

# **If it Weighs as Much as a Duck, it's Made of Wood, and Therefore a Witch**

**Direct and Indirect Accusations of Witchcraft in Depositions of  
the Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692**

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The material for this thesis comes from the original depositions that have survived from the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692. The aim of the thesis is to show that the depositions contain both direct and indirect accusations of witchcraft, analyse how these are realised in the source material, and discuss trends emerging from them.

The theory part of the thesis discusses how what we say is not always what we mean, and proves that there is a credible base to determine some accusations as direct and others as indirect. Main tools used are Grice's Maxims and the Cooperative Principle, the concept of implicature, and Searle's Speech acts.

The analysis of the material shows that there are several different ways to make direct and indirect accusations in the depositions, that gender has more bearing on the accusers than the accused, and that young women are both more likely to give depositions, and also directly accuse individuals of witchcraft. In the scope of the work it was found that an accused individual was more likely to survive the crisis if a) all or b) none of the accusations made against them contained direct accusations of witchcraft.

**KEYWORDS:**

witchcraft, witch, Salem, witchcraft crisis 1692, witchcraft trials, historical trial documents, depositions, accusations, direct accusations, indirect accusations, implicature, speech acts, cooperative principle

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# 1. Introduction

In the classic Monty Python film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (1975) there is a scene where villagers want to burn a suspected witch, and ask permission to do so from a local knight, sir Bedevere. When sir Bedevere questions the villagers, it becomes clear that the main reasons they think the woman in question is a witch are that she is dressed as one (they dressed her), she has a long nose (a false one, put on her by the villagers), a wart (possibly genuine), and that she turned one of the villagers into a newt (he got better). Sir Bedevere is not convinced by this and proceeds with a lesson on how one can scientifically recognise a witch. This process takes a while and establishes that because you burn witches, they are in fact made of wood, and because wood floats and ducks also float, there is an obvious way to find out if she is in fact made of wood (with side suggestions to build a bridge out of her or throw her into the pond rejected right out).

Bedevere: “So, logically?”

Villager: “If... she... weighs... the same as a duck... she’s made of wood?”

Bedevere: “And therefore?”

Villager: “A witch!”

The villagers immediately haul both the woman and a duck onto a huge pair of scales, and when the scales even out, the joyous crowd starts yelling “Burn the witch!” and even the suspected witch comments “It’s a fair cop.”, before the scene shifts.

One might simply dismiss this as a silly scene in a parody film, but it does highlight two different types of accusing someone of being a witch (in exaggerated format, of course), both of which can be found in actual historical witchcraft documents. Appearance, physical deformities, unusual or rude behaviour, and suspected acts of malice are often at the forefront of many witchcraft suspicions, and often a direct accusation such as “I believe that my neighbour is a witch!” is made, with perhaps some further explanation offered as to the basis of such an accusation. But this is not always the case. There is also another, more indirect, way of accusing someone of being a witch, without ever directly making such a claim. One in which the erstwhile accuser gives an account of the suspected witch’s

interactions or doings, mishaps that have befallen the accuser or their family, or general unusual goings on, with the expectation that others can follow the reasoning behind it and draw the correct (witch) conclusion on their own. And while the Monty Python sketch is obviously a hilarious over exaggeration of this, many examples of actual indirect historical witchcraft accusations are impossible for a modern reader to understand as such, if they are looked at by themselves without context. It is precisely these kinds of direct and indirect accusations of witchcraft in the records of the 1692 Salem witchcraft crisis that are the subject of this thesis.

In 1692 the township of Salem, Massachusetts and its surroundings found itself in the middle of a witchcraft crisis, one that has later become one of the most well-known such events in history. What began as a trickle soon turned into a flood of accusations, trials, and executions. While, contrary to popular belief and popular media, no-one was actually burned at the stake, 19 people met their fates at the end of the hangman's noose, and one was even pressed to death (Thurston 2001: 117). In a paradoxical twist, most of those who confessed got off with a slap on the wrist, while those refusing to confess to any sort of witchcraft or consorting with the devil were more likely to be sentenced to death than exonerated.

Much of what was known and understood of witches during this time came from the magnum opus of witchcraft, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, first published in 1486, which "presented the witch stereotype in a complete and well-organized fashion (Thurston 2001: 51). It also made sure to condemn women for their carnal lust towards the Devil (Thurston 2001: 52). Levack (1995: 55) points out that the effect of the *Malleus* on the witch-hunts cannot easily be determined, though it did inform inquisitors and magistrates of the crime of witchcraft and possibly increased belief in such crimes.

During the early modern witch-hunts, the word witchcraft was used to refer to two different types of practice, often called *maleficium* and *diabolism* (Levack 1995: 9). Of these maleficium was "the performance of harmful deeds by means of some sort of extraordinary, mysterious, occult, preternatural or supernatural power" (Levack 1995: 4), whereas the latter "concerned the relationship that existed between the witch and the Devil" (Levack 1995: 8). In other words, maleficium was more down-to-earth everyday kind of witchcraft, and as such more likely to be the cause of witchcraft accusations among

common, uneducated people, who were much more interested in the misfortunes thought to be the work of their neighbours than anything diabolical (Levack 1995: 10). Both of these types were understood as to be included in the term 'witchcraft', with the presence of one often signalling the other, but not necessitating it (Levack 1995: 9), so that one could occur without the other or in conjunction with it. Both of these can be found in the Salem documents.

Some common witch beliefs of the time were the idea of the witch's power coming from the Devil (Levack 1995: 29) and the witch making a specific pact with the Devil in order to gain those powers (Levack 1995: 35). This was often attributed to the women being slaves to their lust, and entering into such a pact due to sexual temptation (Levack 1995: 137-138). Other familiar activities connected to witchcraft were the witches' Sabbath, where the witches congregated in an orgy with their own kind (Levack 1995: 38), and to which the witch in question of course transported herself by flying (Levack 1955: 44). In Salem, as in other witch-hunts, the focus of witchcraft accusations, at least in the beginning, was firmly balanced toward maleficium, as the depositions often described everyday occurrences and hardships befalling the deponents and their families, and not of people flying, taking part in Devil worship, or congregating in witches' Sabbaths, as we will see in the analysis portion of the thesis. This is not to say that no diabolical occurrences were reported, but they were fewer in number and presented themselves later on during the crisis when the presence of witches was proved beyond a doubt by the confessions of many of the accused. As the witchcraft trials proceeded, it was apparent that an accused witch could avoid execution by actually confessing to being a witch, which obviously seemed like a good idea to many (Thurston 2001: 104). The downside of course being that when accused individuals start confessing in numbers, the community has ample reason to believe that the witchcraft crisis is real, leading to more and more accusations. One case in which diabolism was especially present was that of George Burroughs, an unlikely victim of witchcraft accusations to begin with, considering that he was a minister and thus in most witch-hunts would have been above all suspicion. But in Salem, not only was George Burroughs accused and convicted of witchcraft, he was deemed to be the ringleader of the local witches, as can be seen from example 1 below.



