documents are presented chronologically, making it easy to place the documents in their immediate historical context.

Six individual trial cases were selected as the focus of the present study. Together, the documents relating to these cases provide material for the comparison of different strategies and backgrounds, while the material is limited enough to allow for a detailed discussion. While the other trial cases have not been studied in detail, reference is made to them as appropriate.

The selection of material was based on the following considerations. As gender and social status are here of particular interest, it was crucial to include defendants of both sexes and of varying background and status. The initial aim was to include an equal number of men and women; however, it turned out to be impossible to find a suitable group that filled all the other criteria for inclusion, and a group of four women and two men was therefore chosen.

The most important criterion for inclusion had to do with the available linguistic material. As the aim is to interpret and discuss speech strategies, one would want to look specifically at documents containing actual dialogue. Such documents include the courtroom examinations of accused, as well as some witness depositions. These types of documents are usually written by a scribe, who could be any respected and appointed man from the Salem village community. The scribe quite often wrote down the dialogues verbatim; however, at other times the dialogue is written down in the form of reported speech. The latter kind of material has been avoided in the choice of court cases to study; a major criterion for selection has been the availability of a reasonably large amount of direct dialogue.

In order to reduce the number of variables for comparison, it was further considered

important to select court cases that are comparable in terms of their outcome and historical context. Consequently, the two men and four women were all chosen from the same phase in the witch trial process: their trials were all held before the first actual execution, which took place 10 June 1692 (Rosenthal 2009: 394). The trial cases selected are those of Sarah Osborn, Bridget Bishop, Martha Cory, Susannah Martin, George Jacobs Sr. and John Willard. These six defendants differed considerably in terms of background and age; however, all their cases had the same outcome: they were all executed for witchcraft.

The two men and four women who will be the objects of this study are chosen from the same phase in the witch trial process, and their cases had the same outcome: they were all executed for witch-craft.

In order to provide the necessary context, Chapter 2 will give an overview of the historical background of the Salem Witch Trials as well as a summary of actual events and a discussion of the legal system involved in the trials; this chapter will also discuss the contemporary ideas of witchcraft that lay behind the process. Chapter 3 will discuss and problematize the documentary evidence, and Chapter 4 will outline the theoretical framework for the study.

The findings in the study are presented in Chapters 5 and 6. In Chapter 5, each individual case is studied separately. The aim here is to study in detail the pragmatic strategies of each defendant, identifying linguistic features such as the use of counter-questions, directness, pronoun usage and the use of directives, as well as communicative strategies such as sarcasm and laughter. The communicative behaviour of each defendant is contextualized in terms of the background of the defendant, the circumstances of his/her arrest and trial and the interaction with the questioner.

Chapter 6, finally, compares the choices of linguistic forms and communicative strategies by the six subjects. Major research questions are whether the men are more assertive and confident than the women, and to what extent their communicative behaviour at court may be related to their social background and to their status in relation to the other people involved in the case. Their behaviour will also be placed in the context of the specific situation of their trials, and compared to that of the defendant of trial cases later in the process (see p.15; see also Doty and Hiltunen 2002: 310).

The Salem Witch-Hunt period is intriguing and fascinating from many points of view. A large number of historical and pragmatic studies are within historical pragmatics have already been carried out on these materials, and have focused on different areas of legal discourse and dialogue. The present study will combine the study of assertiveness and

politeness with consideration of gender, social background and status, bringing in the angle of historical sociopragmatics. It is hoped that this study will contribute to a further understanding of how much-studied factors such as gender and the social context affect the communicative strategies of the accused, and their perlocutionary effects on their accusers, under the extreme circumstances of the seventeenth-century witchcraft trial.

2. The historical context

2.1. The Salem witchcraft trials

From June to September 1692, nineteen men and women, all having been convicted of witchcraft were carted to Gallows Hill for hanging. In addition, one man of over eighty years of age was sentenced to receive the punishment of *peine forte et dure*, a type of punishment where the person is pressed to death under heavy stones, for refusing to submit to a trial on witchcraft charges. This was an established English procedure designed to force recalcitrant prisoners to enter a plea so that their trials might proceed. Hundreds of others faced accusations of witchcraft; several remained in jail for months without trials. Finally, in January 1693, Sir William Phips reprieved the sentences of all the remaining witches awaiting execution (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009:20) At the insistence of their descendants, the last five of those accused of witchcraft were officially pardoned by the state of Massachusetts on 31 October 2001.

The immediate reasons for the sudden outbreak of panic that led to the trials have been variously explained by scholars, with reasons ranging from food poisoning to local economics (ref); however, such detailed explanations are generally controversial, while there is little doubt of the importance of the more general historical context, that of Puritanism and the seventeenth-century Indian Wars.

2.2 The background: Puritanism and the Indian Wars

Well before Captain John Smith established Jamestown in 1607, the Europeans had heard about the New World's possibilities. However, it may well have been Smith, rather than any other, who convinced the English that there was a new country available to them. In his *Description of New England* (1616) Smith wrote: 'Here nature and liberty afford us that freely which in England we want, or it costs us dearly' (Franklin 1995: 75). He continued his praise of New England by honouring the many natural opportunities available in the area, such as ample supply of fish and meat.

The Mayflower departed Plymouth, England on 6 September 1620 with 102 passengers and about 30 crew members. On the journey to the New World two people lost their lives. Out of the 102 passengers, about 29 were Puritans and the rest were Pilgrims, a group of Separatists from the Church of England. The two groups had similar beliefs, including the thought that no pope or bishop had the right to impose any law on a Christian soul without the latter's consent and. Further, both groups followed John Calvin, in believing, that God chose freely those he would save and those he would damn eternally (cited from Baym *et al.*, 1995:76). The term 'puritan' is sometimes used both for the separatists and for those who chose to remain within the Church of England:

The term "Puritan" first began as a taunt or insult applied by traditional Anglicans to those who criticized or wished to "purify" the Church of England. Although the word is often applied loosely, "Puritan" refers to two distinct groups: "separating" Puritans, such as the Plymouth colonists, who believed that the Church of England was corrupt and that true Christians must separate themselves from it; and non-separating Puritans, such as the colonists who settled the Massachusetts Bay Colony, who believed in reform but not separation. Most Massachusetts colonists were non-separating Puritans who wished to reform the established church, largely Congregationalists who believed in forming churches through voluntary compacts. The idea of compacts or covenants was central to the Puritans' conception of social, political, and religious organizations.(accessed 14.1. 2013)

On 17 December 1620, the Mayflower dropped anchor in Plymouth Harbour and crewmembers spent three days surveying for a settlement site. The specific location was

chosen mainly for its defensive position and because the Native villagers had cleared much of the land, making agriculture relatively easy. According to Franklin (1995: 77), more than half of the new settlers died during the first winter, as a result of poor nutrition and inadequate housing. However, the small community of Plymouth survived and became a colony where subsistence farming, lumbering and fishing were the main occupations. The new immigrants who continued to arrive in this early period settled along the coast and a short distance inland.

The life of the Puritan colonists in the New World was not easy. It was not uncommon for families to experience severe hardships, losing infants and children, and those who survived the winters faced infections that were the result of summer heat (Franklin 1995:77). Religion marked every aspect of life for the Puritans who believed that God's hand was present in every human event and that God rewarded good and punished bad.

The society was strictly patriarchal. Women did not participate in town meetings and were excluded from decision making in the church. In census reports from Massachusetts Bay women's names such as Patience, Silence, Fear, Prudence, Comfort, Hopestill and Be Fruitful reflect Puritan views on women quite clearly. ¹

Church attendance was mandatory, and punishment was inflicted on those who were seen as straying from faith. The severity of punishments, which included hanging in particularly serious cases, was based on a literal reading of the Old Testament and the idea that God's correction would be far worse to the individual than any earthly penalty. ²

Moving into the interior brought conflict with the Indians. Some friendly contact did exist, and commerce existed between the two groups, such as trade with land and beaver. However, many of the Indian tribes were not pleased with the situation. This eventually escalated into open conflicts, such as 'The First Indian War' or 'King Philip's War' and 'King William's War'. The Indian chief Metacomet, called 'King Philip' by the English, was the son of the chief Massasoit who died in 1661. Metacomet's distrust of the colonists was well known, and this distrust eventually led to 'The First Indian War', which started in June 1675 and lasted until April 1678. The colonists won the war, helped by material support from England: they had a steady supply of soldiers and other necessary material, which the Native Americans did not have (Philbrick, 2006: 332). However, during the war, the Plymouth Colony lost nearly eight percent of its English population. The Indian losses were much greater. About 2,000 men were killed or died of injuries from the war, around 3,000 died of sickness or starvation, another 1,000 Indians were sold into slavery and about 2,000 escaped

¹ (<http://www.ushistory.org/us/3d.asp>, accessed 13.1. 2013).

² (<http://www.ushistory.org/us/3d.asp>, accessed 4.5. 2013).

to other tribes in the north or west and joined the continued attacks on colonists (Philbrick, 2006 : 332).

'The Second Indian War' or 'King William's War' started in 1688 and lasted until 1697. It was the first of six colonial wars fought between New France and New England along with their respective Native allies before Britain eventually defeated France in North America in 1763. The cause of the war in North America was mainly disagreement over the fur-trade between New France and western tribes (Aquila, 1997: 44).

Norton (2003: 11), claims that the war was still going on at the outbreak of the witchcraft hysteria and she emphasizes the presence of the Indians as a contributing factor in a growing conflict between the inhabitants of Salem. The new settlers in Salem were aware of the fact that they could experience an attack at any time. It turns out that many of those involved in the crisis had known each other previously on the frontier. According to Norton (2003: 12), a significant number of the key accusers and confessors came from Maine. They were refugees from one or both wars and they sought shelter in Salem Village and nearby Essex County towns. Several young women from families destroyed by frontier warfare were residing as servants in other people's households in the Salem area, and came to play a prominent role in the witchcraft trials. Norton (2003: 12), suggests that the constant fear of Indian attacks on the villages led to a stressful existence where quarrel and religious fanaticism could escalate. Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: xi), also point to an inability to cope with local quarrels as contributing factors in the conflicts that escalated towards 1692.

2.3. The onset of the witch-hunt

The Salem trial records indicate that towards the last part of 1691, young girls in the small community of Salem Village, Essex County, had been experimenting in cautious fortune telling. This took place in small, informal gatherings where the future was discussed. The girls were mainly concerned with their own future status: whom they would marry and of what trade their sweethearts would be. According to the Reverend Jonathan Hale of neighbouring Beverly, the only independent eyewitness to these events, one of the girls had devised a primitive crystal ball - the white of an egg suspended in a glass - and been severely frightened by seeing, floating in the glass 'a spectre in the likeness of a coffin' (Hale, 1702:132-133). Shortly after 15 January 1692, two girls, Abigail Williams and her cousin Betty became ill. It was soon observed that this was no ordinary illness. The Reverend John

Hale described the girls' illness as being 'sadly Afflicted of they knew not what Distempers' (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009: 20). According to Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009, the children:

were bitten and pinched by invisible agents; their arms, necks and backs turned this way and that way, and returned back again, so as it was impossible for them to do of themselves, and beyond the power of any Epileptic fits, or natural Disease to effect
(Rosenthal *et al.*: 20).

Further descriptions followed, such as descriptions of the girls where one assumed that the girls had been taken dumb, their mouths stopped, their throats choked, their limbs were wracked and tormented so much that people could not help but feel compassion for what happened to them. The first physician to be called in, Mr. William Griggs, could not determine what was wrong with the girls, and although the girls' parents and guardians consulted physicians, the girls grew worse. After several weeks, a doctor concluded that the girls were 'under an Evil Hand' (Boyer and Nissenbaum, 1974: 2). There have been many attempts to explain the afflicted girl's behaviour the following centuries. Hutchinson (1764), cited in Rosenthal (1993:32-33), writing 70 years after the events, considers the 'tragedy' as the result of 'fraud and imposture':

There are a great number of persons who are willing to suppose the accusers to have been under bodily disorders which affected their imaginations. This is kind and charitable, but seems to be winking the truth out of sight. A little attention must force conviction that the whole was a scene of fraud and imposture, began by young girls, who at first perhaps thought of nothing more than being pitied and indulged, and continued by adult persons, who were afraid of being accused themselves.

A nineteenth-century commentator, Charles Wentworth Upham wrote the first significant history of the Salem witchcraft trials, *Salem Witchcraft*, published in 1867, which for 130 years remained the most influential work on the events of 1692 (Upham 1687: viii). For

Upham (1867), cited in Rosenthal (1993: 33), also discussed the possibility of fraud in connection with those he described as a 'circle of young girls'. To begin with, Upham denied psychological causes categorically; however, later he admitted the possibility that 'credulity, hallucination, and the delirium of excitement' could have contributed to the girl's behaviour. According to Rosenthal (1993:33), nineteenth-century commentators frequently gave vague suggestions of mental problems, in order to explain the disorders described by Hutchinson. In the twentieth century, medical explanations, and particularly psychological ones, have been pursued more directly (Rosenthal 1993:33), for example, Miller (1989); cited in Rosenthal 1993:35) refers to 'the ravings of a klatch of repressed pubescent girls who, fearing punishment for their implicitly sexual revolt, began convincing themselves that they had been perverted by Satan'. A physician, Caulfield (1980), cited in Rosenthal (1993: 34), explains the behaviour of the girls with hysteria:

One is not obliged to accept the verdict of the popular historians what the children were deceitful, wicked, malicious and dishonest. History has been unkind to them long enough. They were not impostors or pests or frauds; they were not cold-blooded malignant brats. They were sick children in the worst sort of mental distress living in fear for their very lives and the welfare of their immortal souls. Hysteria was only the outward manifestation of their feeble attempts to escape from their insecure, cruel, depressive Salem Village world - a world thoroughly saturated with the pungent fumes of burning brimstone.

The episode in the Parris household happened in a culture where complaints of witchcraft were not unknown, and where a major case had occurred as late as in 1688, leading to the execution of a woman named Glover (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009: 15). She was accused of afflicting four children between the ages of five and thirteen, in a family in Boston. Other incidents were known as well. Martha Sparks, from Chelmsford in Middlesex County, was accused of witchcraft in 1691 and sent to prison in Boston on 28 October 1691, where she remained until December 1692. Martha Sparks was never brought to trial, but the presence of a 'witch' in prison was most likely well known in the region. Finally, a young girl in Ipswich, Mary Knowlton, had fits that her father, Thomas Knowlton, believed to be the result of

witchcraft committed by one Rachel Clinton (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009: 17). At this time and in this society, a diagnosis of witchcraft was not unheard of.

Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: 3), discuss several remedies that were tried to cure the fits of the girls in the Parris household. A young village matron and church member, Mary Sibley, who lived near the parsonage and who had seen the children's sufferings in person, suggested that some traditional counter-magic should be tried rather than relying on the spiritual methods only. She instructed Parris' Indian slave couple, Tituba and John, how to make a 'witch cake'. The cake was baked with rye meal mixed with the urine of the afflicted. A cake like this was believed to lead to the discovery of a witch's identity. Once the cake was made it was fed to a dog, evidently in the belief that if the girls were bewitched, the animal would experience torments similar to their own. According to Norton (2003: 20), the experiment with the cake resulted in the Indian slave Tituba being pointed out as the one who bewitched the young girls.

The number of afflictions spread quickly. Soon they came to affect about seven or eight other girls, ranging in age from twelve to nineteen, including three from the household of Thomas Putnam, Jr., a literate yeoman who eventually came to play an important part in the recording of the trials (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 30).

Eventually, the troubled village resorted to the law. The first legal action related to witchcraft in Salem village was carried out on 29 February 1692. On this day, Justice of the Peace John Hathorne recorded complaints of witchcraft against two local women, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborn, as well as against Tituba, the 'Indian servant' or 'slave' of Parris.

In accord with the traditional legal procedures, Hathorne ordered the arrest of the women for the purpose of examining them. The examinations were conducted publicly in the Village meeting house. Sarah Osborn and Sarah Good denied that they were witches, but Tituba confessed. She even included details and descriptions of the devil: ' a thing all over hairy, all the face hairy, and a long nose.' (Boyer and Nissenbaum, 1974:3). With this, the witchcraft trials were under way.

2.4. What was witchcraft?

Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974:3) suggest that by confessing to witchcraft, Tituba gave credibility to the witchcraft claims. Unlike many crimes, the matter of witchcraft was not something that could be discussed with absolute certainty. Nobody knew then, or knows now, what the afflicted girls were experiencing. The girls exhibited strange behaviour, such as odd postures, foolish or ridiculous speech, distempers and fits; however, in the beginning physicians could not explain their symptoms (see p.8). Even though there had been outbreaks of assumed witchcraft in New England before (see p.9), there was no uniform idea of what witchcraft was like (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974). In the winter of 1692, however, several unexplainable incidents fuelled the belief that witchcraft was real.

In March, the Reverend Samuel Parris had invited the neighbouring ministers for a day of prayer. As Hale narrates the incident, the children began to act 'strangely and ridiculously' during the visit (Hale 1702: 25). One of the girls suffered a convulsion fit, her limbs twisted several ways and became stiff. One of the troubled girls, 17-year old Mary Walcott, had teeth-marks that could not be explained. Finally, young Abigail Williams raced through the house with her arms stretched out screaming 'Wish! Wish! Wish!'. Next she began to pull burning logs from the fireplace and tossed them around the house (Burr 1914:153).

The question of identifying witchcraft came to be a central one in the process that followed. One of the most influential voices in the discussion was the Reverend Increase Mather of Boston. In his book *Cases of Conscience* (1693), cited in Rosenthal *et al.* (2009:32), he asked the question: 'What constitutes admissible evidence in Witchcraft cases?' Mather stressed that 'the evidence of witchcraft should be as clear as in any other crime of a capital nature' (Mather 1692), cited in Rosenthal *et al.* (2009: 24).