- (1) soe I told him my Opinion or feare was, that he was, the Cheife of all the persons accused for witchcraft or the Ring Leader of them -- all, and told him also that I beleived if he was such an one his Master meening the divell had told him before now, what I said of him  
BN-36

It is understandable that if a minister is to be accused of witchcraft, he cannot be a regular run-of-the-mill witch, but by necessity something far more dangerous. According to Levack, one situation where the stereotype of a witch no longer mattered, and even usually unreachable men could be accused, was “when witch-hunts got out of control” (1995:136), which seems to fit the Salem trials. In the analysis in section 5, some examples of common witchcraft activities occurring in the depositions will be discussed.

A good sized body of original documents has survived from the Salem witchcraft trials, consisting of approximately 950 extant records of which about 400 are depositions (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 47–48). The aim of this thesis is to select a suitable sized set of these depositions, and analyse them in regards to the direct and indirect witchcraft accusations made. The thesis aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1) the distribution of direct and indirect accusations in the Salem witchcraft depositions;
- 2) what kinds of trends and constructions can be found in them,
- 3) does the age or gender of the accusers and accused play a role in the directness of the accusations,
- 4) how does the directness of the accusations reflect the outcome of the accusation, i.e. is there a difference between trial outcomes for directly and indirectly accused individuals.

This thesis is divided into six chapters, followed by two appendixes, a brief overview of which is given below. Following this first introductory chapter, the second chapter of this thesis will include the theoretical framework for the classification of direct and indirect accusations, and aims to explain how we say things without actually saying them. It discusses such concepts as Grice’s maxims, meaning, implicature and speech act theory. The third chapter will give a brief outline of other relevant recent research into the Salem witchcraft documents. In chapter four we will go through the process of selecting the source material for the analysis, and the ways in which said material is used and referenced

in this thesis. Analysis of the material takes up chapter five, with detailed discussion of the selected depositions and the direct and indirect witchcraft accusations found in them. Conclusions drawn on the basis of this work are presented in chapter six. Appendix A includes a list of the source material and links to the online version, for the reader's convenience. Appendix B is the Finnish summary of the thesis.

The Salem witchcraft crisis is a fascinating piece of colonial American history, and it is unfortunate that the scope of this work does not bend itself to a more detailed historical discussion of the subject. For a thorough account of the events, Mary Beth Norton's *In the Devil's Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (2002), or Bernard Rosenthal et al. *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (2009) are recommended reading.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

As it is the aim of this thesis to examine the selected depositions for differences in the *directness* or *indirectness* of accusations of witchcraft, analyse such differences and draw conclusions from them, it is necessary to first define what is in fact meant by these terms, in addition to giving a basic explanation of the theoretical framework and concepts utilized in these pursuits.

The source material selection and referencing is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4, but as some examples are needed in this section as well, a short explanation of the referencing is needed. As the source material is selected from the first volume of Boyer & Nissenbaum's 1977 book *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692*, individual depositions are referenced with a suffix of 'BN', followed by an ordinal number. All source material depositions are listed in Appendix A with links to the online version of the book.

### 2.1 Terminology

For the purposes of this work the concept of a *direct* accusation will be used to denote a deposition containing a direct mention of *witchcraft*, *witch*, *wizard*, *conjurer*—including the many different spellings of such—and given as the deponent's own description of the person accused or their conduct, i.e. not as reported speech of someone else. The specific categories will be explained in the analysis portion of this thesis. As opposed to this, an *indirect* accusation will be such that contains no such direct accusation (but may contain such witchcraft words, if they are e.g. reported speech, and not the deponent's own opinions), but as it is given in evidence against an accused witch, can nevertheless be considered to convey their meaning in some other, indirect way. This concept will be examined and demonstrated later on.

## 2.2 Speech Act Theory

Much of *speech act theory* is based firmly on John Searle's work—which he in turn has built upon the theories of his mentor, J.L. Austin—and he continues to be consistently quoted as a source in virtually all later works. This does not mean that his views are universally accepted though, as much of Searle's work is constantly discussed with differing amounts of disagreement, especially concerning his axioms on the relationship between illocutionary forces and the meaning of utterances. As there seems to be no disagreement, as such, on the *existence* of speech acts—and more specifically indirect speech acts—but more on their labelling and categorizing, the resolving of such theories is not necessary for our discussion. For the purposes of the analysis done in this thesis, the acceptance of the existence of *direct* and *indirect speech acts* suffices.

At this junction it seems prudent to point out that most of the reference material used in this section—and indeed in the whole theory chapter—are somewhat older than one might expect, dating from the 1970's onwards. This is a deliberate decision, as the basics of Grice's maxims, the use of implicature, and Searle's speech act theory discussed in this thesis, have not undergone any significant change since their conception. It is also a recurring trend among the writers in question to frequently reference their own earlier work in their later contributions to the cause, and it would seem illogical to quote someone quoting themselves, merely for the sake of getting a more current reference work included in the thesis.

### 2.2.1 What is a Speech Act?

A *speech act* is simply put the act of making an utterance—verbal or written—with the intent to convey some specific meaning (Searle 1972: 44). Meaning is the operative word here, for as Searle puts it: “the sounds or marks one makes in the performance of a speech act are characteristically said to *have meaning*, and a second related difference is that one is characteristically said to *mean something* by those sounds or marks” (Searle 1972: 44; emphasis in the original). There is a marked difference between making a generic sound or a mark, and making an utterance, either verbal or written; one can for example breathe loudly when congested, thus making an apparent sound, but no-one would—or at least should—interpret this as making an utterance. With speech acts—as with so many other

things dealt with in linguistics—intent is everything: if we cough, we are not performing a speech act; unless of course we in fact mean to imply something with our coughing, such as ‘terribly sorry, but you are standing between me and the artificial sweetener and would you mind moving a bit so I can get my I-can’t-believe-it’s-not-sugar fix?’. The same is certainly true of the written word as well; it needs to have an intent to communicate behind it, for it to be understood as a speech act.

### 2.2.2 Indirect Speech Acts

For the purposes of this thesis, the most relevant part of speech act theory is the existence of *indirect speech acts*, with which we can make an utterance, mean what we say and still mean something else as well. Searle (1975:60) gives the example of “Can you reach the salt?”, where the speaker’s intention can be to both *state a question* and also mean for the hearer to give him the salt, i.e. *make a request*. It is the contention of this thesis that the contents of the depositions under examination have the surface meaning of a statement or an accusation, but the illocutionary force is that of an accusation. That is to say that both the examples below have the same intent and function, i.e. witchcraft accusation, even though only the first one explicitly states so.

- (2) Eliz Hubbard. to the Jury of Inquest. that Giles Cory hath several times afflicted [me] with several sorts of torments. I verily think he is a wizard & afflicted me by wichcraft  
(emphasis added)  
BN-61
  
- (3) The deposition of Samuell Smith of Boxford about 25 yers who testifieth and saith that about five years sence I was one night att the house of Isaac Estick sen'r. of Topsfeild and I was as farr as I know to Rude in discourse and the above said Esticks wife said to me I would not have you be so rude in discourse for I might Rue it hereafter and as I was agoeing whom that night about a quarter of a mille from the said Esticks house by a stone wall I Received a little blow on my shoulder with I know not what and the stone wall rattleed very much which affrighted me my horse also was affrighted very much but I cannot give the reson of it.  
BN-76

For those depositions which include a direct statement of the type of ‘I believe such-and-such to be a witch’ seen above, it is easy to categorize them as accusations. But for those

depositions that make no mention of witches or witchcraft, the reader must have more information of the context of the utterance, in order to understand the meaning of it. Or as Searle puts it below.