According to the common law of England and the statutes of Massachusetts witchcraft was undeniably a crime, and the Bible clearly stated that witches had to be exterminated and cut off (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 11). However, proving the existence of witchcraft was highly problematic. This was because the supposed actions on which the indictments rested were not physically perpetrated by the witches, but by spirits who could at times assume their shape. The crime lay in the person allowing the devil to assume his or her human form and to perform acts of mischief. It therefore took place in the mind of the witch, making it extremely difficult to prove (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974:11).

Many records from 1692 show that the magistrates made huge efforts trying to seek out evidence that would be acceptable in the courtroom, verifiable and logical (Boyer and

Nissenbaum 1974:12). An outright confession was the main form of evidence sought by the magistrates. The records show the examiners trying very hard to make the accused confess to the crime for which they were standing trial. Failing this, a trustworthy testimony to some supernatural attribute of the accused was sought. For example six people stated that George Burroughs, a minister, had managed to lift a heavy gun at arm's length with a single finger thrust into the barrel (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 13). The presence of 'The Witch's Tit' was held to be physical evidence of witchcraft. This was an abnormal physical appendage, commonly quite small, through which the witch or wizard was thought to give suck to the devil in the form of a bird, a turtle, or some small creature (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974:13). The presence of this physical feature could be empirically verified as it figured prominently in the evidence, and in the search for this evidence, the accused were subjected to bodily examinations by physicians or midwives.

In contact with religion, a supernatural weakness was believed to characterize a witch, particularly the inability to recite prayers, even of the simplest sort, with perfect accuracy. Sarah Good, during her trial, could only 'stumble' over some part of a psalm, and appeared reluctant to mention the word 'God' (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974:12). Recitation of the Lord's Prayer became a favourite test of witchcraft in 1692 (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 12).

Another type of evidence sought by the magistrates, was anger followed by mischief. What would happen in this situation was that the accused had become so angered at a second party, that she/he expressed or implied a threat. Within a short period of time, this encounter had then been followed by some misfortune befalling the threatened party, such as damage to his property or livestock. Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974:13) recount a widespread story that, as Bridget Bishop was led into the Salem Town courthouse for her trial, she cast her eyes on the place of worship across the square and at that very moment a heavy roof timber fell down (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974:13).

The final category of evidence of witchcraft was the one that was the most difficult to prove, this was the so-called spectral evidence, which involved a spectre taking the shape of the accused. These spectres could attempt actual, bodily harm, as they did when 'afflicting' the bewitched girls (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974). The problem here was that no one could know whether the spectre, or Satan, would appear in the shape of an innocent or even a goodly person. In addition, spectral evidence was very difficult to verify as the spectres were usually visible only to the person or persons for whom the visitation was intended: even if other people were present, they could not see anything.

In 1692, the issue of spectral evidence was problematic. There was uncertainty among the magistrates as to the validity of spectral evidence (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974:14). In *Cases of Conscience*, Increase Mather condemned the use of spectral evidence (Mather 1692), cited in Rosenthal *et al.* (2009:54). He believed that it was dangerous to depend on the devil himself for evidence, even though those who believed in spectral evidence did so because they believed that God was just and would not allow innocent people to suffer.

In an effort to establish a connection between instances of misfortune and the evil will of particular persons, the authorities took into use the practice of stationing the afflicted girls together in the examination room where they would be carefully observed for signs of pain when an accused witch was brought in. The accused would then be required to touch the sufferers, and their response would be noted and entered as part of the record of the trial (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 15). These tests contributed to discrediting the proceedings, at the same time, they were rooted in the magistrate's determination to accept only evidence of witchcraft which could be verified or which could be observed with their own eyes. Increase Mather rejected these tests on the grounds that they too easily lent themselves to fakery and deception. *Cases of Conscience* called attention to the fact that the validity of any evidence depended on the trustworthiness of its source and the circumstances under which it was secured (Mather 1692), cited in Rosenthal *et al.* (2009:54).

2.5. The courts and trials

2.5.1. The Salem examinations

The judicial procedures practised in Salem Village generally followed the same principles as those in the mother country (Rosenthal *et al.* 2010: 45). If the case was brought as far as to a jury trial, an accused person would go through three distinct legal processes. During any of these three legal steps, new documents could be introduced into the case.

According to Rosenthal (2009), the first thing to take place was a preliminary hearing. Next, if the accused was not released, but held for further legal action, the accused would be brought before a grand jury that would determine whether the charge warranted a trial. If the grand jury thought it did, a 'true bill' would be returned and the third process, a jury trial would ensue. During each of these procedures evidence would be produced and recorded in

written form. Such evidence was then put together with new evidence generated during the next step of legal action.

Any grown-up person could make a formal accusation before a local justice of the peace, also referred to as 'magistrate', if he or she was suspicious of a crime or wanted to report illegal activities. The accusation could also be made on behalf of another person, such as an under-age child who was a victim of witchcraft. The formal complaint would require the accused to be brought before authority at a specific date and place for examination. According to Rosenthal *et al*, a bond would normally be posted by the person making the complaint, as a surety that he or she would follow through on the case. Interestingly, this procedure was not followed in the early stages of the 1692 witchcraft cases (Rosenthal *et al*. 2010: 45).

Finally if a magistrate believed that enough evidence had been gathered from the accused or from others who had observed illegal activity, the accused could be held trial before the appropriate court.

The examination of the first three people to be accused of witchcraft gathered a large public presence for this unusual and exiting local event. According to (Rosenthal 2009: 45), the crowd of spectators was so large that the hearing had to be moved to the Salem Village Meeting House. As to the physical setup of the preliminary hearings, the magistrates were positioned on seats before a table facing the accused, the witnesses and the spectators. In the Meeting House, the accused would sit in pews or on stairs, or stand in the alleys. If the crowd was very large, those who could not find a place inside would view from outside through open windows.

The accused were subjected to abuse from the public during the examinations. One illustration of this was given by Nathaniel Cary, husband of Elisabeth Cary, one of the people accused of witchcraft. According to a contemporary source (Calef 1700:96), cited in Rosenthal *et al*. (2009: 45), he stated:

The Prisoners were called in one by one and as they came in were cried out of, & c. The Prisoner was placed about 7 or 8 foot from the Justices and them; the Prisoner was ordered to stand right before the Justices, with an Officer appointed to hold each hand...

During the grand jury hearings, as well as during the trials, the 'afflicted' were present and behaving as at the examinations. This led the grand jurors and trial jurors to believe that the 'afflictions' were not fraudulent, and that evidence confirming the existence of witchcraft existed. The 'afflictions' generally led to charges that the spectres of the accused were assaulting the 'afflicted', and were only visible to them (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009).

As stated in Rosenthal *et al.*, at least two magistrates were present to question the accused during a public examination. Other adults could be summoned if it was believed that they had information that was important for the accusations. Even though testimony at these hearings could be given orally, it is likely that depositions were drawn up prior to the examinations. If the accused went to trial, most of the evidence heard at the trial would be in written form (Rosenthal 2009: 46).

The documents presented as evidence during the examinations were mostly testimonies and statements, class of legal documentation in which one or more people gave personal evidence that reflected upon someone, usually an accused person. The quality ranged from eyewitness testimony to second-hand rumours, hearsay testimony and what Rosenthal (2009: 46), calls 'fits of fancy'.

In the settlements in the new colony, there were commonly several men who could write clear, readable English, and as a favour or for a fee they would write legal documents such as wills, deeds and depositions for their neighbours. Thomas Putnam, a prominent yeoman in Salem Village wrote the depositions of numerous accusers and other supporting witnesses. These documents were used as evidence at examinations, at grand juries, and during trials (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 47). Thomas Putnam's household is said to have been in the middle of the events taking place in Salem Village, not only as claimed victims of witchcraft, but with Thomas Putnam himself at least being a complainant against thirty five persons and giving testimony against seventeen accused persons (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 47). All this happened at the same time that he was recording much of the evidence presented at the trials.

2.5.2. The Court of Oyer and Terminer

In May 1692, Sir William Phips, the new governor appointed by King William and Queen Mary, arrived in Massachusetts with a new governmental charter. He landed in the middle of a public order crisis in which hordes of people accused of witchcraft were stored in

overcrowded jails. The new governor was advised to speedily establish a special court to handle the judicial backlog, even before the accession of a new General Court (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 49). A Special Commission of Oyer and Terminer was established by Phips on 27 May, with authority to hear and determine the increasing number of cases of persons held under suspicion of practising witchcraft.

The court was to follow the Law & Custom of England. The judges and commissioners appointed by Phips were headed by Lieutenant-Governor William Stoughton and included eight other prominent men within government and commerce (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009: 49). Five judges would constitute a quorum to hear cases, which was typical throughout the English colonies and in the mother country itself. Trial judges were seldom lawyers or students of the law, however, they did hold experience from many offices of government. Most of the appointed commissioners, who were local magistrates or who served on the Court of Assistants, had experience of hearing and judging all types of civil and criminal cases. It was their duty to ensure all sides of a case was given an appropriate and fair hearing.

Prior to a jury trial before the Court of Oyer and Terminer, certain procedures of a capital court case had to be followed. An indictment was written up by a clerk at the attorney general's office, which was then presented to the grand jury for consideration of whether there was enough proof to proceed to trial or if more proof was needed. When the attorney general had a true bill on an indictment and was ready to bring a case to trial, the accused would be 'brought before the bar', arraigned, and would be asked to plead guilty or not guilty (Rosenthal *et al.*, 2009: 50). If the person pleaded 'not guilty' he or she was expected to agree to being put to trial 'by God and the Country'. This declaration of innocence and willingness to be tried would then allow for the trial to commence. The Court of Oyer and Terminer met for its first session at the Salem Court House from 2 to 3 June, 1692. For the formal trial, a 'petty jury', also referred to as a trial jury, was appointed. The jury consisted of twelve men taken from an initial pool of 48 'honest and lawfull men' who met the requirements of an estate worth 40 shillings per annum or a purchased estate worth at least 50 pounds. As soon as the jury had been sworn in, the trial could begin (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009:51).

2.5.3 Types of Evidence used

Seventeenth-century English trials were not necessarily long, drawn-out events. In many instances, a jury trial could be completed within an hour or so, depending upon the number of documents presented and whether the defendant presented evidence as well (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009:52). The grand jury procedure and the trial sometimes both occurred on the same day, and sometimes with more than one person on the same day being brought before the grand jury and the trial jury on the same day. This procedure was consistent with English tradition (Baker 1990:581-582). Those who claimed to be afflicted and other witnesses would give their oath that their written testimony was the truth. Some of the depositions had been drawn up months earlier, others were written or added to at the direction of the prosecutor to make them appropriate and specific to the case at hand (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 47).

According to Rosenthal (Rosenthal 2009: 52), one type of important evidence for which there was not a previously drawn-up written record was the testimony of confessors who gave evidence against the accused in person. As regards the accused putting forward his or her own defence, it appears that in most trials the accused did not present any formal defence. Even though each defendant had the right to do so, the lack of legal advisors hindered an effective defence. In addition a defendant was not allowed to swear an oath of innocence, for fear that a false oath might endanger one's soul. Witnesses who presented evidence, and family and neighbours signing petitions in defence of the defendant were also not allowed to swear to their testimony (Rosenthal 2009: 52).

According to Rosenthal *et al.* (2009: 18), the arrests made in Salem Village came without the traditional requirement that a bond should be posted by the person lodging the complaint. This was a significant departure from English law. From 29 February to 19 July, 1692, charges of witchcraft made no demands on the persons bringing the charge, something that in part explains the flood of accusations that were made.

After the accused were imprisoned their fate varied. Those who did not confess usually had indictments presented against them in a grand jury. Indictments were also drawn against confessors, a few of whom were eventually condemned, but none of them were executed. For Puritan judges, confessions were symbolic of 'communal expiation' because the speech of confession showed that the accused renounced their allegiance to Satan, and the result of that was the removal of execution (Weisman 1984: 154). The results for Confessors were that they were indicted for covenanting with the Devil.

Although all witchcraft implied such a covenant, those who did not confess were

charged primarily for sending their spectres to harm the accusers on the day of the examination, and not specifically for the affliction that precipitated the accusation. There were good reasons for this, as such 'tormenting' of the accusers at the examinations could be seen by responsible adult witnesses, of which two were required to support the claim. The spectres themselves, of course, appeared visible only to the 'afflicted'. As accusations steadily spread, more and more people confessed, perhaps to avoid execution, perhaps from family pressure (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 29).

The records of the examinations are plentiful and give a good picture of what the examinations were like. The cases were mainly argued against the accused by presenting depositions to which people swore, or by testimony without a prior deposition. When the charge was accepted and the accused stood trial, the accused person had no legal counsel other than from the Court. During a trial, a 'touch test' would be administered in which the accused would be asked to touch one of the 'afflicted', and people could see that it worked when the touch brought the person was brought out of the fit, the witchcraft could be seen to work (Mather 1693), cited in Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 56). In the trial of Martha Carrier, Cotton Mather described how Susannah Sheldon 'in open Court had her hands 'unnaccountably ty'd together with a Wheel band, so fast that without cutting, it could not be loosed; it was done by a Spectre' (Mather 1693: 21). After the accused was found guilty, normally a period of a few days elapsed before the Court pronounced sentence. The punishment for witchcraft was death, as indicated in Exodus 22:18: 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live'.

2.6. Who were the witches?

The strange behaviour of the girls in the Parris household was attributed to witchcraft (see page 11). The authorities agreed that the girls would have to identify the witches who were harassing them. After considerable pressure, the girls singled out three women in the village and accused them of witchcraft (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 3). The three women were Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osburn, In a study of witchcraft in New England, Karlsen (1987), cited in Kahlas-Tarkka (2012: 1), suggests that a witch could be either a woman or a man, however, those convicted of witchcraft in Salem and elsewhere were mainly women over the age of forty, with women over sixty being at an especially high risk of both accusation and conviction.

In comparison with England, where those convicted of witchcraft tended to be poor,

those accused of witchcraft in Salem were often relatively wealthy or powerful. For example, in addition to the wives of men and some wealthy widows, two sons of the former Governor Simon Bradstreet were accused but not tried, as well as Captain John Alden, son of the then well-known Priscilla and John Alden of Plymouth Colony.³ Karlsen, suggests the many accused women with property and no male heirs constituted a threat to an economic system based on the 'orderly transfer of property from father to son'. Such women were seen as tying up the colony's wealth without performing the essential function of bearing and raising male children.⁴

However, many of the accused persons in Salem Village were poor, and included servants and slaves. Karlsen further states that the many accused women with property and no male heirs constituted a threat to an economic system based on the 'orderly transfer of property from father to son' (Karlsen 1987). Martha Carrier, married beneath her station and relied on the town for support. Tituba, who was one of the first women to be accused of witchcraft, was a slave in the household of Samuel Parris. Her ethnic background is not completely clear, but most probably she was a Carib Indian brought from Barbados (Kahlas-Tarkka 2012: 3). Mary Warren, a young woman in her twenties, was a servant in the Procter family and also not a member of the upper social layer (Kahlas-Tarkka 2012: 6).

According to Kahlas-Tarkka (2012: 8), certain rumours said that some of the persons accused of witchcraft had behaved in a manner which was unsuitable for the local community. Rumours had it that Sarah Osborn, who was about 50 years old, had cohabited with her much younger second husband before she married him and that the couple conspired to deny the two sons of her former marriage their rightful inheritance (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 194).

3. Material and methodology

The general body of materials and documents pertaining to the witchcraft trials have been preserved and are still stored by the Peabody Essex Museum.⁵ There are in addition memorabilia associated with the trials, such as the 'Witch Pins' used in examination of witches and a small bottle supposed to contain the finger bones of the George Jacobs Sr. can

³ <http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/witch.htm>, accessed 07.02.2013.

⁴ <http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/witch.htm>, accessed 07.02.2013

⁵ www.salemweb.com/guide/witches.shtml. accessed 25.02.2013

be found in the Clerk's Office in the Essex Superior Court House in Salem.

The writings that survive from Early New England are not just legal documents, such as those included among the Salem records but also town records, diaries, travel journals and accounts of 'memorable providences', that is natural phenomena supposedly indicative of God's work (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 65). Apart from their interest for historians, the documents provide a wide range of variation of interest for anyone working within the field of linguistics. The Salem witchcraft records are particularly interesting for those studying language change. In addition they provide a valuable opportunity for observing how language is used in the specific legal setting of these trials.

The main source of material that has been used when working on this thesis is Bernard Rosenthal *et al.*'s *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, which was printed in 2009. The Salem witchcraft records are particularly interesting to those studying language change. The book includes a chronological and comprehensive record of all legal documents relating to the Salem witch trials. Several newly discovered manuscripts and records published in earlier books that were overlooked in earlier editions, provide a comprehensive narrative account of what happened in 1692-1693. All legal records are recently transcribed and corrections from earlier editions have been corrected. The manuscripts in the book are accompanied by notes that in many cases identify the person who wrote the document (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009).

The Salem documents are often referred to as a body of texts. According to Rosenthal *et al.* (2009: 65), however, one must keep in mind that they constitute a heterogeneous collection that comprises a number of different text categories very different from each other both in language and content. The text categories may be divided into two types: speech-related texts, including examination records and depositions; and formulaic records, such as indictments, warrants, summonses and complaints. In Rosenthal *et al.*'s view, the examination records and depositions provide particularly fascinating material since they attempt to represent the spoken language of the period (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 66).

The recorders of the documents seem to have had three main ways of presenting what was said or what happened during the courtroom proceedings: direct speech, indirect speech and meta-textual comments. Examination in direct speech was mainly a presentation of the courtroom proceedings as a dialogue between the accused and the interrogator. On this particular point it is important to consider the role of the recorder and how he shaped the texts as we know them today.

As far as passages of indirect speech are concerned, scribal interference is an obvious element, as the recorder must have changed some features to produce the indirect reporting.

The influence of the recorder should not be underestimated even in the records written primarily in direct speech. This can be illustrated by the fact that multiple records of some examinations, written by different people, have been preserved. Even though these records claim to describe the same courtroom proceedings, they frequently vary considerably in content and in linguistic form (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 67).