To be more specific, the apparatus necessary to explain the indirect part of indirect speech acts includes a theory of speech acts, certain general principles of cooperative conversation [...], and mutually shared factual background information of the speaker and the hearer, together with an ability on the part of the hearer to make inferences.

(Searle 1975: 61)

So in order to show how an individual can understand the meaning conveyed with an indirect speech act, we will have to show how meaning, and indirect meaning especially, is conveyed. In the following sections we will discuss how the use of *Grice's maxims* and *the cooperative principle*, combined with the use of *implicature*, explains how we can decipher the secondary meaning (i.e. illocutionary force) of the indirect speech acts in the Salem depositions to be an (witchcraft) accusation. With the concept of the indirect speech act itself, we can at this point term all the depositions under discussion to be accusations, and therefore we can further divide them into direct and indirect accusations, based on how they perform the act of accusation.

## 2.3 Grice, the Cooperative Principle, and the Maxims

In order to say anything at all about the patterns of accusations in the Salem witchcraft depositions, we must first set up some ground rules. For before it is possible to claim e.g. that by saying A the deponent means B, it is imperative to establish the boundaries that govern the deponents' utterances; for this we need to first of all look at Grice's *cooperative Principle* and the related *maxims*.

### 2.3.1 The Cooperative Principle

According to Grice (1993: 26), human conversation is very much dependent on cooperation between the participants: they must to a certain degree be aware of a common purpose or direction in the conversation—if this is not achieved, true communication is

rendered virtually impossible. Thus the Cooperative Principle can be defined as such: “[m]ake your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (Grice 1993: 26). The acceptance of this principle is imperative for the later analysis of the Salem depositions.

### 2.3.2 The Maxims

The maxims working under the cooperative principle can be labeled as *quantity*, *quality*, *relation*, and *manner* (Grice 1993: 26). These categories, according to Grice, include the following maxims:

#### **Quantity:**

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

#### **Quality:**

Supermaxim: Try to make your contribution one that is true.

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

#### **Relation:**

Supermaxim: Be relevant.

#### **Manner:**

Supermaxim: Be perspicuous.

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).

(abbreviated from Grice 1993: 26-27)

As Grice points out (1993: 27), not all of these maxims are at an equal footing when it comes to adhering to the cooperative principle; one can e.g. flout the quantity maxim more

easily than the quality maxim, and without incurring the same level of disapproval. But up to a certain point, they are all necessary to achieve successful communication. But are they present in the Salem documents?

- (4) The Testimony of Joseph fowler, who Testifieth that Goodman Bibber & his wife, Lived at my house, and I did observe and take notice, that Goodwife Bibber was a woman, who was very idle in her calling And very much given to tatling & tale Bareing makeing mischeif amongst her neighbors, and very much given to speak bad words and would call her husband bad names & was a woman of a very turbulent unruly spirit  
BN-01
- (5) The deposition of eelizzebeth Wellman aged forty five testifieth and saith that she saw Sarah Cole the wif of John Cole the Cooper liveing in the [house] of him goin [on a] in a plaine wood in august past and she had cast the scirt of her garment over her neck, and she saw a black thing of a considerable bigness goe by her sid and as soon as Sarah Cole came against a tree that lay upon the ground This black thing was gon and be sene no more and Sarah Cole going a little further turnd hir, face out to me she Claspt hir hands together and swong them twice overe hir head was gon and I could se hir no more and when I came to the place whare she toock hir Flite I lookt for hir but could not se hir. further saith not  
BN-52

At a first glance, the two examples above appear to flagrantly disregard the maxims of quantity, relation and manner, when considered in relation to their function as witchcraft accusations. Neither example appears to be informative enough, relevant, or unambiguous. Why would it be deemed proper to include the assertions that goodwife Bibber is a lazy gossip or that Sarah Cole was seen in the woods with some black thing in official documents? It is my contention that the maxims are in fact observed through the previously discussed *indirect speech acts* and something called *implicature*. For if the audience can clearly and easily understand what is being said or implied, is the utterance not then by definition perspicuous, no matter what it *appears* to be? Another example of an apparent conflict with the maxim of relation can be seen in the sentence “some of the Cattle would Come out of the woods w'th their touniges hanging out of their mouths in a strange & affrighting manner, & many such things” (BN-38), for what possible relevance could it have to a serious legal discourse? In this instance as well, the utterance is in fact relevant—and thus observing the maxim—as long as the participants understand it to be such, which



is a condition assumed to be true in this thesis. Implicature will be discussed later in section 2.5, but first more on the cooperative principle and the maxims.

### **2.3.3 How it All Comes Together in the Depositions**

Both the cooperative principle and the maxims of quantity, quality, relation, and manner are imperative for the analysis portion of this thesis; after accepting the validity of Grice's theorems dealt with in the previous sections, we can then make a further assertion stating that in the Salem witchcraft crisis, the deponents are trying—to the best of their abilities—to follow the cooperative principle and the maxims. For if we allow for the inherent property of (successful) human conversation to be based on these maxims, we must conclude that the deponents in question are in fact cooperating with the overall conversational situation, i.e. an official investigation into accusations of witchcraft. We must also take into account the fact that at the time and place in question, any person taking part in a witchcraft trial must by necessity try as much as possible to 'play by the rules' so as not to risk a change in status from witness to accused. It is safe to say that people in general do not wish to incur the wrath of any official body with the power to not only make their lives difficult, but in fact end them altogether. This is—to a degree at least—true of modern legal proceedings, and most certainly applies to the time frame of the Salem witchcraft crisis; the court was undoubtedly subjected to significantly less peer review, the community was relatively closed-off and free exchange of information was nowhere near the level we enjoy today, thus guaranteeing that individuals falling out of favour with the law, no matter how unjustly, had very little recourse available to them. When taking into account the fact that the nature of the crisis was such that the individuals connected to it—in whatever capacity—were very much in danger of finding themselves on the bad side of the 'smoking cauldron' so to speak, if they did not carefully toe the line, we can without a doubt state that the deponents were most certainly attempting to cooperate as much as possible.

If we add to this the sincere belief in both witchcraft and the power to harm others with it—mainly people who had done the accused witch some real or perceived wrong—prevalent at the time (Levack 1995: 4), the deponents find themselves in an unattainable position; on one hand, if they anger the magistrates or other deponents, they face the possibility of being accused of witchcraft themselves, and on the other hand, if they accuse

someone of being a witch, then the witch in question can use their craft to rain vengeance upon them. In other words, the deponents would have been highly motivated to both try to please the magistrates, i.e. say what they wanted to hear, and at the same time attempt to avoid angering the accused, in case she/he truly was a witch and could thus avenge herself/himself upon them.

One could of course argue that giving a deposition accusing someone of witchcraft would necessarily anger the alleged witch, but there are ways with which to minimize such exposure and at the very least to leave a loop-hole through which to shift blame, mainly through carefully avoiding *directly* accusing someone of witchcraft. When faced with an accused and perhaps acquitted witch, it might be beneficial to be able to make the distinction between saying *you tormented me* or *you or your appearance tormented me*, and between *you are a witch* and *I believe you to be a witch*. If the accused person is not a witch, it means the deponent has not as directly accused an innocent person. And if the accused person is in fact a witch, it might make them less likely to use their otherworldly powers for revenge.

## 2.4 Meaning

The whole concept of meaning can be boiled down to the infuriatingly simple statement of “[t]o know what people mean, you have to interpret what they say” (Mey 1994: 100). This seemingly self-apparent idea is the basic building block utilized in all of the analysis done in this thesis, in one form or another. We might like to think—and often do—that we understand what people mean, because we understand what they say, i.e. we distinguish the words used and know their meaning when strung together, but, whether conscious or not, the act of successfully communicating and receiving meaning is a lot more complicated than that. Meaning is no simple matter, and interpretation of all of the information surrounding utterances is paramount to receiving it.

According to Searle “[t]he simplest cases of meaning are those in which the speaker utters a sentence and means exactly and literally what he says” (Searle 1975: 59), which is significant in the sense that most of the following analysis of the Salem witchcraft depositions aims to show that the deponents making indirect accusations did not mean

“exactly and literally” what they said. Or, perhaps more accurately, they did not mean *only* that which was said. The notion that “the speaker’s utterance meaning and the sentence meaning come apart in various ways” (Searle 1975: 59) is clearly evident in the following example.

- (6) The Deposition of William Baker Aged 36 years Saith: About 10 years Ago: I living with my Master Rust: There was a Barrill of strong beer brewed & the Day it was Brewed Rachell Clinton came there, & was with sum small Thing: But what it was I can not tell: & the Day morning the Bere was put in to the Berrill: & that day said Rachell went bakwords and forrowords, 6 or 7 times: up & Dow the lane that Leds to our house & Did not com in to the house that Day: & that night following: hannah Rust: went Downe to see whether the Bere worked or no: & Puld out the tape & could find no Bere in the Barrel: neither was there any appearance of wet upon the flouer: and presently after we fild the Barril with worter and it was in a night and Day and Did not Leke any of it out as we could see And after that we our folke Brued another Barrel of Bere and put it in the sam Barrill & it Did not Leke tall after that And further Saieth not:  
BN-48

In the example deposition what is said is not exactly what is meant, in terms of it being highly unlikely that when brought forward to a court of law to give evidence in a witchcraft trial the witness would simply complain extensively about the troubles with his barrel, segue for a while to Rachel Clenton doing the Texas Two-Step in the yard, and mean nothing more than simply what he said. It would seem safe to contend that Searle’s class of cases where a speaker means what he says, but also imbues more meaning into his words (Searle 1975: 59), is very much in evidence here.

These kinds of indirect speech acts are extremely relevant to our discussion and analysis, as in the depositions there is a clear and continuing pattern of saying something and meaning something else, but in such a manner that does not in any way negate the actual sentence meaning. This kind of meaning is heavily dependant on a shared understanding of the situational context of the utterance, as Searle states:

In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer. (Searle 1975: 61).

More so it is vital for both parties to imbue joint meaning to the used phrases and concepts.

- (7) & some of the Cattle would Come out of the woods w'th their tounges hanging out of their mouths in a strange & affright-ing manner, & many such things, which we can give noe account of the reason of, unless it should be the effects, of martha Carriers threatnings  
BN-38

If the hearer does not understand the above example to mean “since we are here to give evidence on a suspected witchcraft case, and the tragedies befallen on us are so clearly of sinister otherworldly origin, we do sincerely state this woman to be a witch”, its use is unwarranted.

## 2.5 This Implies That... i.e. Implicature

The word ‘implicature’ is derived from the verb ‘to imply’, as is its cognate ‘implication’. Etymologically, ‘to imply’ means ‘to fold something into something else’ (from the Latin verb *plicare* ‘to fold’); hence, that which is implied, is ‘folded in’, and has to be ‘unfolded’ in order to be understood.  
(Mey 1994: 99)

Thus when an utterance is termed to be or include an implicature, it is thought to have another, hidden meaning in addition to, or instead of, the apparent surface meaning. This concept is most suitable to our analysis of the Salem witchcraft depositions, for it should by now be apparent that said depositions contain pertinent information not only on the surface level of what is said, but also hidden beneath it.

### 2.5.1 Implication or Implicature

According to Mey (1994: 99-101), *implication* differs from *implicature* in the sense that the first is used to describe a situation where there exists a specific logical relationship between propositions, whereas the relationship between the constituents of an implicature is more of a conversational nature. The example given (Mey 1994: 100) for an implication is “[i]f you cut my hedge, I’ll take you out to dinner”, where the relationship between the two constituents is a clear-cut  $p \rightarrow q$ , i.e. “if p then q”. That is to say that the first *implies* the second, without necessarily negating the second in the absence of the first, i.e. if p is realized then q is expected to follow, *but* if p is not realized, q could still happen (*ibid.*).

Implicature, on the other hand, does not contain such a neat and tidy logical progression. Mey (1994: 101) explains this with the example of when asked “When’s Aunt Rose’s birthday?” the answer “It’s sometime in April” is interpreted to mean ‘not on the 1st or the 30th, and most likely not even in the first or last few days of the month’. The reasoning behind this is that though logically ‘sometime in April’ includes e.g. the 1st of April, we assume that the person answering the question would remember if the birthday in question was on April Fool’s Day, and thus would then say “It’s the 1st of April” instead of “It’s sometime in April” (ibid.). This is due to the fact that “if the speaker knows when it is, and does *not* offer this information, the answer ‘sometime in April’ will strike the recipient as somewhat bizarre” (ibid.). In accordance to Grice’s maxims on quality and relation, we expect the speaker to be both truthful and as relevant as possible. Thus

the answer ‘Sometime in April’ will tell us, by conversational (as opposed to logical) implicature, that the only thing the speaker remembered about Auntie’s birthday was the month in which it occurred, and that the speaker honestly didn’t know whether it was at the beginning, the middle or the end of that month.  
(Mey 1994: 101).

Clearly, where implication is used of more concrete and literal relationships between constituents, the correct deciphering of an implicature requires additional knowledge about the situation of the utterance.

So how to go about unfolding the meaning of an implicature? As the Salem depositions are real documents produced in real-world situations, there is no philosophical template to follow, but instead the reader must make educated guesses based on the context and conventions of the documents and situation. Or as Mey (1994: 102) puts it “all understanding implies some qualified guessing depending on the context; that is, the circumstances of this particular question, the persons involved in the situation, these persons’ backgrounds, etc. And the more we know about this context, the more well-grounded our ‘guesswork’ is going to be.” When it comes to the Salem documents, it seems safe to say that all participants were well aware of the context (what constituted witchcraft, what kinds of statements would be deemed proper as witchcraft accusations, etc.). If there had been some misunderstanding about their meaning, it is unlikely that the

depositions containing indirect accusations would have been included in the trial documents.