The second speech-related text category is depositions, which are written records of the oral testimony of witnesses who report on their experiences or actions in a particular context. Legal documents exhibit less linguistic and structural variation than the examinations and depositions. The writing of these documents was clearly constrained by strict conventions that probably had to be followed in order for each document to have the appropriate legal form. One example of such a text is indictments. The indictments seem to be mass-produced by two or three recorders in particular, who left empty spaces for the name of the accused and accuser (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009).

The recorders had an important role as intermediates between the original utterances of the Salem participants and the forms in which these utterances were written down in the documents. This means that no generalizing assumptions should be made about the language of, for instance, individual deponents or confessors without first paying attention to the context of recording, as it always had to be considered whether the linguistic phenomenon was more likely to reflect the choices made by the recorder than by the accuser (Cusack 1998: 93).

According to Rosenthal *et al.* 40% of the records have been tentatively identified by name identification (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009). As many researchers have pointed out, in the early colonial period, writing literacy was still a skill acquired by men who needed this ability in their profession. It is therefore no surprise that all currently identified Salem records were written by men, and that most of them belong to professions for which writing seems to have been of central importance (Cusack 1998: 93). Some of the recorders were merchants by profession or had worked as such at some point in their lives, a career that involved writing as an essential skill. It is possible that yeomen were likely to be chosen as recorders because of their social status (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 70). Some of the scribes are not known, however; in some cases anonymous recorders wrote down more than one deposition for a single individual or for members of a household (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 71).

As mentioned earlier, scribes were known to add information to the depositions. In the records it is evident that many depositions contained changes in colour of ink, variety of pressure and amount of ink applied to paper by quill pens, and clear additions or deletions of

words. When closely studied, it is clear that these depositions were not created at one sitting. Normally text was added at a later time with additional information written into a deposition as a continuation of the text. This is illustrated in the case of George Burroughs. On 9 May 1692, an unknown person wrote down the testimony of Elizabeth Hubbard, one of the accusers, regarding George Burroughs. Elizabeth Hubbard claimed that the spectre of George Burroughs had appeared to her. This particular handwritten testimony was read that same day at George Burroughs's examination. Reverend Samuel Parris was requested to record the Burroughs examination, and notes that: 'Hubbard and other of the 'afflicted ' girls Testimony going to be read & they all fell into fits.' (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009:47). After the examination was concluded, Thomas Putnam took this original deposition and continued where the previous text left off. He added a description of what transpired at the hearing beginning: ' also on the: 9th may 1692 being the time of his examination Mr. George Burroughs or his Appearance did most grievously afflict'(Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 47). Additional notes on the bottom of the testimony show that this same document was introduced for use at the grand jury inquest of 3 August 1692, and was sworn to for use during Burroughs's trial on 5 August 1692 (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 47).

The contribution of the scribes to the documents is important to bear in mind when studying the texts as evidence of the communicative strategies of the accused, as in the present study. Other aspects of their language, such as their vocabulary, spelling and syntax. may be studied as evidence for Early American colonial English, and is as such of considerable interest.

The study of language of historical periods, up to fairly recent times, is restricted to the surviving written evidence. Written texts inescapably provide a very limited selection of all the possible forms of language that would have existed during the period. Here, apart from the formulaic language of legal documents, the records offer insight into language use during examinations and trials. The setting is necessarily formal, even though occasional instances of more colloquial talk appear in the material. Still, such instances are relatively scarce legal discourse is clearly predominant in the records. It is fair to assume that, in the process of transforming the spoken into written word, many of the distinctive features of spoken discourse would have been removed from the writing in order to make it conform to the standards of legal documents (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 84).

For the present study, the texts have been studied from Rosenthal *et al.'s Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, (2009). This edition provides a diplomatic transcript of the texts and includes a chronological and comprehensive record of all legal documents relating to the

Salem witch trials. Several newly discovered manuscripts and records published in earlier editions, provide a comprehensive narrative account of what happened in 1692-1693. All legal records are recently transcribed and corrections from earlier editions have been corrected. The manuscripts in the book are accompanied by notes that in many cases identify the person who wrote the document (Rosenthal *et al.* 2009: 15).

While a study of scribal practices or spelling would require a study of the original texts, for the present purpose it has been considered appropriate to use the edition, as it provides the necessary documents for this study and it is also the newest volume on this subject.

4. Theoretical background

4.1. Pragmatics

4.1.1 Pragmatics as the study of language use

Within the field of linguistics, the last half century has seen a series of important paradigm shifts (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). A move from synchrony to diachrony, and new ways of thinking about language, have led to new ways of studying language. These are characterized by an emphasis on real language in actual use, not as an abstract system: a move from fixed to dynamic language (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013: 2). Variation has become an important factor. 'Messy data' which previously was seen as incomprehensible has now become accessible and one now looks at all various manifestations of language.

Out of this paradigm shift, new disciplines have emerged, such as stylistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics and pragmatics. Traditional areas such as phonology and morphology have not been replaced, but there has rather been a replacement of the traditional system-based approach to language. The new approaches are based on the collection of empirical data and there is focus on variation and change. There is also a strong emphasis on the interaction between language and other things outside it, making the new discipline inherently interdisciplinary.

The new disciplines, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA) differ in focus but have much in common. Sociolinguistics focuses mainly on language variation according to the user, that is, on gender, class, education, age etc. It is concerned with language variation and attitudes in relation to social structures and

patterns, and deals with questions such as: what does language tell us about society? how are social patterns reflected in language? Important concepts within sociolinguistics are for instance prestige, hypercorrection, standardisation and gendered language.

Pragmatics, on the other hand, focuses mainly on language variation according to use, important areas being context, interaction and aims. Pragmatics is concerned with how speakers interact and how they make meaning from interaction. Important issues within pragmatics are politeness, speech acts, inference and the co-operative principle (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). When comparing pragmatics to discourse analysis, one could say that discourse analysis focuses on the discourse (the utterance or text or conversation) and how it is constructed, rather than with the speakers and their interaction. Central concepts within discourse analysis, finally, studies discourse in relation to power structures.

Pragmatics may, then, be defined as the study of language use (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). Other definitions have been presented, such as 'the study of speaker meaning as distinct from word or sentence meaning' (Yule 1996:133). It has also been seen as a negotiation of meaning in interaction, taking 'account of the different contributions of both speaker and hearer as well as that of utterance and context to the making of meaning' (Thomas 1995: 23).

Pragmatics is a fairly new field of study with textbooks appearing in the 1980s. Much of the early work in pragmatics had similarities with theoretical approaches were concerned with utterances only and viewed them separately from their discourse context, thus following in the tradition of Chomsky's formal syntax, involving introspection in interpretation (Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice 2007: 13).

In the beginning empirical pragmatics were mainly concerned with studying authentic spoken language; however, but the focus has shifted to also include texts as communication.

From an early phase, however, pragmatics split into two quite distinct views: while the school known as 'Anglo-American' or 'theoretical' pragmatics (Huang 2007), cited in Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013:1,12), has continued the philosophical and introspective tradition, the new, empirical approach to language is adopted within 'Continental European' or 'social' pragmatics (Taavitsainen and Jucker 2013).

Within the social pragmatics tradition, language is studied as a means of communication that is used by people in specific situations, with specific intentions and goals, and within specific contexts (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). This tradition is related to sociology and anthropology and utilises empirical data, mainly data with much contextual information. In the beginning, Empirical pragmatics was first mainly concerned with studying

authentic spoken language; however, the focus has shifted to also include written texts as material.

4.1.2 Historical pragmatics

When pragmatics broadened its scope to include written material as legitimate data, this meant a crucial turning point for the development of historical pragmatics. Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice (2007: 12) define historical pragmatics as historical linguistics combined with pragmatics; they further state that historical pragmatics focuses on language use in past contexts and examines how meaning is made (Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice 2007:13). Jucker (2008: 895), identifies three main aims for historical pragmatics: it wants to understand the patterns of intentional human interaction of earlier periods, the historical development of these patterns, and the general principles underlying such developments.

Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013) define three distinct subfields of historical pragmatics based on these main aims. These aims focus on language use in past contexts and examines how meaning is made (Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice 2007). Jucker states that historical pragmatics wants to understand the patterns of intentional human interaction of earlier periods, the historical development of these patterns, and the general principles underlying such developments (Jucker 2008: 895).

The first subfield investigates the social context of communicative patterns. To illustrate, an example may be cited from the present matter.

The first subfield would here investigate the social conditions of the use of address terms at a particular point in time. What kind of speakers used *thou* to address what kinds of addressee? Who used the pronoun *you* for the same purpose? What was the effect of changing from one pronoun to the other in a particular social context, for example in the context of? Questions such as these would often require an interdisciplinary approach that did not just include linguistic expertise, but also historical, social and cultural expertise (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013 : 4).

The second subfield looks at the development of communicative patterns. It would ask questions like: How does the use of *thou* and *you* change between the period of Chaucer and that of Shakespeare? Is there geographical variation in these periods that might help us to trace the change? Does anything happen between these periods? If so, what causes the changes? By including further data one could probably see an increasingly diachronic study of step-by-step developments instead of just a contrastive analysis of an earlier and a later

period. The third, which belongs to the theoretical side of pragmatic, studies the pragmatic principles underlying language change in general, and would ask questions such as which communicative principles lead to the changes.

The first two subfields identified by Jucker and Taavitsainen correspond approximately to two more traditional divisions within historical pragmatics, defined by Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice (2007: 13), that is, *pragmaphilology* and *diachronic pragmatics*. *Pragmaphilology* is said to study historical texts in their sociocultural context. Studies may include 'new readings of medieval texts, analyses of Chaucerian dialogues or Shakespearean scenes, or new communicative interpretations of documentary evidence' (Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice 2007: 14). Within *diachronic pragmatics*, different stages of language are compared, with the main focus being on language change.

The present study may be situated within the first subfield in both classifications. The aim here is to interpret the Salem trial dialogues in relation to what we know of the social context of the speakers and of the patterns of language use current at this point in time. The focus will here be on the interaction between the speakers, rather than on linguistic changes or the communicative processes behind them.

4.1.3 Challenges within historical pragmatics

The pragmatic study of historical texts presents several challenges to do with the data and its interpretation. One important question is to what extent can valid interpretations be produced of a text from another period. In addition, as with any branch of historical linguistics, one must consider the limited availability of data from historical periods (the so-called 'bad data' problem). Scholars developed different methods of dealing with this challenge.

To interpret a historical text, it needs to be contextualized, both in terms of its historical and social background and of other texts from the same period. In the 1990s Trosborg (1995: 141), stated the following: 'The ultimate goal of most pragmatically oriented research is the collection of ethnographic data, i.e. naturally occurring data, collected along with information about the age, sex, status, situation, culture, relationship, etc of the interactants'.

The 'bad data' problem was originally formulated by the sociolinguist William Labov (1994: 11). The main goal of early sociolinguistics was to study the most 'genuine' kind of

language produced by speakers, known as the 'vernacular'. As it was felt that the vernacular belonged to informal spoken contexts, any surviving historical texts were seen to provide poor data compared to the data from present-day informants. Similarly, to begin with conversation analysis was the main model of pragmatic analysis. The desired kind of data in pragmatics was defined as oral interaction between participants who freely communicated with each other. Strict adherents of the conversation analysis paradigm considered that all the rest was not 'real' language and such mediated language was therefore of less value. However, it may be objected that this approach leaves out the majority of language production from pragmatic analysis. It is also important to keep in mind that constructed conversations with an interviewer do not necessarily produce 'natural' data.

As natural and unconstrained face-to-face conversations from earlier periods are not available, historical pragmaticists must resort to written texts of different kinds. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013), discuss two possible approaches to this challenge. (1). Most of the early historical pragmaticists adopted the first approach, which assesses different types of available sources in terms of how they are related to spontaneous speech production. The main focus within this approach is on speech related texts, such as courtroom records, witness depositions or plays, as well as on spontaneous texts, such as private correspondence.

Models have been developed to help researchers to define how close to real language their data is. These models measure the distance between spoken and written language in various ways and one may talk of a text being on a continuum between two modes of communicative immediacy and communicative distance (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). One example of such a model is Koch and Oesterreicher's model of communicative immediacy and distance. The scale is visualised by placing various types of written texts on the scale according to different distances from the spoken so that the differences are more pronounced at one end and more levelled at the other (Koch 1999: 400).

The second approach focuses on the recent paradigm shift within linguistics, in which a language no longer is seen as a homogenous unit, but as a heterogeneous conglomerate of different kinds of spoken and written language. The view is that all types of language are seen as being communicative, and thus open for pragmatic analyses. According to Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013), the current approach to data in historical pragmatics is based on the idea that all language use is always contextualized and that written language should also be studied (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). This 'communicative' view holds that both spoken and written language are forms of communication produced by speakers/writer for target audiences with the intention to communicate, and that language is always produced within

situational constraints. The third approach discussed by Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013), that of studying spoken records of the recent past, is not relevant for the present study.

With that in mind, one can conclude that all forms of language that have survived and provide at least some information for contextualisation may be considered potential material for historical pragmatics. However, Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013) also point out that one must be careful not to draw unwarranted conclusions or generalise too much, as all language is constrained by its use and context. With this view in mind, an analysis of a play will give information about this play, but it does not allow us to generalize about the language in general. With this in mind, pragmatic analyses may cover all surviving texts, as long as they are analysed for what they are and are not taken to represent something else. Therefore, if we analyse courtroom data or fictional drama texts, they should be analysed within their own contexts and within the frames of their specific genres, and they should not be taken to be substitutes for spoken, free-flowing conversations. For the present study, the implication is that the courtroom dialogues should in the first instance be treated as written records produced by scribes: even though the aim is to study the speakers' communicative strategies, the interpretation has to take into account the context in which the dialogue survives.

4.1.4. Terms of address

The types of words used by people to address others are important features of language use. With terms of address speakers appeal directly to their hearers. Two main types may be distinguished: pronominal and nominal address. Both provide means of expressing social and attitudinal meanings embedded into the terms, and often both forms are used together, for example *thou Traitor, Your Excellency, you rascal* (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013).

In earlier periods of the history of English, pronominal address is particularly intriguing, as the choice of the second-person pronoun could express subtle shades of meaning, depending on the context. This has changed, as *you* is now the general second-person pronoun in Standard English, while *thou* is restricted to some archaic uses in religious, present-day texts, as well as to a few dialectal varieties. The use of nominal terms of address has also undergone substantial changes also. Some words, such as *Madam* and *Sir* still have a function as title and address terms. Both nominal and pronominal terms of address have been the focal point of many studies. Many of these studies have focused on Early Modern English, especially on Shakespearean terms of address and on private letters.

Brown and Gilman (1960) led the main wave of research on pronominal terms of address in a broad range of European languages, such as German, French, Spanish and Italian. In contrast to English, these languages still distinguish between a more familiar pronoun and a more polite and distant pronoun. According to Brown and Gilman (1960:58), a system of non-reciprocal power semantics applied throughout much of the medieval time. The system had its roots in the hierarchical societies of medieval Europe up to about the nineteenth century, when more egalitarian societies began to replace the earlier hierarchical systems (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). In these new societies, the asymmetrical power semantics were replaced by a more symmetrical system that included a higher degree of solidarity or familiarity.

Address terms function as subtle indicators of interpersonal relations, but they also reflect attitudes and concepts of prestige and politeness. The Anglo-Saxon society was strictly hierarchical, yet no variation in pronominal address terms has been found in surviving texts. Even though address terms had an important function as sensitive indicators of appropriate behaviour and politeness between various social classes, Old English pronouns of address were not used in the same way as in the periods that were to follow.

In Middle English, the choice between the pronouns *ye* and *thou* depended on the social situation and context. In the 15th century *thou* was used to signal intimacy, and the uses of *you* were extended to the singular, to address superordinates, people considered to be higher up on the social ladder compared to oneself. *Ye* was considered to be more formal. If you did not know someone, it would be seen as rude to call them *thou*. Several studies on the use of *you* and *thou* have found that social distance and affective elements are the determining factors when choosing the correct pronoun for the correct situation (Brown and Gilman 1989; Kopytko 1993; McIntosh 1963; Mulholland 1967 and Quirk 1971). *Thou* was used to express intimacy and closeness. In addition, *Thou* was often used to express emotional involvement, such as love, anger or contempt in informal situations (Barber 1976:208-209). Both of the pronouns *thou* and *you* could be used in many different ways to illustrate or mark social distance. Where there was a difference in status, a speaker of superior social rank would address a person of lower rank with *thou* but receive *you*. This rule of power was also common within the family, with the parent addressing the children as *thou*, and sometimes the husband addressing the wife with *thou* but receiving *you*. As seen above, *thou* could be used to express strong emotion and contempt.

Moving into the Early Modern English period one can observe that the pronominal system was in a flux. The pronominal distinction still existed, but it was not the same as in the

earlier period.

Letters and other types of texts of the early modern period display a wide range of nominal address terms including kinship terms, titles, ranks, occupational terms and terms of endearment and of abuse. The patterns of use from earlier periods deviate considerably from the modern systems that people are familiar with today. In particular, Present-day English provides a more reduced selection of kinship terms. In some special contexts, one can find usage of occupational terms.

Cultural differences in the varieties of English can be detected in terms of politeness, where address terms are seen as indicator of the degree of formality in interaction. Research within this area has mainly focused on works by Chaucer and Shakespeare.

4.1.5. Speech act theory

Speech act theory started with the work of two philosophers: Austin and Searle, who were concerned with the recognition of different types of speech acts and their logical status. In 1962, Austin defined speech acts as the actions performed when we say something. He further suggested that the actions performed when an utterance is produced can be analysed on three different levels (Cutting 2008:13). The first of these levels is the locution, which means 'what is said', the form of the words uttered. The second level is the illocutionary act. This term means the act of saying something, or doing something, for example it could be the act of asking a question, or greeting someone, of making a promise or of ordering the addressee to do something (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). The third level is the perlocutionary act, which refers to what the speakers are doing with their words (Cutting 2008:14): to the actual effect of the speech act on the addressee, such as persuading, convincing, scaring, enlightening or inspiring whether intended or not (Austin 1962:page).