### 2.5.2 Umbrella Term?

The concept of implicature is without a doubt a useful tool in the analysis of the Salem Witchcraft Crisis depositions, although it is somewhat all-encompassing. Or as Mey puts it:

It is possible to consider everything that is not covered by strict truth-conditional logic as belonging to the phenomenon of ‘implicature’; in this sense, implicature is a broad cover term, a ‘pragmatic waste-basket’, to use that well-known terminology” (Mey 1994: 103).

Having neatly differentiated between implication and implicature, Mey makes a further difference between *conversational* and *conventional* implicature (1994: 100–106). While conversational implicature is something implied, but left unsaid (Mey 1994: 99), conventional implicature has more to do with certain words or expressions and their meaning, when considered by themselves, such as ‘last’ and ‘but’ (Mey 1994: 103–105). There is no definitive agreement on the importance of conventional implicatures, or indeed even on their appliance to pragmatics, but there is sufficient reason to dispute the notion that they are “non-cancellable, automatic or logical” (Mey 1994: 105). Even though conventional implicature is by definition tied to a convention, these conventions change according to e.g. culture, history and class, and as such are not universally applicable (*ibid.*). That is to say that what holds true in a specific situation may change when confronted by another set of dissimilar conventions.

If the subject of this thesis were e.g. the witch-hunts of Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries, there might be a reason to delve deeper into conventional implicature, as such a long timeframe and geographical area could well cause differences in word and expression usage from time and place to another, even though the central concept of witch-hunts remained the same. But as the Salem witchcraft trials occurred in the short time span of a year and in a relatively small area, it seems very unlikely that one could find any relevant conventional implicature differences in the depositions. Therefore the subject of the two different kinds of implicatures is not pursued further.

- (8) The Deposition of susannah shelldin aged about 18 years who testifieth and said that on this 2 June 1692 I saw the Apperisition of Bridgit Bishop.and Immediately appeared to little children and said that they ware Thomas Greens two twins and tould Bridget Bishop to hir face that she had murthered them in setting them into fits wher of they dyed  
BN-08

It seems safe to say that—allowing for the previously agreed upon premise that the person giving the deposition intends to accuse the target of the deposition of witchcraft—there is no clear logical relationship with the contents of Susannah Sheldon’s deposition and the conclusion that Bridget Bishop must be a witch. The ‘unfolded’ meaning in this case is divined with the help of the conversational situation, i.e. according to what is expected and understood in the specific time, place, and situation of the utterance.

## 2.6 Metaphor and Euphemism vs. Indirect Speech Act

Why is the utterance use under discussion in the Salem witchcraft depositions an instance of an indirect speech act instead of a metaphor or euphemism? While we have shown that an indirect speech act is used to convey something else than what is actually said, could not the same also be accomplished with a metaphor or a euphemism? The following sections briefly consider this question.

### 2.6.1 Metaphor

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) gives two definitions for the word ‘metaphor’:

1. A figure of speech in which a name or descriptive word or phrase is transferred to an object or action **different from**, but analogous to, that to which it is literally applicable; an instance of this, a metaphorical expression.

2. Something regarded as representative or suggestive **of something else**, esp. as a material emblem of an abstract quality, condition, notion, etc.; a symbol, a token. Frequently with *for*, *of*.

(*OED*, s.v. “metaphor,” n., emphasis added, italics as in original)

A metaphor is indeed used to convey something else than what is said, but the critical difference is that a metaphor is not—at least normally—used to convey literal meaning *and* something else, just the something else. While one can say that “Jack kicked the bucket” and mean either that Jack kicked an actual bucket *or* that Jack is dead, it would be most unusual to use it to mean that Jack kicked an actual bucket *and* is dead. In contrast, such a communication is most definitely possible with an indirect speech act, with which one can say things such as in the excerpt below, and mean both what is said and also something else, more relevant to the witchcraft trial.

- (9) some of the Cattle would Come out of the woods w'th their tounges hanging out of their mouths in a strange & affrighting manner, & many such things, which we can give noe account of the reason of, unless it should be the effects, of martha Carriers threatnings  
BN-38

As the frightening bovine episode no doubt happened, and is not just a figurative replacement of actual events, even though the telling of it carries another, implied meaning that Martha Carrier is a witch, this cannot be said to be a metaphor.

## 2.6.2 Euphemisms

Let us now say something about euphemisms.

1. Rhet. That figure of speech which consists in the substitution of a word or expression of comparatively favourable implication or less unpleasant associations, instead of the harsher or more offensive one that would more precisely designate what is intended.

(*OED*, s.v. “euphemism,” n.)

To a certain point we can indeed claim that the indirect accusations in the Salem Witchcraft Crisis depositions are instances of euphemism use; they certainly are a substitution of one form for another. But when looked at in more detail, euphemism is in fact something of a misnomer for what we are analysing.



- (10) I saw the Apperishtion of Bridgit Bishop.and Immediatly appeared to little children and said that they ware Thomas Greens two twins and tould Bridget Bishop to hir face that she had murthered them in setting them into fits wher of they dyed  
BN-08

In the above example what is left out is the “comparatively favourable implication”. While what is said is different from what is meant, i.e. form substitution is in use, it cannot be stated with any confidence that the actual words used are in any way more favourable or less harsher than the intended meaning, as the implication stays the same.

## 2.7 Summary

Thus far we have established the following: successful human communication is dependent on both the adherence to a set of rules governing what we say and the actual physical act of making an utterance, which in turn requires a conscious intent to communicate something specific (Grice + speech acts). Moreover, we have examined how one can communicate things by saying something and meaning something else (implicature), the actual content of which can be successfully deciphered, if, and only if, the addressee has all the pertinent knowledge of the situation in which the utterance was made. And lastly; such implicatures are realized with indirect speech acts, where what is said—while being true—contains an additional hidden meaning under the ostensible surface meaning. In the analysis part of the thesis, the preceding theory will be used as a basis for determining the directness and indirectness of accusations in the Salem witchcraft depositions.

## **3 Research on the Salem Documents**

There is new research continuously being done on the Salem witchcraft documents from several different perspectives, and on different subgroups of the documents. In many of these studies pragmatics theories and tools (such as Grice's maxims and speech acts) are used to analyse the documents in terms of discourse strategies used, preconceived notions of guilt or innocence, and successful confession strategies. Another area of study has been scribal recognition and attribution of firstly different documents to their respective hands, and secondly the attribution of different hands to their respective scribes; there has also been work done in trying to interpret the role that scribes played in creating the body of works now often called the Salem Witchcraft papers. There is unfortunately very little research directly intersecting with the research questions posed in this thesis.

While there have also been several books and articles published on the more general historical questions dealing with the 1692 witch-hunt in Salem, where much new and interesting information and speculation has been brought to life, it would be impractical to discuss those in this context; it is not the aim of this thesis to examine the overall causes and circumstances of the witchcraft crisis, nor would it be possible in a work of this size.

### **3.1 Speech Acts in the Salem Witchcraft Documents**

One research venue for scholars interested in the Salem witch-hunts has been the analysis of speech acts found in the documents. Culpeper and Semino (2000) discussed speech act verbs (such as e.g. curse and wish) with the observation that the most frequent witchcraft acts reported were verbal in nature; the usual root of witch-suspicious was a disagreement of some kind with the accused saying something that was interpreted as a curse, and thus a manifestation of witchcraft. The effect of a speech act verb such as curse is reliant on whether the recipient believes in its power, and cannot be accurately analysed without taking into account the prevailing socio-cultural circumstances; in Salem cursing someone was a concrete act of witchcraft, compared to the present time, where it is used almost solely to express aggravation or hatred.

In her article, Barbara Kryk-Kastovsky (2009) has studied speech acts in Early Modern English and, based on her own analysis and previous studies in the field, comes to the conclusion that the Speech Act Theory can be applied to analysing 17th century courtroom discourse. While not specifically related to the Salem documents, Kryk-Kastovsky's article is an interesting and convincing case of how speech acts apparent in modern courtroom discourse can be found in corresponding historical documents as well; a point soundly in favour of the suitability of the pragmatic tools and theories used in the analysis portion of this thesis.

Further on the subject of speech acts, Doty and Hiltunen (2009) have studied their appearance at different points of the courtroom process, and in their selection of the Salem witchcraft documents have found a clear predilection for formulaic patterns of discourse. Different speech acts were found to be prevalent at different stages, but all of them share the tendency to develop internal patterns repeated thenceforth. In their study Doty and Hiltunen found that all of the documents share the common characteristic of including legalistic fixed forms, although to a different extent; whereas indictments are fairly uniform in their appearance, apart, of course, from the accused's personal information, depositions are prone to include a freer narrative part in the middle of official opening and closing statements, with both examinations and confessions showing a general pattern of a question and answer form, but with great variation in the employment of it. Doty and Hiltunen also point out that while the speech acts in reported speech are highly uniform, those reported in direct discourse show much more variety.

### **3.2 Witchcraft Activity Type**

In addition to discussing the previously mentioned speech act verbs, Culpeper and Semino (2000) posit the existence of a 'witchcraft activity type', which could be implemented in the courtroom. This activity type presupposes the existence of the following: a system of belief allowing for the existence of witches and the devil, someone fitting the characteristics of a witch having a quarrel with someone else, and something undesirable befalling this someone else. If these conditions were met, the witchcraft activity type could be instantiated, after which all manner of events could be re-interpreted as acts of witchcraft. According to Culpeper and Semino, at the heart of the matter is the witchcraft

accusation; following the accusation it is up to the judicial system to decide whether or not the accusation has merit. If such accusation was to be upheld, then sundry events concerning the accused witch could—and would—be seen in a new light, that of witchcraft. This has direct bearing on the analysis portion of this thesis, as it is another way to explain why some of the depositions under analysis appear to contain nothing about witches, pacts with devils, or even supernatural events, but are accepted as accusations of witchcraft nevertheless: the witchcraft activity type has been implemented.

### **3.3 Salem Documents: Speech of Deponents or Scribes?**

An important aspect when considering the Salem documents in general is the degree of scribal influence inherent in them; to what extent can the content of a specific document be attributed to the actual words of the speaker, and to what extent is it an expression of the language of the scribe? In analysing the use of direct and indirect accusations of witchcraft, are the documents reliable sources of information? The role and identity of scribes in the recorded discourse has been one popular area of study regarding the Salem witchcraft documents, with studies appearing from e.g. Hiltunen and Peikola (2007), Doty (2007), and Grund et al. in the “Linguistic Introduction” chapter of the *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 64-90)—a book discussed in more detail in the following chapter. Hiltunen and Peikola (2007) explain the different criteria used in identifying hands and scribes, and with taking into account the script, distinctive letter-forms, use of abbreviations, punctuation, and orthographic data, some 80 different hands have been discerned from the 200 documents studied.

Doty (2007) has analysed 68 examinations for scribal practices for contextual commentary and evaluative word usage. The scribes were found to employ different patterns of direct and reported speech use in making the records, and varying degrees of descriptive comments, with consistent patterns emerging for all the four identified scribes. Doty posits that analysing the documents in terms of the different recording strategies use by each scribe gives us another level of information beyond that which is revealed of the accused; mainly insight into the thoughts and beliefs of the scribes themselves.

Grund (2007) has tackled the subject of the role of the scribe in the final content of these documents by comparing examination records of which multiple copies survive; some as later copies of the original, some as different versions by the same scribe, and some as different versions by different scribes. In these surviving documents, Grund finds several differences both in content and form, e.g. additions and omissions, changes in word order, word usage, and tense, thus giving credence to the assumption that the documents may have as much—if not more—to do with the scribe's language than that of the 'actual' speaker.

As it pertains the following analysis, it should be pointed out, however, that Grund used examination documents as his source material, which differ markedly from the depositions used in this thesis: while the examination records were either summarized during court proceedings or recreated afterwards from the scribe's notes or shorthand, the depositions were filed with the court already in written form and were often taken down outside the court (Grund 2007: 122). Thus where examination documents are characterized with haste and summarization, the depositions could be taken down as dictated, in a more leisurely fashion. It is, of course, by no means certain that the depositions are anymore verbatim records of the deponents' speech as the examinations are of that of the accused, but one could argue that there is at least a greater possibility of it. In favour of the depositions being verbatim records, or at least very near to it, Jane Kaminsky argues that the law in effect in the Massachusetts Bay Colony required the courts to produce a true transcript of the witnesses' words free from mistakes or misrepresentations (Kaminsky 1997: 13).

It also important to note that even if it was proved that the specific word forms and constructions present in the depositions were the language of the scribes instead of the deponents, it would not invalidate the premise of this thesis, but merely shift the focus somewhat from the deponents to the scribes. That is to say that the underlying question of directness or indirectness of accusations of witchcraft in the Salem witchcraft documents is just as interesting and study worthy, regardless of whose use of direct or indirect accusations they are.

The role of the scribes is beneficial to keep in mind, but unfortunately the scope of this work does not permit closer examination of the work of scribes in the source material. This would, however, be an excellent point of further research: comparing and contrasting the

findings of this thesis on directness and indirectness of accusations with the identity of the scribes behind the documents in mind.

### **3.4 A Newer Edition of the Salem Witchcraft Documents**

Whereas Boyer & Nissenbaum's *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692* (1977) was for more than 30 years the go-to comprehensive collection of the surviving Salem witchcraft documents, there is a more recent publication from 2009 by Rosenthal et al. called the *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt*, which is a massive undertaking of collecting all the surviving Salem witchcraft documents into one edition, with all the documents newly transcribed and marked for date and scribe, when known. This book represents a decade's worth of collaboration between many of the foremost Salem researchers, and is an invaluable tool both as source material for research and as a chronological account of the Salem witchcraft crisis. The source material for this thesis is taken from the original Boyer & Nissenbaum version, mainly because it also has an online version from which the material can be copied in text form for use in the discussion, and also because supplying links to the online version in Appendix A allows the reader to easily access both transcripts and photographs of the original documents.