Speech acts have been classified into five groups: The first is declaratives, which are words and expressions that change the world by their very utterance, such as 'I bet', 'I declare' and 'I resign'. The second grouping is called representatives, that are acts in which the words state what the speaker believes to be the case, such as 'describing', 'claiming', 'hypothesising', 'insisting' and 'predicting'. 'I think girls work harder than boys', a clear claiming speech act. The next group is that of commissives, which are acts in which the words commit the speaker to a future action, such as 'promising', 'offering', 'threatening', 'refusing', 'vowing' and

'volunteering'. The third grouping is that of directives, which include speech acts that are aimed at making the hearer do something, such as 'commanding', 'requesting', 'inviting', 'forbidding' and 'suggesting'. A sample sentence may be 'Do not do unto others as you would they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same'. The fourth group is called expressives and it contains words that state what the speaker feels, such as 'apologising', 'praising', 'congratulating', 'deploring' and 'regretting' (Cutting 2008:15).

The division of speech acts into groupings describes a state of affairs that is to come about in the future, through actions of either the hearer or the speaker (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). In order for speech acts to be appropriately and successfully performed, certain felicity conditions have to be made (Cutting 2008:15). For Austin (1962), cited in Cutting (2008: 15), the felicity conditions are that the context and roles of participants must be recognised by all parties and the action must be carried out completely and the persons must have the right intentions (Cutting 2008:15). Searle believes that there is a general condition for all speech acts, which is that the hearer must believe that it is possible to carry out the action. In addition, the hearer must assume that the speakers are performing the act in the hearer's best interests, they are sincere about wanting to do it, and the words count as the act (Searle 1962), cited in Cutting (2008:16).

When trying to categorise utterances in terms of speech acts, it is clear that there are limitations to speech act theory. Often there is an overlap and speech act models have no provision for the 'messiness' of everyday spoken language (Cutting, 2008:20). At an even more general level, Brown and Yule (1983: 3), identified two main macro-functions of talk: transactional and interactional functions. Transactional functions involve the function which language serves in the expression of content and the transmission of factual information. In general, most talk has a mixture of the two functions.

Brown and Yule (1983: 3), point out that much of everyday human interaction is characterised by the primarily interpersonal way of speaking rather than the primarily transactional use of language. For example, the phrase 'Thank you for not smoking' on a sign, an expressive 'thanking' speech act, is presumably used because it sounds more polite and friendly than the impersonal prohibiting directive 'No smoking'. There are various factors that may make speakers use indirect directives, such as lack of familiarity, the formality of the context and social distance, such as difference in status, roles, age, gender, education, class, occupation and ethnicity. Social distance may give speakers power and authority, and it is generally the speakers in the less dominant roles who tend to use indirect strategies (Cutting 2008: 18).

Finally, cultural differences must be kept in mind when considering these factors. Speech acts, their linguistic realisations (how people express themselves), and their relationship to social dimensions such as those listed above are very much culture bound. The ways of expressing speech acts vary from social group to social group, country to country, and from culture to culture. Cutting (2008: 19,) gives the following example of a telephone conversation that took place in Cuba:

- (2) A Is Mr. Perez there?
B yes, he is.
A Em... can I speak with him, please?
B Yes, wait a minute.

The question is intended as an indirect request for the hearer to bring Mr. Perez to the phone. However, B only hears an interrogative with the function of direct representative, checking whether Mr.Perez is in his place of work.

Various empirical methods have been developed to find out how patterns of speech acts differ across languages (Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013). To begin with, studies were conducted with questionnaires with a short conversation leading up to a speech act, for instance a request or an apology. Informants were asked to fill in the missing speech act. The responses to these questionnaires were then compared across languages to find out about different ways of issuing requests or apologies in specific countries (e.g. Blum-Kulka *et al.*, 1989), cited in Jucker and Taavitsainen 2013:2.2). The use of role-play was introduced as another method to obtain empirical results.

A general methodological problem that has emerged in speech act studies is that it is difficult to use corpus evidence, as there is no simple way of searching for a speech act, such as an apology or a complaint. Apologies and complaints, both of which are common speech acts, may come in countless different manifestations. There have been various attempts to develop methods for locating specific speech acts in computerized corpora. According to Deutschmann (2003), cited in Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013: 6.2.), apologies in English are to a large extent conventionalised, and tend to contain. Words such as sorry, pardon or excuse. A search for these words will therefore recover most of the manifestations of

apologies that are present in the corpus.

The same problem applies to historical corpora. Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013: 6.3.) have here developed an approach searching for specific ‘speech act verbs’, verbs that are typically used in a particular kind of speech act. The problem here is that, especially for historical studies, we cannot hope to cover the entire range of possible manifestations of a speech act by looking for keywords only; this becomes even more problematic in periods in which spelling is variable. Other scholars have therefore chosen to study more limited-sized corpora and collect the data manually, such as Kohnen (2008b), who established a collection of typical patterns for directives in Old and Middle English to maybe provide a history of directives in English (Kohnen, 2008b), cited in Jucker and Taavitsainen (2013: 6.4.). With this method, the researcher can bring in his or her philological understanding of the original texts in order to locate also the more indirect realisations of a particular speech act. It also has the added advantage that it allows for a much more efficient study of the immediate context of the speech acts. For the present study, which involves a quantitative study of a limited text material, manual data collection is the only sensible option.

4.1.6. Politeness

The concept of politeness within pragmatics may be illustrated with the following example, cited by Cutting (2008: 43):

- (3) During her successful General Election campaign in 1979, Margareth Thatcher undertook various photo opportunities to emphasise how in touch she was with ordinary people. On one occasion, she was photographed standing on the back of a double decker bus. As this was taking some time, she said, 'I'm beginning to feel like a clippie (a bus conductor)'. And then, observers recall, one could see the realisation in her eyes that she might have said something patronising, so she added, '...who are all doing a wonderful job'.

(Graeme Greene, BBC Radio Quote...Unquote, 1979)

Politeness here refers to choices made in language use in order to maintain good social relationships. The example above shows how important it is to be seen to show a friendly attitude, if one wants to save face and be appreciated in return (Cutting 2008:43).

Brown and Levinson (1987: 62) suggested that, for anyone to enter into social relationships, they must acknowledge and show awareness of the aspect of the 'face', the public self-image or sense of self of the people that are addressed. They further suggested that it is a universal characteristic of human interaction across cultures that speakers should respect other people's expectations regarding self-image and take their feelings into account, to avoid Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) (Brown and Levinson 1987: 62). If FTAs cannot be avoided, a speaker can redress the threat with negative politeness, such as respecting the hearer's 'negative face', the need to be independent, have freedom of action, and not be imposed upon by others (Brown and Levinson 1987). Another way to counteract an FTA could be to use positive politeness, which is paying attention to the 'positive face', the need to be accepted and liked by others and to be treated as a member of a group, and to know that one's wants are shared by others.

According to Nevala (2010: 419), verbal interaction be analysed in terms of social attributes. Politeness is an important factor in social relations, it is not just the way in which the speaker approaches the hearer, but also the hearer's evaluation of the speaker.

Nevala stresses the importance of the interactional status which the speaker establishes in a discourse situation: while the social status of the speaker is relatively fixed, the interactional role is more flexible and can usually relate to the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, together with shifts in intentionality and power (Nevala 2010:419).

By using indirectness in the form of indirect speech acts and cooperative maxims a speaker can make suggestions, requests, offers or invitations quite casually, without addressing them to anyone in specific. The illocutionary effect will most likely be heard and understood by hearers, who can then choose to ignore it if desired. Using indirectness also allows people to be polite by giving options and retreating behind the literal meaning of an utterance. In addition, hearers will usually know what is implied by a cooperative maxim, such as the use of hints, and they will then have the freedom to respond to it or to ignore it, without losing face (Cutting 2008: 44).

In contrast, direct speech acts involve asking a question or making a suggestion, request, offer or invitation in an open and direct way. Utterances such as these tend to contain imperatives with no mitigating devices, as in 'Give that note to me', 'Open the door'. The

hearer is given little option but to do as they are told or to be seen as uncooperative. An action like this is the most face-threatening mode (Cutting 2008: 44).

Negative politeness strategies pay attention to negative face, by demonstrating distance, and avoiding intrusion on each other's territory. Negative politeness is used to avoid imposing or presuming and to give the hearer options. By emphasising the importance of other people's time and concerns, using apology and hesitation or by posing a question where the hearer can say no, speakers can avoid imposing on other people's face (Cutting 2008: 45). The extent of the optiongiving influences the degree of politeness. The greater chance the speaker offers the hearer to say 'no', the more polite (s)he is. Positive politeness strategies work towards saving positive face, by demonstrating closeness and solidarity, by appealing to friendship and making people feel good. Brown and Levinson state that a characteristic of positive politeness strategy is by claiming common ground. This can be done by paying attention to the hearer's interest, wants and needs (Cutting 2008: 45). Cutting further states that a common positive politeness strategy is to seek to be in agreement and to avoid disagreement.

Studies on politeness in historical language use have become more important during the last decade. Culpeper's study from 1996 has shown impoliteness as a series of communicative strategies designed to attack face, and then to cause social conflict and disharmony (Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann 2003). The face attack can be either intentional, seen as intentional or both. Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann further suggest that the entire context of interaction has to be taken into account:

If intention is a factor that distinguishes impoliteness from politeness, as we argue, then we need a richer understanding of an interactant's behaviour, including their prosody, and of the discoursal context, in order to infer intentions. It is the response to an utterance, and indeed the construction of the whole speech activity, that may determine how the utterance is to be taken, including whether it be polite, impolite or something in between (Culpeper, Bousfield and Wichmann 2003:1,576).

Jucker (2000: 375) argues that it is only because insults are related to the perlocutionary effect that they have on the hearer that they can be produced unintentionally. One person may find an utterance insulting while another person may not. The insult can be playful or serious; its

interpretation will depend on how the hearer reacts to it, whether it is received as an insult or not. The choice of politeness formulation depends on the social distance and the power relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Cutting (2008: 50), argues that when there is social distance, politeness is encoded and the interaction is indirect. Where there is less social distance, there is less negative politeness and indirectness.

Cutting (2008: 50), further argues that the formality of the context will influence the choice of either direct or indirect politeness strategies. The greater the formality, the more indirect the language (Kryk-Kastovsky 2006), cited in Nevala (2010: 437), in her discussion of courtroom settings, suggest that covert impoliteness is often used when judges, by confusing or intimidating witnesses, try to make them change their given deposition. A more overt type of impoliteness may be seen when the judge openly claims that the witness is somehow not able to give a reliable answer. The unequal power relation between the participants influence which impoliteness strategies are used and by whom.

Archer (2008: 192) points to historical settings such as institutional courtroom discourse as not just being about impoliteness, but also about verbal aggression and expected behaviour. In her opinion, defendants come to court 'expecting to have their behaviour questioned, and therefore frequently anticipate accusations before they are made. They are in other words prepared to take on a defensive and submissive mode (Archer 2008: 45). In such a setting, the judges are the ones controlling the setting and have the most influence on the manifestations of impoliteness. Archer (2008: 45) also suggests that the judges may interfere with the defendant's assessments of the gravity of face damage inflicted on them, which clearly relates to the matter of asymmetrical power. On the basis of her analysis, Archer suggest an 'intentionality scale' of verbal aggression, which would range from a strong to a weak intent to harm.

Rudanko (2006), cited in Nevala (2010: 441), presents a notion of different grades of impoliteness and places 'aggravated impoliteness' at the high end of the scale (Rudanko 2006:838), Rudanko studied impoliteness in Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* where he looked at verbal behaviour that could be considered 'beyond lack of manners and discourtesy' (Rudanko 2006), cited in Nevala (2010: 441). He argues that the main reason for his use of the term 'aggravated impoliteness' is that 'impoliteness' is not strong enough to describe all the different strategies that can be used in order to attack face or cause conflict and disharmony in general. According to Rudanko, aggravated face attack happens when the speaker deliberately and with intention tries to harm the hearer's face, but does not want the hearer to recognise his or her intentions (Rudanko 2006: 838).

Ordinary impoliteness and aggravated impoliteness can be seen as 'a more serious manifestation of ill will or malice than mere impoliteness'. According to Rudanko, mere impoliteness mostly concerns using taboo words or being rude when polite behaviour is expected (Rudanko 2006: 838). An act of aggravated impoliteness is prototypically gratuitous, which means that the speaker performs it first and foremost to offend the hearer. It is one-sided, since, according to Rudanko, reciprocal impoliteness represents 'mere' impoliteness, and aggravated impoliteness is deliberately planned and premeditated by the speaker as opposed to ordinary impoliteness, which can also happen unintentionally and by accident (Rudanko 2006: 838).

However, the relationship between indirectness and social variables is a complicated one, with the whole issue of politeness and language being culture-bound. Tannen (1994: 32-34), suggests that the use of indirectness can hardly be understood without a cross-cultural perspective. Consequently, a study of politeness in historical materials has to take into account the possibility that expectations of politeness differ from one period to another, interpretations should therefore not take present-day conventions for granted, but relate to other contemporary materials as far as possible. This is also an important point to bear in mind when studying the Salem witchcraft trial material.

4.2 Earlier studies of the Salem materials

Several studies from the past few years have looked at questions relating to the discourse patterns and strategies chosen by the different parties in the Salem witchcraft trial process. According to Hiltunen (1996:17), courtroom discourse in general has become the favoured subject for research within varied disciplines. The comprehensive survival of the Salem records and the dramatic circumstances of the trial, as well as the historical and linguistic interest of early colonial materials, combine to make the Salem material of great interest for researchers. Several researchers, particularly in Finland, have studied the materials from the point of view of historical pragmatics.

Hiltunen (1996: 18) suggests that one of the most prominent themes addressed in studies of courtroom interaction, is the issue of credibility, in which features of the accused's or the witnesses' speech support credibility or undermine it and thereby render them either 'powerful' or 'powerless'. From this starting point, he examined questions in the Salem witchcraft trials. He examined the trial records of twenty-six cases where the dialogues were

entirely or essentially recorded in direct speech and the questioning strategies were examined thoroughly. In his study, he found that the magistrates used a wide range of questions directed to the accused, such as leading questions, open questions and alternative questions.

In the trial records, there are also questions asked by the defendants, such as rhetorical and counter-questions. Hiltunen (1996:28) found that the rhetorical questions only appeared in the dialogue of those denying the accusations of witchcraft; those who confessed did not use them. An explanation to this may be that rhetorical questions function as forceful statements; according to Hiltunen (1996: 29) those who denied any guilt generally used more forceful language than those who confessed. He further observed that, when speakers with less social power than the hearers responded to a question with a question, it was more likely to be interpreted as a challenge to the authority of the latter, as well as a questioning of the relevance and appropriateness of the prosecution. Hiltunen found that rhetorical questions were not prominent in the material, but when they did occur they were strong indicators of the defendant's sense of injustice and a reflection of the important role of power in the courtroom (Hiltunen 1996:31).

Hiltunen's study showed that the hysteria about witchcraft in the Salem community at the time of the trials was bound to have overruled rational considerations. Hence, the examination of the defendants often appear to have been a merely formal process, in which the statements of the defence were paid little attention or were simply just ignored. In addition, the material showed that, in the course of the trials, a way out of the difficult situation emerged, in the form of a choice between denial and confession (Hiltunen 1996: 36).

In a further study, Doty and Hiltunen (2002) look at question-and-answer patterns ~~in~~ from the point of view of both the examiners and the accused. They look at pragmatic features of the discourse and narrative structure and function both in direct discourse and in reported discourse, Doty and Hiltunen (2002: 332), find a historical progression in the way the trials were recorded, from records presented in direct discourse during the early months of 1692 to ones presented in reported speech in the late summer and early autumn. This difference means that different methodological approaches have to be applied to the two kinds of material, focussing on discourse pragmatics and narrative structure respectively. The pragmatic analysis emphasizes the records in direct discourse and focuses on the strategies of the examiners and the accused. The results show in what ways the examiners made use of presuppositions within questions and statements to elicit confessions. The accused responded by confessing or by first denying the charge and later changing their statement to a confession (Doty and Hiltunen 2002). Doty and Hiltunen (2002: 332) make the specific point that Tituba,

the most successful defendant, made use of a range of strategic moves and thereby controlled the amount of information given, providing an arena for later confessors.

In their study, Doty and Hiltunen utilize Labov's work in oral narratives as background theory, which provides a multilayered approach to understanding both the structure of the confessions and the spread of the witchcraft hysteria in Salem.

Archer (2002) looks at answers and questions in the Salem materials from a sociopragmatic point of view. She argues that the examiners played a very controlling role in the discourse at Salem and she points to the general attitude displayed by the judges toward the accused. The different assumptions brought by the two parties to the discourse exchange can lead to different reality paradigms, hence the assumption that someone who maintained their innocence had to be lying, ergo they were 'guilty but unwilling to confess' (Archer 2002: 26). Archer suggests that the type of questions that functioned as accusations were particularly difficult to disprove, partly due to the fact that the magistrates were responsible for judging the legitimacy of a 'reality' their questioning strategy helped to establish (Archer 2002:1).

Archer further looks at the strategy of the Salem magistrates and suggests that it is similar to that of today's cross-examiners. The role of the latter is to construct a representation of the reality that corresponds to the facts, as they see them. Consequently, questions are used that enable them to build up necessary evidence to convince the judge, jury or magistrate (Archer 2002: 26). In addition, the marked power-relationship between the magistrates and the defendants meant that the magistrate could control the course and the outcome of the court trials to a large extent. This enabled the magistrates to construct a version of events that they then used to make a conviction (Archer 2002: 26).

Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen (2007) studied the discourse strategies of the defendants at the Salem witchcraft trials. Using politeness as the framework of the study, they looked at eight different cases, out of which four defendants chose successful discourse strategies and saved their lives, whereas the other four were less successful with their strategy and were executed. Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen (2007:1) found that, in order for the defendants to be successful, they needed to cooperate, which included admitting to the accusations and providing the court with details, in addition to denying hurting other people intentionally. On the other hand, defendants who refused to admit their guilt, who denied all involvement in witchcraft and who questioned the evidence and the intelligence of the court were not successful in their discourse strategies.

Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen (2007:15) further claim that the examples in their paper

have shown that similarities can be found both in the successful and the unsuccessful defence strategies and that one must consider the characteristics of the Puritan society as contributing factors in the deaths of the defendants who denied any involvement with witchcraft. These defendants did not conform to the rules and conventions of society, and for this reason they tended to make every strategic error possible. Meanwhile, the survivors, consciously or unconsciously, chose strategies that were favourable for them but may have worsened the situation for the other accused people.

Here, Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen (2007) apply Grice's theory of implicature, relating to the questions of how people use language (Grice 1975). This is based on the assumption that there are general guidelines for how conversations should be conducted (cf Levinson 1983: 100-102). Grice's four basic maxims are elements expressing general cooperative principles, such as; the Maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance and Manner. According to Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen, it was likely that violation of at least some of these maxims could occur in the Salem trials. The power imbalance and the special circumstances led the accused, the accusers and the afflicted to handle the situation in different ways, depending on their character and their intellectual and social abilities (Kahlas-Tarkka and Rissanen 2007: 4).

In the recent study '*I am a Gosple Woman*': On Language in the Courtroom Discourse during the Salem Witch Trials, with Special Reference to Female Examinees', Kahlas-Tarkka (2012) poses the question whether gender is a relevant factor in the way examinees answer the questions of the examiners. Kahlas-Tarkka looks at the examination records of five Salem women, of whom two confessed to witchcraft and survived, and three denied guilt, were convicted and hanged or died in prison. The women represented different social layers of Salem Village. Special attention is paid to self-politeness strategies; the discourse type, i.e. relation between direct and reported speech; verbosity; and the role of Puritan religion. Kahlas-Tarkka (2012:13) also looked at the division of the sexes among the accused. She suggests that the great predominance of women had to do with social hierarchies, Puritan beliefs and gender roles. The examinations of the five accused women present an uneven amount of material, and also illustrate that the women chose different strategies in their examination discourse. The discourse must, according to Kahlas -Tarkka (2012:13), have been influenced by the examiner and the recorder.

The language of the examination records varies considerably. Kahlas-Tarkka (2012: 1-14). points out that it cannot be studied out of its socio-historical context, including aspects of religion and socio-linguistic factors such as age and gender According to Culpeper & Kytö

(2010:332) 'In public and formal discourse, women generally speak less than men in mixed-sex interactions, except in situations, such as the courtroom, where cooperation can be coerced.' Culpeper & Kytö also point out the unevenness of the general situation of men and women in a courtroom context: women in the Early Modern courtroom only had access to a small part of situated activity roles constituting the trial, and this would obviously result in linguistic differences (e.g. women rarely asked the questions). Women were never judges, prosecution counsels, defence counsels or any other courtroom officials. Neither did they constitute the jury. (Culpeper & Kytö 2010: 316).

Krisda Chaemsaitong (2009), finally, looks at self-politeness and self-face in the trial records. The study looks at the strategies of the accused individuals from the perspective of pragmatic politeness. In this paper, the term politeness is used in reference to self, and is concerned with the speaker's own face, a model different from that of Brown and Levinson (1987) (Chaemsaitong 2009:56). According to Chaemsaitong (2009:56), it is realistic to examine the Salem trials from this perspective because the accused's responses were partly driven by 'what they thought others thought of them', which was part of their face.

Chaemsaitong (2009: 56) identifies nineteen sub-strategies of self-politeness in the material, and suggests that these strategies were as they helped the accused to defend themselves and to enable them to enhance or restore their tarnished public image. Chaemsaitong (2009:79) further claims that, during the trials, strategies of self-politeness appear throughout the verbal exchanges between the examiner and examinee. It was also found that, in the Salem witchcraft trials, where issues of life and death, and public image were closely linked, and where the appearance of being a good Christian was emphasized, one could assume that one would be more oriented towards self-politeness. Chaemsaitong (2009: 79) also found that the way in which the accused evaluated the situation, and the possibility of the judge's acceptance of their denial of guilt, would determine their choice of self-protection strategy. Resorting to self-face protection might save the accused from capital punishment (Chaemsaitong 2009: 79).

In Chaemsaitong's study, several examples illustrate that the examinees, the less powerful participants in the trials, utilised different pragmatic strategies to save their face, while at the same time choosing to maintain or neglect the other's face. In particular, Chaemsaitong (2009: 81) suggests that, even in a setting where power relations between the participants are not in balance, one should not assume that a less powerful participant would always show politeness towards a more powerful participant. This final

point will be especially focussed upon in the present study, which will consider the strategies chosen by six examinees who ultimately proved to be unsuccessful.

5.0 Case studies

5.1 The selection of trial cases

For the purpose of the present study, six individual trial cases, recorded in dialogue form, were selected: those of Sarah Osborn, Bridget Bishop, Martha Cory, Susannah Martin, George Jacobs Sr. and John Willard. The principles for their selection were outlined on p.4. In order to relate the discourse strategies chosen by the defendants to factors such as gender and social status, it was felt important to keep other variables as stable as possible.

The accused persons included in this study all shared the same outcome of the trials: they were all found guilty of the charges and sentenced to death by hanging. They were all examined in the beginning of the period, from 1 March 1692 until 18 May 1692. All the trial proceedings took place before the first execution, that of Bridget Bishop, which was carried out 10 June 1692. Unlike the accused in the later trials, they would, consequently, not yet have been aware of executions actually being carried out.

Their backgrounds are to some extent similar, as they were all members of the Salem Village community; however, there were considerable social differences between them. Some of them were landowners, such as Bridget Bishop, Martha Cory and George Jacobs Sr, and some more than others had connections to the church, such as Martha Cory. Their ages range from around forty up to seventy. All were or had been married, and all except the youngest defendant, John Willard, had lived in Salem for a long time.

Bridget Bishop, Martha Cory and Susannah Martin were all women in their sixties. All of them had a reasonably solid social position: Bishop owned a house, Martin stood to inherit land and Cory held a respected position in the church. At the same time, all three had also caused some moral indignation in the community: Bishop's house was a centre of late-night activity, while Cory, like the somewhat younger Sarah Osborn, had entered a second marriage in circumstances that attracted disapproval (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 193- 194). Martin had been accused of witchcraft before, which would have made her an easy target for witchcraft accusations.

The two men included in the study differ from each other both in age and background.

George Jacobs Sr. was a well-to-do farmer in his seventies, who had lived 33 years in Salem. John Willard, on the other hand, was a man of around forty and a relative newcomer to the village. He was the only one of the accused to have held a position of official authority: as a constable, his task had been to collect the accused for their examinations, and he was accused after refusing to continue this. His trial, on 18 May, took place three weeks before the first execution.

Citations from the dialogues are taken from the edition of Rosenthal *et al*, printed in 2009. In order to facilitate reference, the utterances by the accused have been marked with bold type. Bold type has also been used to mark actions by the accused that are reported by the scribe, such as laughter and other types of paralinguistic behaviour.

5.2. The case studies

5.2.1. Case study 1: Sarah Osborn

Sarah Osborn was about 50 years old when she was one of the first three women to be accused of witchcraft in Salem. According to Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: 193), Sarah Osborne married Robert Prince, a Salem Villager who some years before had purchased a 150-acre farm next to John Putnam, his sister's husband. Robert Prince died in 1674, and left his land in trust to his wife with the stipulation that it would be given to their two sons when they came to age (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 193). Soon after her bereavement, Sarah Prince brought the hired man Alexander Osborne, a young Irish immigrant whose indenture she had purchased for a small amount of money, into the community. Certain rumours existed, stating that she had cohabitated with Alexander Osborne who eventually became her much younger second husband.

According to Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: 194), Sarah and Alexander Osborne began the process of gaining full and permanent legal control of the Prince lands after becoming husband and wife, in direct defiance of Robert Prince's will. It may seem that Sarah Osborn's fate becomes clearer as one starts to understand how she must have been viewed in the Village. The crucial issue seems not to have been the cohabitation before marriage with Alexander Osborne, but rather the way she and her second husband had threatened the established pattern of land tenure and inheritance. One may assume that this situation contributed in upsetting the social norms of the village and that it was a contributing factor in

her being accused by the Putnam family member. When the accusations of witchcraft came, it was not Alexander Osborne, the outsider, who was accused, but Sarah herself, the insider who had betrayed her own sons and, in the process, the structure of the Village itself (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 194).

Sarah Osborn was found guilty of the charges of witchcraft and was to be hanged in May 1692, however, she died in prison before the execution (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 193). The beginning of her examination is recorded as follows:

- (1) Sarah Osburn her examination
(H) What evil spirit have you familiarity with (O) **none**
(H) Have you made no contract with the devill (O) **I no I never saw the devill in my life** (H) Why doe you hurt these children (O) **I doe not hurt them** (H) who doe you imploy then to hurt them (O) **I imploy no body.**

Sarah Osborn's utterances in the first excerpt seem to be calm and neutral. She states that she does not have anything to do with any evil spirit or any contract with the devil. The magistrate's questions indicate that he assumes that she is guilty.

Further on in her examination Sarah Osborn is asked about her connection to Sarah Good, another of the first three accused women:

- (2) (H) What familiarity have you with Sarah good (O) **none I have not seen her these 2 years.** (H) where did you see her then (O) **one day agoing to Town**
(H) What communications had you with her (O) **I had none, only how do you doe or so I did not know her by name** (H) what did you call her then, **Osburn made a stand at that at last said shee called her Sarah** (H) Sarah good saith that it was you that hurt the children, (O) **I doe not know that the devil goes about in my likenes to doe any hurt**

Sarah Osborn claims she has not seen Sarah Good for a long time. She also informs the magistrate that she had seen Sarah Good one day and that she had greeted her in a politely manner. Sarah Osborn is here informed that Sarah Good had put the blame of the afflictions onto her. This does not seem to make the defendant angry or frustrated, and she does not accuse any other individuals for the crime.

While her answers have generally been short and neutral, there seems to be an element

of slight sarcasm when she shifts the blame and states that she does not know that the devil goes around in her likeness. This may be seen as a way for her to save her self-face.

While Osborn does not accuse others, she volunteers information about witchcraft, suggesting that she herself was a victim:

- (3) mr Harthon desired all thes children to stand up and looke upon her and see if they did know her. which they all did and every one of them said that this was the woman that did afflict them and that they had constantly seen her in the very habit that shee was now in three evidience do stand that shee said this morning that shee was more likely to be bewitched then that shee was a witch.
mr Harthon asked her what made her say so; **shee answered that shee was frighted one time in her sleep and either saw or dreamed that shee saw a thing like and indian all black which did pinch her in her neck and pulled her by the back part of her head to the dore of the house**

This excerpt, which presents Sarah Osborn's dialogue in reported speech, contains the first reference in the trials to spectral evidence. There is also a reference to a voice, which Osborn claims had told her not to go to Sabbath meetings anymore.

- (4) (H) did you never see anything else
(O) **no.** it was said by some in the meeting house that shee had said that shee would never believe that lying spirit any more.
(H) what lying spirit is this hath the devil ever deceived you and bee false to you
(O) **I doe not know the devill I never did see him** (H) what lying spirit was it then
(O) **it was a voice that I thought I heard** (H) what did it propound to you.
(O) **that I should go no more to meeting but I said I would and did goe the next sabbath day** (H) were you never tempted further (O) **no** (H) why did you yeild thus far to the devil as never to goe to meeting since.
(O) **alas I have been sike and not able to goe** her housband and others said that shee had not been at meeting thes yeare and two months.

Being a woman of a Puritan community, Osborn seems to be well aware of the importance of conforming to the normal religious behaviour expected of the village people, and uses the spectral evidence to provide an excuse for her absence from church. She claimed that she had attended the next Sabbath meeting despite the voice; however, it then becomes evident, through the statement of 'her husband and others', that she had not been to meetings for a

long time. To save her face, Osborn then resorts to blaming her sickness for her not attending meetings. This explanation, which clearly has the character of a lame excuse, may be assumed to have had a very negative effect on the impact of Osborn's story of the spectral visitation: given the general assumption of guilt, she would come across as a liar.

Osborn's dialogue is in general simple and direct. She does not use any impolite wording and her attitude in general seems neutral and unaggressive. At the same time, she gives no signs of deference, nor does she use politeness phrases or respectful address terms, as several of the other defendants do; however, this may simply reflect the recording strategy of the scribe. Again, unlike most of the other defendants, Osborn uses a cooperative strategy up to a point: she cooperates with the magistrate by telling them about what she has experienced, and in fact provides them with much material for the remaining trials in her introduction of spectral evidence. However, she then attempts, unsuccessfully, to strengthen her own positive face by using the evidence to show herself in a good light, rather than using it to avert responsibility, which was the successful strategy chosen by Tituba (Kahlas-Tarkka 2012: 4).

5.2.2. Case study 2: Martha Cory

Martha Cory was probably born in the 1620s, making her the oldest of the accused people discussed in this study. She had been married to a man named Rich before her marriage to Giles Cory. She held a respectable position in the village church and she was seen to be a pious, intelligent woman. Complaints were lodged against Martha Cory on 19 March 1692 for afflicting Ann Putnam, Sr., Ann Jr., Mercy Lewis, Abigail Williams and Elizabeth Hubbard. The accusations against Martha Cory started the first new case since the examinations of Sarah Good, Sarah Osborn and Tituba on 1 March 1692.

Unlike them, Martha Cory was a church member and therefore a member of the religious elite in Massachusetts Bay. All witchcraft charges were serious, but the charge against a member of the church was the most serious yet. Martha Cory was examined on 21 March. According to Rosenthal (1993: 59), she had a strategy to outwit the accusers. Her plan included the matter of clothing and something she had learned from the questioning of Tituba on 1 March 1692. Apparently, Tituba had problems describing the woman she claimed had afflicted her, and the question rested on the woman's clothing. Eventually Tituba invented a wardrobe for the spectre, which remained unidentified. Martha Cory's plan was to illustrate

that Ann Putnam's claim of affliction by the spectre of Martha Cory was not credible if the clothing worn by the spectre did not match the clothing worn by Martha Cory (Rosenthal 1993: 59).

The question about the spectre's clothing would eventually become a difficult one to explain for Martha Cory. At the magistrate Hathorne's intense questioning about how she could know about the clothing, she resorted to trusting in her husband Giles Cory by stating 'My husband told me the others told' (SWP I: 249). In his testimony, Giles Cory did not include any charges against his wife. However, neither did his testimony improve his wife's situation. For instance, he stated that he had had difficulty praying until his wife had come to him, and that the week before an ox had lain down and would not get up; also, a cat had apparently died, and his wife had told him to knock it on the head, which he did not do, and the cat got better. Finally, he stated that he had seen his wife kneeling down as if to pray, but no sound could be heard. To him, this report of their various activities was trivial, however, in the context in which he delivered his narration, it was not helpful to their case (SWP I: 259-60).

Martha Cory was excommunicated from the village church on September 14. Her husband Giles Cory was executed by pressing to death on 19 September and Martha was hanged on the twenty-second the same month. Kahlas-Tarkka (2012), notes that the accusation of Martha Cory indicated a change in the repertoire of the people accused, since Cory had become a valued member of the village church, despite her illegitimate son with Giles Cory before their marriage (Kahlas-Tarkka, 2012: 10). In her examination, Martha Cory demonstrated that she was determined to defend her innocence. The beginning of her examination is recorded as follows:

(5) **Pray give med leave to goe ('goe' written over 'give') to prayer**

This request was made sundry times

We did not send for you to go to prayer

But tell me why you hurt these?

I am an innocent person: I never had to do with Witchcraft since I was born. I am a Gosple Woman

Do not you see these complain of you

The Lord open the eyes of the Magistrates & Ministers: the Lord show his power to discover the guilty.

.....

We must not believe all that these distracted children say

Mt Hathorne. You are now in the hands of Authority tell me now why you hurt these persons
Martha Kory. **I do not.**
Who doth?

The very first question illustrates clearly that in the trials in Salem in 1692 the magistrates generally assumed from the beginning that the accused was guilty. The magistrate does not ask whether the defendant did in fact hurt the accusers.

In the first part of Martha Cory's examination one can see that the defendant chooses the strategy of denying having any part in what she is accused of. Immediately after her denial of guilt, she makes a reference to her pious life by asking permission to go to prayer several times. She also calls herself a 'Gospie woman' indicating that she cannot have had anything to do with witchcraft. One might say that asking to go to prayer right in the middle of an examination could be seen as arrogant considering the context. Martha Cory's next utterance 'The Lord open they eyes of the Magistrates & Ministers: the Lord show his power to discover the guilty', is also daring. She questions the integrity and wisdom of the judges with the statement that God should 'open the eyes of the Magistrates & Ministers'. By questioning the Magistrates & Ministers she is insulting them, as they represent both religious and legal power in this context.

Martha Cory does not have much power. She is an elderly woman, on trial for witchcraft and much further down on the social ladder compared to the magistrates. At the same time she is a church-woman, and she therefore has a position in the community that gives her a somewhat better starting point than that of some of the other defendants. This is possibly why her behaviour is markedly different from that of Sarah Osborn, who was merely trying to evade responsibility; from the beginning of her trial, Martha Cory attempts to take the lead.

Cory describes the accusers as 'distracted' and implies that their testimony therefore cannot be relied upon. By stating that the accusers are 'distracted', she moves the focus away from her own situation, and places herself in a more powerful position, taking on a protective or understanding attitude when she says 'we must not believe distracted persons', a point she keeps repeating:

- (6) If you expect mercy of God, you must look for it in Gods way by confession
 Do you think to find mercy by aggravating your sins
A true thing
 Look for it then in Gods way
So I do
 Give glory to god & confess then
But I cannot confess
 Do not you see how these afflicted do charge you
We must not believe distracted persons
 Who do you improve to hurt them
I improved none

Martha Cory's answers are pertinent and sober throughout, not, and she denies her guilt consistently throughout the examination. She makes an effort to save her own face by presenting herself in a very straightforward manner. However, unlike Sarah Osborn's, her dialogue suggest an assertive, even somewhat aggressive tone. When pressed, she ends up asking counter-questions:

- (7) 3. or 4. sober witnesses confirm'd it
What can I do many rise up against me
 Why confess
So I would if I were guilty
 Here are sober persons what do you say to them
 You are a Gosple woman, will you lye
 Abigail cryed out next Sab: is sacrament day, but she shall not come there
 Kory **I do not care**
 You charge these children with distraction: it is a note of distraction when persons vary in a minute, but these fix upon you, this is not ye manner of distraction -
When all are against me w' can I help it
 Now tell me y' truth will you, why did you say that the Magistrates & Ministers eyes were blinded you you would open them
She laught & denyed it

Normally the magistrates and judges are the ones who ask questions to the defendants. In the cases, the defendants ask questions to the magistrates, questions are generally rhetorical and counter-questions. According to Quirk, *et al.* (1972: 401), rhetorical questions function as forceful statements.