The new collection of records includes some new material, but its inclusion or exclusion should not sway the results of the analysis, as the material under analysis is—due to the limited scope of this work—only a portion of the surviving depositions anyway. *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (Rosenthal et al. 2009) also includes some corrections of errors found in the transcriptions of Boyer & Nissenbaum's work, but these should not prove relevant to the analysis, and will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 4 Source Material. The new edition will be used, however, to check information on dates and scribes, and wherever else applicable.

## 4 Source Material

To perform a valid analysis of the subject matter, and to draw accurate and supportable conclusions from the material, the reference sample used must be extensive enough. While it would be ideal to use the whole corpus of surviving depositions from Salem as a basis for the work, it is simply not possible, as the limited scope of this thesis would then render any in-depth analysis impossible. As the purpose is to give a detailed and specific analysis of the directness and indirectness of accusations in the depositions, a judicious trimming of the source material to a suitable sample size is therefore of the utmost importance. The following sections cover first the way in which the material is referred to in this thesis, and then detail the criteria used to include or exclude specific documents types, the categorization of such types, and the effect on the number of documents under consideration.

### 4.1 Referring to the material

The material used in this thesis comes from the surviving documents from the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692. As the original material is obviously not available, the book *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692* by Paul Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum (1977) is used instead. The electronic version of the book, available online at <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/category/swp.html>, is used as well, due to the ease of searching and compiling electronic texts versus paper material. As there have been some noted differences between the electronic version and the original book, all material taken from the website has been thoroughly compared to that in the book to ensure the integrity of the research. Further comparison has been made with the electronic material and that included in the newer compilation of the material in *Records of the Salem Witch-Hunt* (Rosenthal et al. 2009), as applicable. No such differences were found that would have any bearing on the analysis portion of this work.

The documents used in this thesis are not referenced by the titles given to them in Boyer and Nissenbaum, e.g. “William Stacy v. Bridget Bishop”. There are two reasons for this: firstly, because the use of such cumbersome titles would unnecessarily complicate the

main body of the text, thus making it more difficult to follow, and secondly because these titles are not necessarily unique monikers, as there are cases where more than one deposition is given by a certain individual against the same accused. Therefore the individual papers are indicated with an abbreviation of Boyer & Nissenbaum, and their ordinal number in the source material; thus the above “William Stacy v. Bridget Bishop” becomes BN-01. A comprehensive list of the source material documents and links to them in the online version can be found in Appendix A, together with the number of the page from which they *start* in Boyer & Nissenbaum (1977), and, if necessary, a letter ordinal differentiating between two or more texts beginning on the same page.

The content of the documents is as found in Boyer & Nissenbaum’s online edition, with some minor visual changes; due to readability and space considerations, unnecessary line gaps, page change markers and the associated page numbers in the middle of text have been removed. The text has also been condensed so that the original line breaks and hyphenation due to these line changes have been removed. No other editing has been done. All spelling and punctuation has been left as is, and differs sometimes more sometimes less from current day conventions.

As the length of some depositions is discussed in the analysis, a word count of the depositions has been provided. The word count has been calculated from the body of the original deposition text, excluding any detached dates, further affirmations given in court, signatures and other additions. Some examples of such exclusions can be found below.

- (11) (Reverse) Joseph Fowler Against Bibber & Wife  
( Essex County Archives, Salem -- Witchcraft Vol. 2. Page 56 )  
BN-01
  
- (12) Sworne Salem May the 30<sup>th</sup> 1692  
before us.  
\*John Hathorne)  
) Assis'ts  
\*Jonathan. Corwin)
  
- Jurat in Curia June. 2<sup>d</sup> 1692  
(Written on side of paper) William Stacey  
BN-04



The word count is calculated from each deposition text with MS Word's word count tool, and is by necessity an approximation due to differences in spelling between the documents, and some extra markings in some documents, such as “[ torn ]” to denote missing text. As the word count is only used to demonstrate and discuss differences in deposition lengths at a very general level (e.g. whether a deposition has less than a hundred words or more than two hundred), this level of accuracy is more than sufficient for the purposes of this thesis. The word count is given in bold inside curly brackets { } in connection with each deposition in the list in Appendix A.

## 4.2 Defining Depositions

The first step in further material selection is obvious: determining which documents are depositions. Most readers have undoubtedly heard the word *deposition* used in the context of court language, and thus the word is probably at least familiar, even if the specifics of its judiciary use are not known. Depositions in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were not given from the witness-box while simultaneously taken down by the clerk, but were instead written down beforehand and then read aloud at court, with the deponent standing ready to swear to the fidelity of their evidence and to answer any possible questions (Cusack 1998: 92). This holds true to Salem witchcraft trials as well; after an initial complaint had been made against a specific individual or individuals, evidence against them was solicited in the form of depositions, which were then delivered to the court in written form. Based on given depositions the court would then issue a ruling on the validity of the complaint. The practice of delivering the depositions in written form is an important point for the later analysis section for one specific reason: the depositions were rarely written down by the person giving the evidence. As few ordinary people of the time could write at the level needed for conveying information for court proceedings, such depositions were taken down by a convenient literary person, a member of the household, minister, or a clerk, for example (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 46). Grund (2012: 43) points out that “no legal requirement appears to have existed for the deposition to be recorded by a professional court clerk; rather, anyone could write down a deposition.” This is especially important to take into account when looking at e.g. identical or similar phrases found in the depositions: how much of such similarity comes from the deponent and how much from the hand writing the depositions?

When used in this work, the word *deposition* can be defined as: a testimony given in writing, constituting evidence against an accused witch, and possibly read in court at the actual trial of said accused witch (as not all accused were brought to trial and not all depositions were used in trials). Defining what is meant by deposition is, however, one thing, while determining which documents are depositions quite another.