Hiltunen (1996: 28), states that it is a typical feature that these types of questions do not appear in the beginning of an examination, but rather towards the end. He further states that these types of questions only appear in the speech of accused persons who deny the accusations of witchcraft; those who confess do not use these types of questions (see p.71). In Martha Cory's examination, there are as many as eight occurrences of rhetorical questions. The use of counter- and rhetorical questions adds to the picture of a strong and confident person, whom Hiltunen (1996: 29), describes as opinionated, outspoken but not too popular in Salem Village.

Another notable feature of Martha Cory's behaviour is her laughter, which appear in example (3), and at several other occasions during her examination:

- (8) What do you say to all these things that are apparent
If you will all go hang me how can I help it.
 Were you to serve the Devil ten years tell how many
She laught
 The Children cryed there was a yellow bird with her
 When Mr Hathorn askt her about it **she laught**
 When her hands were at liberty the afflicted persons were pincht
 Why do not you tell how the Devil comes in your shapes & hurts these, you said you would
How can I know how
 Why did you say you would show us
She laught again

In the transcript, Martha Cory's laughter appears rather arrogant; while this may reflect the scribe's intentions in portraying her, her answers do not give an impression of nervousness. It may also give an indication that Cory felt confident she would not be found guilty, since in her eyes the accusations were absurd. At the same time, given the power relationship between her and the magistrate her laughing can also be seen as a very dangerous thing to do. In addition, her actions are not preserving her self-face, as she is unable to establish common ground with the magistrate.

- (9) Who is your God
The God that made me
 Who is that God
The God that made me

What is his name

Jehovah

Do you know any other name

God Almighty

Doth he tell you that you pray to that he is God Almighty

Who to I worship but ye God yt made

How many Gods are there

One

How many persons

Theree

(Examination of Martha Cory, recorder Parris)

Here, as long as asked simple questions, Cory gives clear, determined answers. She pays attention to the magistrate's face by not offending him or not answering his questions, and to her own face by not insulting the magistrate. However, her answers are cooperative only as long as the questions are straightforward; this changes as soon as the questioner tries to insinuate that she is engaged in witchcraft, as with the question 'doth he tell you that you pray to that he is God Almighty?' suggesting that she, perhaps, might be praying to the devil. Her defence reaction here is to use a rhetorical question.

Cory's use of rhetorical questions seems to have two main functions: firstly, they are used to question the logic of the trial and, secondly, they act as a means to persuade the others that she is innocent. Her use of questions may thus be seen as a pleading for fair treatment:

(5) **What can I do many rise up against me
When all are against me wt can I help it**

Martha Cory is, on the whole, not cooperating in her answers when accused. It is clear that she thinks the whole procedure is irrelevant from her point of view and she laughs openly several times. Her strategy is consistently confident, although at some points she gets frustrated as she feels that she is not being heard or believed. Her examination is one of the longest in the Salem Witchcraft records, which may suggest that, given her background and personality, it was not entirely easy for the magistrates to condemn her. At the same time, her refusal to cooperate would, under the circumstances, have sealed her fate.

5.2.3. Case study 3: Bridget Bishop

Bridget Bishop, born ca 1632 in England, was the first person executed for witchcraft during the Salem witch trials. Bishop had been married three times. She had earlier been accused of bewitching her second husband, Thomas Oliver, to death, but she had been acquitted of the charges for lack of evidence (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 192).

Bishop was accused of bewitching five young women in Salem Village. In addition to these five, there were also other persons who came forward and accused her of witchcraft. Among other charges, she was accused of bewitching the child of one Samuel Shattuck and of striking his son with a spade. Shattuck also stated that Bishop had asked him to dye lace which apparently was too small to be used on anything but a poppet, a type of doll used in spell-casting. A 42-year old man named Samuel Gray testified against Bishop on May 30, 1692. He claimed that, fourteen years earlier, Bishop had turned up in his room during the night. After she left the room, his child had become very unsettled. A few months after Bishop's visit, the child, who had always been a healthy child, died (Rosenthal 1993: 57).

Two more men came forward as well and testified against Bishop. One of them, 36-year old William Stacy, stated that, fourteen years ago, Bridget Bishop had provided him with help and comfort during his smallpox attack. He further stated that he had done some work for her and the three pence that he received for the job had disappeared when he left her house. On 2 June 1692, 32-year old John Louder claimed that, seven or eight years earlier, he had awakened in the night with a great weight on his chest. When he had looked up, he had seen Bridget Bishop or her shape sitting on his stomach. He further stated that he had tried to get her away, but that she had put her hands on his throat, choking him, and he had lacked the strength to free himself (Rosenthal 1993: 58).

Bridget Bishop was found guilty of the charges laid against her on June 2, 1692 and was executed by hanging on June 10, 1692. The beginning of her examination is recorded as follows:

- (10) As soon as she came near all fell into fits
Bridget Byshop, You are now brought before Authority to give acc of what
witchcrafts you are conversant in
I take all this people (turning her head & eyes about) to witness that I am clear.
Hath this woman hurt you speaking to ye afflicted.
Eliz: Hubbard, Ann Putnam, Abigail Williams, & Mercy Lewes affirmed she had hurt
them.

You are here accused by 4. or. 5. for hurting them, what do you say to it?

I never saw these people before; nor I never was in this place before.

Mary Walcott sais that her brother Jonathan stroke her apperance & she saw that he had tore her coat in striking, & she heard it tare.

Upon some search in the Court, a rent that seems to answee what was alledged was found.

When Bridget Bishop enters the courtroom the magistrate explains to her that she is brought before authority to explain about the witchcrafts she was involved in. As usual, there is no question of whether she is guilty or not. Bridget Bishop answers clearly and straightforwardly that she has nothing to do with the charges made against her.

Her utterance seems to be neutral and she gives a simple statement of her innocence of the matter. The magistrate continues by stating that three or four people have accused her of witchcraft. Bishop restates her innocence and distances herself from the charges by stating 'I never was in this place before'.

Bishop was then presented with the accusation that she has bewitched her first husband to death:

(11) They say you bewicht your first husband to death.

If it please your worship I know nothing of it.

She shake her head & the afflicted were tortured.

The like again upon the motion of her head.

Sam: Braybrook affirmed that she told him to day that she had been accounted a Witch these .10. years, but she was no Witch, the Devil cannot hurt her.

I am no Witch.

Here, she is utilising the nominal address term 'your worship'. This may be interpreted that she is concerned with preserving the magistrate's face by addressing him respectfully and politely. She seems to wish to appear to be an amicable and polite person; at the same time, she is firm in denying her guilt. She continues to answer questions in what appear from the record to be a calm and firm way, when confronted with further accusations, including that of having written in 'a book':

(12) Why if you have not wrote in the book, yet tell me how far you have gone? Have you not to do with familiar Spirits?

I have no familiarity with the Devil.

How is it then, that your appearance doth hurt these?

I am innocent.

This is most likely a reference to the 'Black Book', in which those who have covenanted with the Devil have signed their names (see page 18). The aim of a suspected witch would, then, be to get more people to sign the book and to covenant with the Devil (see page 18).

The record of Bishop's examination, taken down by Samuel Parris, shows very clearly the participation of the audience: it is full of references to the reactions of the afflicted at her body movements. The magistrate, in fact, confronts her with this, suggesting that she is practicing witchcraft in front of them by moving her body:

- (13) Why you seem to act Witchcraft before us, by the motion of your body, which influence upon the afflicted.
I know nothing of it. I am innocent to a Witch. I know not what a Witch is.
How do you know then that you are not a witch?
I do not know what you say.
How can you know, you are no Witch, & yet not know what a Witch it:
I am clear: if I were any such person you should know it.
You may threaten, but you can do no more than you are permitted.
I am innocent of a Witch.
What do you say of those murders you are charged with?
I hope, I am not guilty of Murder.

Here, as throughout the examination, Bishop rejects firmly any connection to the charges. She does not, in general, discuss any of the charges, but simply repeats her innocence. When questions are phrased in a more complicated manner, she gets into trouble, and cannot cope with the logical argument of the magistrate: 'how can you know, you are no witch, & yet not know what a Witch is'. This particular exchange very clearly shows the social inequality of the situation, as the questioner is employing the logic of an educated person, which will only confuse an unlearned person already overwhelmed by the situation.

Bishop responds by trying to appeal to the magistrate's presumed knowledge of her innocence, by claiming that if she were a witch, the magistrate would know it. This declarative speech act annoys the magistrate and the perlocutionary effect of her last utterance is that the magistrate now claims that she threatened them, which he seemingly takes to be an

insult. She is now in a highly uncomfortable position, which gets worse as the magistrate manages to catch her in a lie:

- (14) **Then she turned up her eyes, & the eyes of the afflicted were turned up**
It may be you do not know, that any have confessed to day, who have been examined before you, that they are Witches.
No, I know nothing of it.
John Hutchinson & John Hews in open Court affirmed that they had told her
Why look you, you are taken now in a flat lye.
I did not hear them.

Here, Bishop is asked whether she knows about earlier confessions the same day and, presumably in a state of nervousness, determined to deny everything, claims that she does not. When confronted with the testimony of two people who claim to have told her reply to the magistrate is that she did not hear them. As in the case of Sarah Osborn in a similar situation (see p. 48) her reply must now have had the character of a feeble excuse, and she is clearly exposed as a liar.

Throughout her examination, Bridget Bishop answers the questions she is asked in a straightforward, polite manner, without entering into discussion or volunteering information. Her strategy seems to be to protect her self-face and the magistrate's face by speaking in a polite manner, and by avoiding face-threatening acts, such as insults towards the magistrate and other people present in the room. However, when intimidated by logic and trapped into lying, she gets confused and ends up making statements that offend or irritate the magistrate, thus clearly damaging her case.

5.2.4. Case study 4: Susannah Martin

Susannah Martin was a sixty-seven-year-old widow from Amesbury and Salisbury. She was accused of witchcraft twice, the first time in 1669, when she was not found guilty, and the second time in Salem, where she was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging for witchcraft on July 19, 1692 (Karlsen 1987: 262). During the examination and trial, fifteen of Martin's neighbours accused her of afflicting them through her spectre, by pinching them or

causing their farm animals to die. Her husband, George Martin, had fought the first charges of witchcraft. He countered the charges of witchcraft with slander suits. Susannah Martin was acquitted of the charges, but her reputations as a witch seems to have continued despite the results in court. ⁶

While battling the charges of witchcraft, Susannah and her husband were involved in a series of legal battles relating to her inheritance. According to Karlsen (1987: 262), there is a correlation between witchcraft accusations and local women of Salem standing to inherit property. The record of Susannah Martin's trial begins as follows:

(15) The Examination of Susan: Martin. 2.May 1692

As soon as she came in many had fits.

Do you know this Woman

Aibg: -(Williams) saith it is Goody Martin she hath hurt me often.

Others by fits were hindered from speaking.

Eliz:Hubbard said she hath not been hurt by her.

John Indian said he hath not seen her

Mercy Lewes pointed to her & fell into a little fit.

Ann Putnam threw her Glove in a fit at her

The examinant laught.

What do you laugh at it?

Well I may at such folly.

Is this folly? The hurt of these persons?

I never hurt man woman or child.

Mercy Lewes cried out she hath hurt me a great many times, & pulls me down

Then Martin laught againe

Susannah Martin begins her examination with laughter at the evidence and accusations presented to her. The situation that Martin is in, a trial session, is a very serious one. There is a very distinct power division in the courtroom with the magistrate holding immense power and defendant, Susannah Martin, who has no real power in the situation. However, it appears that she herself believes that she is not totally powerless, as she undoubtedly believes that she has a strong case. The laughter at the beginning of her examination would certainly seem to suggest that she is of that belief. The likely perlocutionary effect of the laughter would, however, be that the magistrate gets annoyed and feels insulted. The discrepancy between

⁶ <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/people?group.num=G01&mbio.num=mb17>.

Martin's behaviour and the realities of the courtroom seems to suggest that her perception of the situation differs critically from that of the magistrate.

Similarly, Martin's linguistic choices show that she does not attend to her own face, she is not friendly or polite, and her actions do not in any way serve to make the magistrates look at her in a positive light. Her answers to the questions are considerably more aggressive than those of any of the other defendants considered so far:

- (16) What ails this people?
I do not know.
But wt do you think?
I do not desier to spend my judgmt upon it.
Do not you think they are bewicht?
No, I do not think they are?

In the following passage Martin insinuates that the girls may be involved in black magic and that they may be in league with the Devil:

- (17) Tell me your thoughts about them.
Why my thoughts are my own, when they are in, but when they are out they are anothers.
You said their Master - Who do you think is their Master?
If they be dealing in the black art, you may know as well as I.
Well what have you done towards this?
Nothing.
Why it is you, or your appearance.
I cannot help it.
That may be your Master
I desire to lead my self according to the will of God, word of God.
Is this according to Gods work?
If I were such a person I would tell you the truth

Martin does not give in to the magistrate's questioning strategy, which once again clearly reflects the belief that the accused is guilty, but unwilling to confess. The Salem magistrates believed that the accused knew more than they were willing to admit to, therefore the magistrates assumed that any who did not give them the answers they wanted, or who resisted to inform them about the truth, were lying or being 'uncooperative' (Archer 2002: 20). Martin

is certainly showing herself uncooperative; at the same time, she is quite outspoken and often colourful in her expression:

- (18) Pray God discover you, if you be guilty.
Amen. Amen. A false tongue w ^{<ill >} never make a guilty person.
You have been a long time coming to the Court to day, you can come fast enough in the night. Said Mercy Lewes
No sweet heart, said the Examinant
And then Mercy Lewes, & all, or many of the rest, were afflicted
John Indian fell into a violent fit, & said it was that womand, she bites, she bites, <&> then sh<e> was
biting her lips
Have you not compassion for these afflicted
No, I have none
(104. Examination of Susannah Martin, recorder Parris, draft copy)

Here, she uses witty proverbial expressions and shows that she cannot be intimidated into false confession, something that must have been irritating to the magistrate. She also illustrates that she is confident and not afraid of being outspoken and straightforward.

Regarding the pronominal address term 'Sweet heart' used by Martin, Kahlas-Tarkka (2012: 12), suggests that she 'takes the liberty to address her examiner as 'sweetheart'. However, it seems more likely from the context that the term is meant to address the accusers, not the examinant. If this is the case, then Martin is not here insulting the magistrate, but rather practising a positive politeness strategy where the aim is to save positive face by demonstrating closeness and solidarity. The term 'Sweet heart' is a term that one may find being used in the Early Modern period between parents and children and between relatives and friends as a term of endearment.⁷ Also, if an older person addresses a younger 'sweet heart' it can be seen as a way to create good ambiance, friendship and closeness. Susannah Martin, by addressing the accusers, who were mainly young girls, with this term, may be trying to establish a friendly atmosphere.

At the same time, her attitude seems generally rather sarcastic, she makes fun of religious discourse by stating '*Amen, amen. A false tongue will never make a guilty person*'. This strategy is clearly not a wise one to take, as mocking religion in a courtroom in Salem Village, in a society in which religion is very important, is unlikely to have been looked upon

⁷ (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/sweetheart, accessed 03.05.2013).⁷

positively by the magistrates. In this context, her friendly address to Mercy Lewes may also have had a sarcastic undertone.

One might wonder whether Susannah Martin considered the possibility that things might not work out the way she would want them. She was a confident woman with, experience in life, and had survived an earlier accusation; she may have found it hard to believe that she could be found guilty of the crimes of which she was accused. Her examination took place on 2 May 1692, which was very early in the trial processes; she could therefore have had no clear idea of the danger she was in, or realize how badly her discourse strategy would work against her.

5.2.5 Case study 5: George Jacobs Sr.

George Jacobs Sr. was arrested on May 10, 1692, together with his granddaughter Margaret Jacobs. His primary accuser was Sarah Churchill, a servant in his home. She, like Margaret Jacobs, had been accused of witchcraft and, in her confession, she accused others. Margaret Jacobs also accused her grandfather, among others who had already been accused, in order to save her life.

Several women accused Jacobs'spectre of beating them with his walking stick and conducting other kinds of physical abuse.⁸

The Puritans believed that witches and wizards had proof of their connection with the Devil on their bodies (see p.14). Jacobs was examined by Dr George Herrick, who found a 'witch's teat' on his right shoulder. Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: 77), suggest that this feature, combined with the spectral evidence, led the magistrates to believe they had a strong case. George Jacobs Sr.'s examination is not very long. He is generally firm in his answers, and does not charge other people. He does, however, exhibit some degree of sarcasm, which might have insulted the magistrates. The record of George Jacobs' trial begins as follows:

- (19) Here are them that accuse you of acts of witchcraft.
Well. let vs hear who are they, & what are they.
Abigail Williams - **(Jacobs laught).**
Because I am falsely accused - Your worships all of you do you think this is true?
Nay: what do you think?

⁸ <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/people?group.num=G01&mbio.num=mb13>, accessed 08.04.2013.

I never did it.

Who did it?

Don't ask me.

Why should we not ask you? Sarah Churchwell accuseth you, there she is.

I am as innocent as the child born to night, I have lived .33. yeares here in Salem.

Of all defendants, Jacobs adopts the most active and assertive strategy at the outset of his trial; rather than acting as a defendant, he addresses the magistrates boldly and, in fact, seems to turn the interrogation around the other way, assuming the role of questioner. He manages, in fact, to elicit an answer from the magistrate, Stoughton, before the latter takes the lead back by another counter-question: 'nay: what do you think?'

The act of laughing can be seen as a speech act and the perlocutionary effect of this speech act is undoubtedly insulting from the magistrate's point of view. By laughing, Jacobs does not think about preserving the magistrate's face, rather he looks after himself by showing contempt towards what has been said against him. Jacobs himself indicates that he laughs because the accusations are false and ridiculous.

Magistrates in the Salem seem to have adopted an 'unwilling' reality paradigm, denying defendants as guilty but unwilling to confess (Archer 2002: 20). Jacobs' laughter might have been seen as highly arrogant. The magistrate Stoughton would certainly have found the laughter contemptuous, in combination with Jacobs' show of confidence.

Jacobs' question whether those present believed the allegations against him was presumably in part meant as a rhetorical question, intended to bring out the absurdity of the situation. Stoughton's reply 'Nay, what do you think?', is probably also not to be interpreted as an answer to the question, but an indication that it was not Jacobs' place to ask questions, but to answer them. Jacobs is then asked to identify who was responsible for afflicting the children, to which Jacobs gave the clear answer 'Don't ask me'. This blunt answer seems to annoy Stoughton who replies by asking why they should not ask him, since Sarah Churchwell, who was present, accused him of the crime. Immediately after that, Jacobs seems to have realised that his bluntness was not a good strategy, and reaffirmed his innocence by stating that he had lived 33 years in Salem and that he is as innocent as a newborn child. The mention of how many years he has lived in Salem indicates that Jacobs believes that if he were in fact a wizard, it would have been discovered many years before.

Jacobs continues, however, to address the magistrate in a confident way:

(20) What then?

If you can prove that I am guilty, I will lye under it.

(...)

Pray do not accuse me, I am as clear as your Worships; You must do right judgment

(...)

In excerpt (7), George Jacobs Sr. chooses a risky strategy when he openly questions the Court's ability to make the right judgement by giving advice on how it should proceed and in whom it should believe. He does this by utilising the speech act category of directives, using both imperative and modal verb constructions: 'Pray do not accuse me, I am as clear as your Worships; You must do right judgement'. Both the imperative and the directive modal speech act verb 'must' make the speech acts into commands (Cutting 2008:15).

One might assume that Jacobs did not intentionally want to come across as commanding the magistrates into doing anything; rather, the illocutionary force here more likely that of a request and a plea that they look at the case from his point of view. This is suggested by the fact that while trying to manage and move the case his way, he is also attempting to pay attention to the magistrate's positive face by addressing him with the polite and respectful 'Your Worships'. When addressing the magistrate with this term, Jacobs is also protecting his own face by being respectful towards the magistrate who in return hopefully will make the magistrate look at him in a positive way. The perlocutionary of the directives is, however, likely to have been counterproductive: while the assertive speech style would have been natural for Jacobs as a wealthy farmer and patriarch in his family, it does not suit the situation in the court room.

Jacobs continues in the same vein, with frequent counter-questions and humorous turns of phrase:

(21) Look there, she accuseth you to your face, she chargeth you that you hurt her twice. Is it not true?

It is not true? What would you have me say? I never wronged no man in word nor deed.

Here are 3. evidences.

You tax me for a Wizard, you may as well tax me for a Buzard. I have done no harm.

Unlike Susannah Martin, Jacobs shows no contempt against the magistrates or accusers; however, he still argues against the magistrates and the accusations made against them. His utterances differ considerably from those of all the female accused, in that he seems to address the magistrates very freely, take initiatives and at times steer the conversation, even when his arguments clearly fall on deaf ears:

(22) Is it no harm to afflict these?

I never did it.

But how comes it to be in your appearance?

The Devil can take any likeness.

Not without their consent.

Please your worship it is untrue, I never showed the book, I am as silly about these things, as the child born last night.

That is your saying, you argue you have lived so long, but what then Cain might live long before he killed Abel, & you might live long before the Devil had so prevailed on you.

(...)

You had as good confesse (said Sarah Churcwell) if you are guilty.

Have you heard that I have any Witchcraft?

Jacobs, like Martha Cory, uses a very large number of counter questions, something that agrees with his general display of confidence. While he is generally forthcoming in terms of speaking, he is not very cooperative, as he does not admit to any of the accusations. Also he does not volunteer to accuse another person, even though the magistrates have pushed hard for the accused to give the names of their accomplices. One could also say that he is not cooperative in the sense of following the expected rules.

According to Grice's (1975), Cooperative Principle, an interlocutor's task is to make their conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, with the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged. In his examination, Jacobs follows established conventions regarding address terms and he uses the term 'Your worships' when talking directly to the magistrates. However, his strategy otherwise does not fit the expectations of the courtroom: he takes the initiative in the discourse, questions the magistrate's wisdom and uses directives formed as commands. There is no reason to assume that this would have reflected a conscious arrogance; however, it may

have reflected a miscalculation of the seriousness of the situation. It seems, in fact, that Jacobs was confident that he would be exonerated, and therefore said in court: 'If you can prove that I am guilty, I will lye under it' .

5.2.6 Case study 6: John Willard

Little is known about the early life of John Willard, born around 1672. He was hanged on Gallows Hill, Salem on August 19. At the time of the first allegations of witchcraft, Willard was serving as a constable in the village of Salem and his duties included bringing the accused before the court. However, as time went on, he started to doubt the truth of the accusations, and in May 1692 he refused to make any more arrests.

According to Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: 195), John Willard married Margaret Knight of Salem Village some time before 1690 (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 195). Willard's origin, like that of many of the other accused witches, was unclear. He was an outsider to Salem Village as well as a newcomer to the Wilkins family, a large and self-contained family, of which his wife was a distant relative. Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974: 195), suggest that the story of John Willard can only be understood in relation to the Wilkins family.

The Wilkins family became involved in land-transactions, which were successful to start with. However, certain disputes changed the situation for the worse. While not entirely impoverished, the Wilkins family found itself in relatively modest circumstances and turned their interest in the maintenance of Salem Village as a stable agricultural community. The family provided substantial support to the Village and later also became strongly involved in the Salem Village church (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1974: 197). Margaret Knight's decision to marry an outsider had profound psychological ramifications for this tight-knit and economically marginal family. She was the first to choose a spouse who was not from Salem Village and her family were uneasy regarding her marriage to John Willard, who also became interested in land speculation as well as farming. In March 1690 he bought a large area from George Corwin, which he later divided up and sold portions of.

In 1692, ten members of the Wilkins family and several girls from the village accused Willard of witchcraft. Shortly after the accusations, but before Willard was arrested, seventeen year-old Daniel Wilkins experienced a mysterious affliction from which he died

shortly after. At about the same time, Bray Wilkins was struck by urinary problems. John Willard was blamed for both of these afflictions. Not long after, Ann Putnam Sr., accused Willard of having murdered thirteen Salem Villagers during his brief residence in the community (Boyer and Nissenbaum 1074: 198).

Willard was first accused of witchcraft by Ann Putnam Jr, who claimed that Willard not only tormented her, but that he had also beaten her baby sister to death. Fearing accusations, Willard tried to approach his wife's grandfather, Bray Wilkins, an influential church member, for help; however, he was not successful in contacting Wilkins. Later, this led Wilkins to believe that Willard was upset with him and had bewitched him, since he had suffered physical pains and illnesses after the contact attempt. Other unfortunate incidents further led to further accusations of witchcraft against John Willard, who, however, maintained his innocence until the end.⁹

John Willard's situation is somewhat different from the others, in that the prosecution has an official reason, in addition to the witchcraft charges, to call Willard in for questioning. At the beginning of the examination the magistrate refers to John Willard having fled from the authority, and thus acknowledging guilt to the charges. If in fact Willard had fled, then in addition to the accusations of witchcraft, he was also called in to answer to a charge for this:

- (23) Here is a returne of the warrant that you were fled from Authority that is an acknowledgement of guilt, but yet notwithstanding this we require you to confesse the truth in this matter.
I shall, as I hope, I shall be assisted by the Lord of Heaven, & for my going away I was affrighted & I thought by my withdrawing it might be better; I fear but the Lord in his due time will make me as white as snow.
What do you say? Why do you hurt them, it is you or your appearance?
I know nothing of appearance.

The magistrate starts his examination of John Willard with a statement where he basically requests John Willard to confess to his crimes. By asking a direct question, the magistrate is utilising a directive speech act, where he commanding John Willard to confess to the truth.

In this opening sequence there is not an opening question, but rather a simple assumption that the accused is guilty. In Willard's reply, one can observe that he does not give a straightforward answer. Instead he opts out to avoid saying something that was not

⁹ ⁹ <http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/people?group.num=G01&mbio.num=mb34>, accessed 08.04.2013).

socially acceptable in that situation. Since the setting is a courtroom, the examinees, attempting to save their face, could choose not to participate in the exchange simply in order to avoid saying something that could destroy their face. In this situation, John Willard chooses to opt out by giving the information sought by the magistrate. To save his face, he avoids the question and instead gives a reference to God and a metaphor where God will make him white as snow. The effect of this avoidance is, however, to elicit a new question, presumably a somewhat exasperated one: 'What do you say?' As Willard answers straightforwardly that he knows nothing about any appearances, the questioner does not let go:

- (24) They charge you, it is you or your appearance.
I know nothing of appearance, & the God of Heaven will clear me
Well, they charge you not only with this but with dreadful murders, & I doubt not if you be guilty, God will not suffer evidence to be wanting.

Willard now gives consistent, sober replies to the magistrate's utterances. He makes repeated references to God, and one might assume that he might have tried to protect his own face by showing the magistrate that he was a man of devotion and a firm believer in God. Willard is not insulting in the way he speaks, and therefore also protects the magistrate's face:

- (25) If you desire mercy from God, then confesse & give glory to God.
Sr as for sins I am guilty of if the Minister askt me I am ready to confess.
If you have thus revolted from God you are a dreadfull sinner

The magistrate's first sentence in excerpt 12 is a conditional speech act in which he states that if John Willard confesses to the charges made against him he will receive mercy from God. A confession would also show the magistrates that the accused distanced themselves from their allegiance with Satan (see page 18). Although the desired perlocutionary effect of the magistrate's conditional speech act was that the accused would confess, this did not happen. Instead Willard responds using another conditional speech act with 'If', which can be a way for him to protect his self-face. Although he did not explicitly state that he was innocent, it

was implied by the conditional response. Willard's response to the magistrate's conditional sentence is rather fearless and it is further implied that, if he was to confess, it would result from the magistrate's request and it would not be the truth.

As with many of the accused, Willard's body movements were perceived as threatening or harmful:

- (26) Open your mouth, don't bite your lips
I will stand with my mouth open, or I will keep it shut, I will stand any how, if you will tell me how
An: Putnam testimony read.
Do you hear this evidence read?
Yes I do hear it

Here, the accusers are asking him to open his mouth and to not bite his lips as this apparently made them also bite their lips. In this situation Willard's reply may, be seen as sarcastic and could be intended to avoid damaging his self-face and prevent possible consequences that could be damaging for his case.

In general, Willard seems to want the rest of the public to see him in a positive light, and not as one who has been accused of witchcraft:

- (27) What do you say to this murdering and bewitching you relations?
One would think (said he) that no creature except they belong to their cradle would be guilty of such things.
You say you would bewitch your Grand-father because you, or your appearance saith he prays that the Kingdom of Satan my be thrown down.
He offered large talk.
We do not send for you to preach

Here, John Willard does not give a straight answer. Instead of directly telling the magistrate the he did not murder and bewitch his relations, he implied such a refusal by making an impersonal statement, where he used the impersonal, generic pronoun 'one', the negated generic noun 'no creature', and the irrealis modal 'would' (Chaemsaitong 2009: 71). One might say that the accused implied the refusal in order to protect his self-face as he felt the question was potentially face-damaging. What exactly is meant with the 'large talk' referred to by the

scribe is not entirely clear; however, the phrase usually refers to some kind of boasting, and the questioner's reaction, 'we do not send for you to preach' implies that Willard here engaged in some kind of defensive monologue, perhaps with a strongly religious content. That some kind of boasting was involved is suggested by the following dialogue:

- (28) You had much need to boast of your affections
There are a great many lyes told, I would desire my wife might be called
Peter Prescot testified that he with his own mouth told him of his beating his wife
He urged Aaron Wey to speak

Willard often resorts to indirect, evasive answers that he presents confidently and assertively. He has used clever wordings where he has given indirect, opting-out answers to the questions he was asked. In (15) the magistrate makes a comment to Willard and, instead of responding, he asks for his wife, in the form of an indirect request.

He also shows his knowledge of the witchcraft trials:

- (29) Susan: Sheldon said there is the black man whispering in her ear, & he should not confesse
What do you say to this?
I heard nothing nor see any thing.
Susan: Sheldon tryed to come to him, but fell down immediately.
What is the reason she cannot come near you?
They cannot come near any that are accused.

Here, the accuser Susan Sheldon is trying to get closer to Willard, which seems to be impossible for her to do. The magistrate demands Willard to tell him why it is so. In his answer, he does indicate that he knows something about the processes, namely that it is not possible for afflicted to come near people who are accused of witchcraft.

In the Salem witch trials, it was a common test of witchcraft to check whether the accused were able to recite the Lord's prayer. If they did not, it was a sign that they were guilty of the charges (Rosenthal 2009: 33). Willard is asked if he is able to pray the Lord's prayer.

(30) Can you pray the Lord's prayer?

Yes

Let us hear you.

He stumbled at the threshold & said Maker of Heaven & earth

He began again & mist

It is a strange thing, I can say it at another time. I think I am bewitched as well as they, & laught

Willard does not manage to recite the prayer despite many attempts. While his inability to recite may have been caused by sheer nervousness, the magistrates would clearly interpret the difficulties he was having as signs of witchcraft, which certainly did not help in his defence. Willard, now clearly frustrated at the situation, tries to explain why he could not do it and also laughs. The act of laughing must be seen as a sign of nervousness. However, the magistrates may not have taken it that way. Willard also attempts to explain his inability to recite the prayer by stating that he must also be bewitched, since, according to himself, he is normally quite capable of reciting the prayer without any problems. The magistrates now try to make him confess:

(31) Well say what you will confesse

I am as innocent as the child unborne.

Do not you see God will not suffer you to pray to him? Are not you sensible of it?

Why it is a strange thing?

No it is no strange thing that God will not suffer a Wizard to pray to him. There is also the jury of Inquest that will bear hard against you - therefore confesse. Have you never wisht harm to your neighbours?

No never since I had a being.

Well confesse & give glory to God, take counsell whilst it is offered

I desire to take good counsell, but if it was the last time I was to speak, I am innocent

Willard tries to protect his own face by comparing himself to an innocent child. However, at this stage he is clearly extremely nervous, and, for the only time in his examination, answers a question from the magistrate with a question. At this point, his confidence seems to be turning to defiance, and he still refuses to confess.

Throughout his examination, Willard speaks freely and reasonably confidently, and

attempts to protect both his face and the face of the magistrate. He only resorts to face threatening acts when he feels severely threatened, at the end, when he laughs and answers a question with a question after failing the test of reciting the Lord's prayer. However, he is often evasive in his responses, something that may signal a certain lack of self-confidence; he may also be verging on the pompous at times, and his 'large talk' would, presumably, not have been a good defence strategy under the circumstances.

6. Discussion

The case studies show that there are many similarities between the examinations of the six defendants; however, there are also some notable differences. If the studies are viewed from the point of view of the suggestion of Rissanen and Kahlas-Tarkka that cooperativeness was the main element in a successful defence at Salem, it is clear that only one of the defendants, Sarah Osborn, can be said to show any signs of active cooperativeness. Her description of a spectral visitation implies an acceptance of the conditions of her examination: the presence of witchcraft. However, as she refuses to admit to witchcraft herself, and fails to counter the accusation of absence from Sabbath meetings, her cooperativeness is not enough to save her.

The other five defendants are cooperative only to the extent that they submit to examination and answer the questions posed; none of them admit to any guilt, or provide information about others. Bridget Bishop is the one who offers least information, basically following the strategy of denying everything; at the same time, she is also the least confrontational. The remaining four, however, mark clearly, in various ways, their refusal to accept the conditions of the trial. Their dialogue suggests that their evaluation of the situation differs markedly from that of the magistrates, and they therefore tend to select strategies that lead to perlocutionary effects that are not intended.

The six studies also show that there are several clear patterns of communicative behaviour and argumentation that emerge in the material. In the following, these patterns are referred to as strategies. The term strategy may here refer to the use of particular patterns of behaviour, choices of topic or the use of particular types of speech act. Three strategies in particular stand out in the material, and are discussed in turn: questioning the magistrate, laughing and sarcasm, and appeals to God and a Christian life.

Finally, the case studies have highlighted various issues to do with power relations in

the courtroom, including gender roles. These will be discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

6.1. Questioning the magistrates

In the Salem witch trials, the magistrates carried out the questioning with the assumption that there were witches in the village (Hiltunen 1996). In a questioning situation such as the one in the Salem village trials, the prosecution had absolute authority and control of the situation. The power relationship is further heightened by the fact that the defendants did not have proper defence, no one to speak for them but themselves.

It is clear from the examination records that the magistrates also tended to assume that each defendant was guilty before he or she was convicted. This can be seen in the opening sequences of most examinations here considered, where the first question asked by the magistrate entails a predisposition towards the accused (cf Hiltunen 1996:24). For example, the first question Bridget Bishop is asked in her examination is: 'What evil spirits have you familiarity with'.

As the trials proceed, however, some of the defendants ask questions also. As questions demand action from the addressee, they are always face-threatening; they may therefore be problematic in a situation where deference is expected. Rhetorical and counter-questions are the most typical type of question used by the defendants; however, direct questions also occur, although rarely. Hiltunen (1996:28) has pointed out that rhetorical questions only appear in the examination of those denying the accusations of witchcraft, while those who confess to witchcraft do not use these types of questions.

Hiltunen (1996: 31), states that counter-questions are not acceptable unless they are uttered by a speaker with greater social power than the addressee. If a speaker who has less social power than their hearers answer a question with a question, one may very well interpret that as a challenge to the authority of the latter.

Of all the defendants here considered, Martha Cory is the one who uses questions most often in her defence. According to Hiltunen (1996:29), she was a personage in Salem, 'but not too popular a personage; opinionated, outspoken, Martha Cory had the misfortune of being always right, and no one ever forgives that'. In her examination, she does not answer the magistrate when he asks her about who, if not her, was carrying out the actions for which she was accused. Instead, she follows with a counter-question strategy by making several requests

to be allowed to go to prayer. Replying in such a way may have displeased the magistrates, perhaps so much that they considered Martha Cory to be a person too outspoken and too uncooperative.

While most of the defendants' questions are rhetorical, George Jacobs Sr. opens his trial by boldly asking direct questions, and from a moment almost seems to assume control of the situation. Like Martha Cory, George Jacobs Sr., was a strong and determined person. His examination illustrates this: there are no hesitations, vague suggestions, or charges against other persons. He also uses counter-questions in his defence, although without success. Like Martha Cory, George Jacobs Sr. also challenges the court by casting doubt on their judgment of the situation: 'Your worships all of you do you think this is true?'

The types of counter-questions that are presented by Martha Cory and George Jacobs Sr. represent a speech strategy that assumes a degree of power: both defendants are clearly used to being listened to. Both are elderly people who would command a degree of respect outside the courtroom. Here, however, they are of considerably lesser social power than the magistrates and their behaviour would probably have come across as rude and arrogant. Here, there is a very clear discrepancy between the social realities of the courtroom and the situation of Cory and Jacobs: from their point of view. As they do not accept the situation, and find it unrealistic, the logical response to this will, indeed, be to ask questions about it.

Susannah Martin also uses counter-question, although not to such a wide extent as Martha Cory and George Jacobs Sr., Karlson (1987), claims there is a correlation between witchcraft accusations and local women of Salem standing to inherit property. At the same time, Martin's behaviour at court seems to correlate well with the stereotype of the accused witch as a disagreeable old woman. Her answers, like those of Bridget Bishop, tend to focus on distancing herself from the accusations; unlike Cory and Jacobs, she only exceptionally takes initiatives or poses a question.

The strategy of using rhetorical and counter-questions may be seen as the defendant's criticism against the authority and accuracy of the arguments made against them. Considering the situation of the defendants, the occurrence of these types of questions strongly indicate the sense of injustice that the defendants must have felt, which overrides their need to adjust to the situation by showing deference. Therefore it is not surprising that like Martha Cory, George Jacobs Sr. and Susannah Martin produce utterances that would have been interpreted as insults, impoliteness and lack of cooperativeness.

6.2. Laughing and sarcasm

If the use of counter-questions could be seen as arrogant or provocative in the witchcraft trial situation, this is even more the case with laughter. Of the present six cases, four individuals laugh in the courtroom. Their laughter may not, however, always be interpretable in the same way: it is therefore of interest to consider the circumstances in which the laughing occurs.

Martha Cory, Susannah Martin, George Jacobs Sr. and John Willard all have occurrences of laughter recorded in their examinations. Susannah Martin laughs at the evidence and accusations that she is charged with. This happens several times and there may be several reasons to why she would do a thing that would endanger herself. One reason may be that she did not consider the situation she was in a real danger and she must have thought it absolutely unheard of to be found guilty and hanged. She may, in fact, have intended her laughter to demonstrate her innocence, as testimony of her reaction to the absurdity of the witchcraft charges.

The discourses of Susannah Martin and Martha Cory have similarities from this point of view. Like George Jacobs Sr., both make clear that they find the process absurd; in addition, both women show their contempt against the behaviour of the accusers, referring to them as 'distracted persons' and using terms such as 'folly'. All three defendants respond to the accusations by laughter; while this may to some extent be a nervous reaction, the context also suggests that the laughter is an attempt to communicate the surrealism of the situation and thus the defendant's innocence. All three defendants give the impression of being confident and generally intelligent persons, who, unlike Osborn and Bishop, do not allow themselves to be tricked; at the same time, their repeated laughter also seems to indicate that their reading of the courtroom situation was very different from that of the magistrates.

The laughter of John Willard, however, may be interpreted rather differently. Throughout his examination, John Willard has worked hard to defend himself properly. The examination has shown John Willard as a confident and polite man. He does not use counter-questions and sarcasm, but instead uses polite wording and phrases and tries to protect the face of the magistrate. He only laughs at the end of the examination, when asked to recite the Lord's prayer. By this time, he is aware of failing what amounts to a conclusive test of witchcraft, and from the context it is fair to assume that he would have been extremely

nervous about the situation he was in.

Willard's examination took place on May 18, 1692, which was still quite early in the process; however, at this stage he was well aware of all the people who had been examined before him and who were now in prison. The laughter in this situation can only be interpreted as nervous; at the same time, like the laughter of the other defendants, it is recorded by the scribe and would be interpreted as a sign of arrogance by a reader who took his guilt as given or likely from the outset.

6.3. Appeals to God and a Christian life

The Salem Village community was a strict, patriarchal society where religion played an important part in the daily lives of all the village members. Church attendance was mandatory and praying was expected during the day (see page 6). Thus it was not uncommon to receive punishment for not attending church meetings or for not conforming to expected religious behaviour (see page 7). Conversely, the outward maintenance of good Christian practices would mark a person as a respectable member of the community.

The case studies have shown that several of the defendants used references to God and Christian practices in their defence. References to God, and calling on God as a witness, are common throughout the Salem examination documents. For example, Nehemiah Abbot states during his examination: 'No Sir, I say before God, before whom I stand, that I know nothing of witchcraft' (SWP : 49), and Rebecca Nurse says: 'I can say before my Eternal father I am innocent. & God will clear my innocency' (Rosenthal *et al*, 2009: page).

In the trials, the defendants found themselves in a position where they themselves believed they were innocent, but where the magistrates assumed they were guilty (cf Archer 2002:20). Kahlas-Tarkka (2012: 12) suggests that an appeal to God may not only confirm the innocence of a defendant but also be a way to correct any false accusations made by the examiners. Thus, Susannah Martin wants to 'lead herself to the word of God'.

Martha Cory makes several appeals to God. As a well-known church member, it may be assumed that references to God and a Christian life would be a logical part of her defence. In the beginning of the examination, the term 'A Gospel woman' is one she uses to build up the argument that, as a religious person, she would never take part in anything related to witchcraft. Further into the examination the magistrate interrogates her on questions of faith about her religious life, which Cory has no problems answering.

John Willard is, however, the defendant who makes most references to God and

Christian life. In the opening part of his examination, he gives an oration that seems to have been rehearsed beforehand, and which prompts a confused or irritated ‘What do you say?’ from the magistrate: ‘I shall, as I hope, I shall be assisted by the Lord of Heaven... I fear but the Lord in his due time will make me as white as snow’. The ‘large talk’ not reproduced by the scribe (p. 69) may have been religious in content, as he is told not to ‘preach’. Unlike Cory, who is able to answer the questions on faith posed to her, he fails to recite the Lord’s Prayer, something that would have considerably undermined the effect of his religious rhetoric.

6.4. Power-relationships in the Salem trials

Several power-relationships are relevant for a discussion of the Salem witch trial examinations. The power-relationship between the magistrate and the defendant is prominent and may also be seen as self-evident considering the situation. In Salem Village, the trials were held in the village townhouse, and both the magistrates and the accusers were present (see page 13). The power-relationship that existed between the magistrate and the defendant was evident and constant. The magistrate had the authority to ask questions, demand answers and determine the fate of the defendants.

What has become evident when analysing the trial records is that the defendants behaved differently in the courtroom. Some of the defendants showed signs of being confident and strong, such as Martha Cory, Susannah Martin and George Jacobs Sr. (see pages 54, 61 and 64): these defendants spoke confidently, laughed at the examination and also asked questions of the magistrates. The case studies of Sarah Osborn, Bridget Bishop and John Willard (see pages 48-51, 57-61 and 69-7), on the other hand, showed them as far less confident, even though all three show very different strategies in their defence.

Bridget Bishop and Sarah Osborn show certain similarities in their choice of strategy. Neither of them use counter-questions and there are no instances of sarcasm in their examinations. They do not address the magistrate as their equals, as in particular Cory and Jacobs do, but rather focus on evading the accusations as best they can. One may suggest that the two women were similar in personality types and the strategies they adhered to during the trial.

For all types of personalities, the situation in the courtroom was, of course, the same. They were all forced to adhere to the set rules of conduct in the courtroom and the existing

power-situation. The defendants did not have any legal counsel present during the trial and were not allowed to have anyone give them good references. The physical layout of the courtroom and the magistrate's physical placement in the room (see p. 16) would have contributed to making the power-relationship uneven. However, this is also the situation of today's courts, where one can observe similar physical conditions.

However, in the trial situation there was also another type of power-relationship present, which was far less self-evident, and which broke radically with the established power structure. This was the power-relationship that came to exist between the accusers, the 'afflicted' in Salem Village and the accused. To understand this, one must look at the situation of the people involved before the witchcraft accusations started.

The accused witches shared certain similarities to start with. They were typically older women and men, outspoken, relatively poor and not popular in the village (Hiltunen 1996: 29). Some of them did, however, have a position in the Salem Village community as church members. One example of this is Martha Cory, who was a respected member of the church before she was accused of witchcraft (see page 18). Most of the accused here studied had a position of some status or power, even if modest: Osborn, Bishop and Martin all either owned land or stood to inherit some; Jacobs was an established farmer, and Willard had had a position of authority as a constable.

On the other side, there were the girls who accused women and men of witchcraft. These young women were daughters and servants who occupied the lower ranks of household hierarchies, and their normal role was to be seen and not heard, to look after other people's needs, and to do all tasks required of them. The afflicted girls were not used to be listened to or to have anyone be interested in what they had to say. However, when they put forward their accusations, people were suddenly interested in what they had to say and their opinions and thoughts mattered.

According to Norton (2002:10), the young women who instigated the Salem witchcraft outbreak were the sort of people who were commonly given short shrift by the high-status men who served as magistrates in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Incidentally, the lower-status men who sat on grand jury and petty juries also usually paid little attention to complaints registered by youthful females. The feeling of being listened to and being important must have led the girls to feel powerful and important, which may be the essence of the power-relationship between the accusing girls and the accused witches and wizards.

In Norton (2002:10) the historian Jane Kamensky claims that the young women turned their society and the courtroom 'topsy-turvy', assuming roles denied to young women under

normal circumstances (Kamensky 1998), cited in Norton 2002:10). They were suddenly in a situation where they held seemingly unlimited power over a large group of older women and men, a grandfather and a constable, some church members, who, simply in them being older were used to being showed some respect, especially from younger people. It might be suggested that it was, in particular, this situation that led to the confusion of power roles that seems evident in most of the examinations here considered.

Some of the defendants, most notably Martha Cory and George Jacobs Sr., were clearly used to speaking with some authority and being listened to. The situation which met them in the courtroom turned upside down their ordinary experience: their word was being contrasted to that of the young girls, and the latter were believed. Cory, Martin and Jacobs Sr., all show an initial attitude of contempt towards their accusers, and at least some of their laughter is directed at their 'folly'. This is particularly clear in the opening of Jacobs' case:

- (19) Here are them that accuse you of acts of witchcraft.
Well. let vs hear who are they, & what are they.
Abigail Williams - (**Jacobs laught**).

Jacobs here tries to appeal to the common sense of the magistrates with the question 'Your worships all of you do you think this is true?' It seems likely that the reversed power relationship is the main reason why these self-confident and intelligent defendants seem to read the situation so badly and present themselves in an arrogant way that is only likely to harm their cause. In comparison, Sarah Osborn and Bridget Bishop, who come across as far less commanding personalities, clearly show a better adjustment to the seriousness of the situation. Their cooperative and polite strategies are, however, not, enough, as they refuse to admit guilt.

In a small sample of people studied, it is difficult to draw conclusions about which factors, apart from individual personality, might have governed their behaviour. It may, however, be noted that the main factor that seems to play a role in the assertiveness and confidence displayed by the defendants is age: both of the youngest defendants, Sarah Osborn and John Willard, are relatively unassertive, while Martha Cory and George Jacobs Sr. seem to behave with the confidence of seniority. There is no doubt that gender plays a role as well: it is notable that both Jacobs and Willard are much more willing to hold the floor, the latter

even to 'preach', while the women generally confine themselves to answering questions.

All the six defendants had a solid, if not grand, position in the community, which defined their relationship to others. For these defendants, it was not an option to confess to the witchcraft charges. To confess to witchcraft would have entailed giving up their position in the community, and would have been unthinkable at least at the stage where the executions had not yet started. The situation was not the same for Tituba, the slave in the Parris household (Kahlas-Tarkka 2012: 4). As mentioned previously, Tituba was one of the first three women to be accused of witchcraft (see p. 12). Being a slave, her background and social status were in complete contrast to the cases studied in this thesis. According to Kahlas-Tarkka (2012: 3), Tituba did not have a model for a successful strategy, since it was a well-known fact that witchcraft was a deadly crime in the Puritan and Christian belief. Therefore, one may assume that she was insecure as to how to behave as an accused person and also to how she was supposed to act. Perhaps her situation, being a slave and not having many options available to her, made her confess to the crime. If she did not have much to lose, she may have thought that it would be better to provide the magistrates with the information they wanted.

In the examination, Tituba followed the examiner's lead without trying to change its direction and without making any aggressive statements (Kahlas-Tarkka 2012: 4). However, she also attempted to move the blame away from herself by accusing others instead, such as the devil; however, she does not give names to any of the ones she blames.

It is possible that some of the six accused, such as Sarah Osborn, might have confessed if she had had the benefit of hindsight; during the later stage of the Salem Trials, the accused were increasingly resorting to this way of saving their lives. At the earliest stage, however, admitting to witchcraft was still mainly an option available only to those, like Tituba, who had nothing to lose and who were not confronted with a demeaning power reversal in the courtroom. The six accused did at no point in their examinations assume any guilt and this may be attributed to their personalities and positions in the Salem Village society.

7.0 Conclusion

The present study set out to examine the pragmatic strategies of four women and two men in the Salem Witch trials. These men and women were chosen on the basis of their examination

records and the presence of direct speech in the dialogues. In addition, the accused were chosen from the early period of the trials; Osborn, who was examined on 1 March 1692, was one of the first to be examined in the trials and the other five were examined within the month of May 1692. The six defendants chosen for this study were all found guilty of the charges of witchcraft and hanged, except Sarah Osborn, who died in prison before her execution.

The trial records of the defendants have illustrated that the accused chose different pragmatic strategies in their defences; however, one main thing they did have in common was that all of them denied having anything to do with the witchcraft charges. The study has shown two very different kinds of pragmatic strategies in the material. Martha Cory, Susannah Martin and George Jacobs Sr., showed themselves as being confident, and assertive characters. In their examinations, they used counter-questions, and all three laughed at what was happening in the court room. It was suggested in the previous section that this behaviour was to a large extent triggered by the reversed power relationships in the courtroom, which may have made the defendants underestimate the seriousness of the situation. The defendants did not see their questions and laughter as inappropriate in that particular context, even though they would have appeared so for the magistrates, especially when entered into the examination records.

The matter of cooperativeness was a vital issue for a defendant in the Salem Witch trials. Earlier studies have shown that cooperating with the magistrates were immensely important for the outcome of the court-case (see p. 78). The defendants in this study however, did not cooperate the way the magistrates would want them to, by giving confessions to the crimes they were charged with. A confession would have made them avoid execution, as the records have shown that those who confessed to the charges of witchcraft, were not hanged (see page 2). Regarding this, one must keep in mind that the time from when the arrests took place, until the last person was examined (June 1692), did not leave time for this study's defendants to achieve the necessary information, as no one had actually been hanged.

The defendants did cooperate in varying degrees, as they did provide answers to the magistrate's questions. Osborn is the only one of the six who volunteered information connecting to witchcraft, and thus openly accepted the premise that dark powers were involved. Bishop, Osborn and Willard were polite in their answers, they did not use counter-questions or show any signs of sarcasm; while Willard, did laugh, the context suggests that he laughed because he was nervous for not being able to recite the Lord's prayer. In addition, several instances of face-saving strategies have been pointed at, relating to saving the faces of the magistrates and those of the defendants themselves.

The case studies also show that, religion was not just a part of everyday life for the Salem villagers, but it was also used as a strategy in the defence of the defendants. Most of the case studies contain references to God and a Christian life, which have been interpreted to mean that the defendants have tried to use their connection with religion as an evidence of them not being able to have anything to do with witchcraft. The co-existence of witchcraft and a Christian life was not possible, therefore the defendants claimed their connection with God and their participation in everyday religious life in Salem Village.

The issues of gender and social background were looked at in this study. What has emerged as a pattern is that the older the defendants were, the more confident and assertive were they in their examination and defence strategy; from this limited sample, it may also be concluded that the males were much more likely to take initiatives and volunteer talk, while women simply answered questions.

In the end, of course, the pragmatic strategies of the defendants were not successful. Assertiveness and confidence did not work for the defendants who chose that strategy; politeness and humble behaviour did not work either. It is clear that the only strategy that would have worked for the defendants in this study is that of confession, which was chosen by many of the accused who were charged later. Unfortunately for Osborn, Bishop, Cory, Martin, Jacobs Sr. and Willard, there seems to be a very clear difference in the outcome of those accused early in the process, before the execution of Bridget Bishop on 10 June 1692; to those accused later. What becomes evident for those accused in the later period is that there is a way to avoid execution, and that is to confess to the charges of witchcraft. After studying the records, there is a clear pattern of confession to avoid execution, which must have become known to the public, since later so many confessed instead of denying the charges. It is also possible that, at the later stage, the reversed power-structure between the accusers and the accused would no longer have had the devastating effect on the defendants' self-face that comes out especially in the trials of Martha Cory and George Jacobs Sr.

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