### 4.3 Selecting the Material

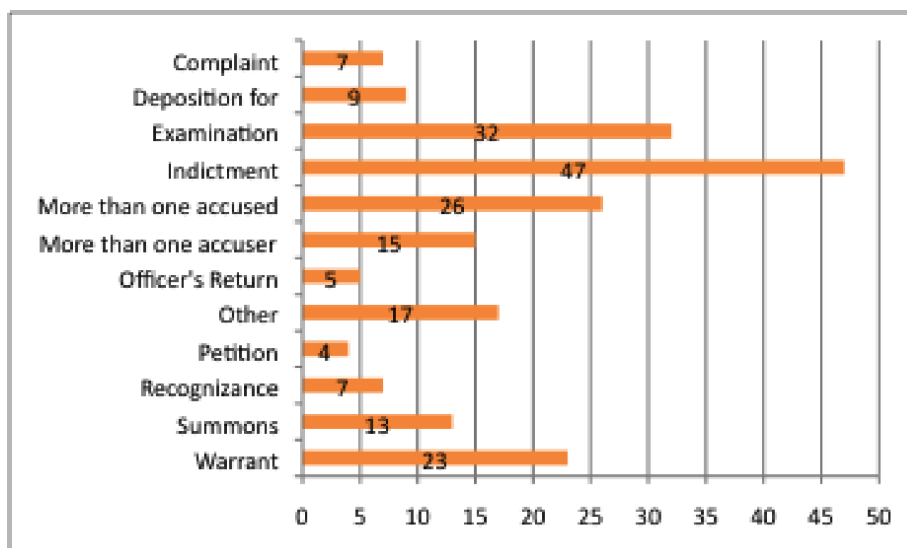
Another challenge in selecting the material has been the distinct lack of reliable labelling. The book version of Boyer & Nissenbaum (1977) names documents only sparingly, with no category for ‘depositions’, whereas in the online version some effort has been made to label the documents, with little success. As Grund (2012: 42) points out, many editions of historical texts and their classifications are not reliable linguistic sources for specific research questions, because they were produced for other purposes. One possible way of choosing the material would be to include only those documents that term themselves to be depositions, such as “The Deposition of susannah shelldin ...” (BN-07). But this method of relying on the documents’ self-labelling as a basis for classification would exclude virtually identical documents with the same form, function and purpose, which use e.g. the word *testimony* instead of *deposition*. “These documents all share the same general purpose of providing evidence for or against an alleged witch” (Grund 2012: 42). As there is little point in creating several unnecessary—for the purposes of this work—sub-categories, such documents are all grouped into one category: depositions. Therefore the word *deposition* is taken to mean any surviving document from the Salem Witchcraft Trials that can be termed to be the testimony of one or more person against one or more individuals, giving information about the previous actions of the accused—in a negative light—in the form of a narrative. Thus excluded are all examinations, which are conducted as a dialogue, indictments, warrants, witness summonses, and other such court originating records, records of physical examinations, any answers, confessions and suchlike given by the accused.

Even with all other documents save depositions removed, the body of documents found in Boyer & Nissenbaum (1977) proves to be too much; several hundred depositions remain.

As the material is published in three volumes, a logical course of action was to limit the material selection to the first volume, which would both restrict the number of depositions to a manageable sample and avoid the possibility of subconsciously selecting documents that “fitted” the research questions and/or themes best, so to ensure that the material under analysis would give as impartial results as possible.

Additionally I have set two more restrictions for the material, and excluded a) all depositions that include more than one accuser or accused, and b) all depositions given **for** someone, as opposed to **against** someone. The depositions containing more than one accuser or accused have been excluded, as it is mostly impossible to confidently state whose direct or indirect accusations are reported, and against whom. Such depositions are therefore unsuitable when discussing the differences between direct and indirect accusations in terms of the individual accusers and accused. As for restriction b, as the purpose of this thesis is to look at *accusations*, it would make little sense to include such depositions that are given in defence of someone.

At this point the exclusions have been done on the basis of the documents’ title information, e.g. “Examination of Nehemiah Abbott, Jr.”, “Warrant for arrest of John Alden”, etc., including all depositions which reference multiple people on the title, e.g. “John Porter and Lydia Porter v. Sarah Bibber”. Figure 1 shows the number of excluded documents by category, and at this point we are left with 86 separate documents, dealing with 16 separate cases. But as Grund (2012: 42) pointed out, it is often beneficial not to rely merely on the categorisation of the corpora, and when looking at the contents of this material sample, it becomes apparent that further exclusions are in order.



**Figure 1.** The categories and numbers of documents excluded by title in Boyer & Nissenbaum (1977) Vol I.

### 4.3.1 More than one accuser/accused

Perhaps the most easily established factor is the number of accusers and/or accused in the documents, and that is the first category against which to hold the remaining documents. Among the 86 instances there are two which fail this check; BN-49 and BN-62 appear to have multiple accusers and multiple accused, respectively.

- (13)     1.     The testimony of Mary Edwards  
           2.     as: to: the Latter part of this testimony Releating to the  
                   death of my pigges: & yearings I can attest two

John s edwards, sen'r  
 BN-49

- (14)     1.     giles Cory and his wife Came to my bead side  
           2.     I saw giles Cory and John proctir and I had then shuch a  
                   paine in one of my feet  
 BN-62

As is apparent from the examples given above, BN-49 includes the accusations of Mary and John Edwards both, whereas in BN-62 accusations are levelled at Giles Corey, his wife, and John Proctor; thereby both documents are excluded from the source material. As opposed to this, BN-53 does at first glance appear to have at least two complainants, but a

detailed study reveals that the other signature is not related to the deposition itself, but is instead the signature of the foreman Robert Payne, who attests that the deponent, John Brown, has sworn to the fidelity of his deposition in court.

BN-53 does pose another dilemma: it appears to be two depositions in one. While one side of the document holds a deposition by John Brown, used in court as mentioned above, the text on the reverse side (as indicated in the document) starts with the phrase “The s'd Jno Browne further saith”. As it would seem highly unlikely that the scribe in question had divided the deposition to both sides of the document for no apparent reason, it is more likely that these are two separate depositions scribed at different times. Therefore they should be considered independently of each other, and are due to this renumbered as BN-53a and BN-53b respectively. A similar situation can be found in depositions BN-66, BN-71, and BN-79; thus they have accordingly been divided into BN-66a/BN-66b, BN-71a/BN-71b, and BN-79a/BN-79b.

### 4.3.2 Hearsay and Corroboration

One further restriction is set for the material, that can only be perceived from the content of a document. A deposition is thus deemed to meet the criteria if the deponent is reporting of a situation or situations where he/she has had personal contact with the accused and/or personal experiences of witchcraft. This excludes all documents where the deponent is either repeating information heard from another source (*hearsay*) and/or attesting to having seen or heard another person being afflicted or issuing accusations against someone (*corroboration*). An example of both such instances can be found below.

- (15) Mary Webber wid aged aboute 53 years Testifieth and sayth that she liveing at Casco Bay aboute six or seaven years agoe, when George Burroughs was Minister at s'd place, and liveing anner -- Neighbour to s'd Burroughs, was well acquainted with his wife w'ch was dauter to mr John Ruck of Salem **she hath heard her tell much of her husband** unkindness to her [...] and **know nothing of it myselfe** otherwise Except by common report of others also concerning such things  
(emphasis added)  
BN-26

- (16) The deposition of Ephraim Shelden aged April 10<sup>th</sup> 92 20 years who testifieth. and sayth I this deponent being at the house of Lewtent Ingersol when Mercy Lewes was in one of her fits I heard her cry out of Goodwife Cloyce and when she came to herself she was asked who she saw. she answered she saw no body they demanded of her whether or noe she did not see. Goodwife Nurse or Goodwife Cloyce or Goodwife Gory. she answered she saw no body.  
(Deposition of Ephraim Shelden v. Martha Corey)

In both examples the deponent has had no personal contact—related to the information and circumstances they are describing—with the accused witch, but are merely repeating what others have told them. Documents BN-10, BN-26, BN-34, BN-41, BN-64, BN-75, BN-78, and BN-70 all fall into this category, and are thus excluded from the material. Excluding the entirely hearsay based depositions allows for complete focus on how individuals personally coming into contact with suspected witchcraft—and more specifically the accused witch—have formulated their accusations.

### 4.3.3 Special Cases

Amongst the body of documents there are two more instances in need of further study: one involving BN-03, and the other BN-85 and BN-86. The first of these, BN-03, is a deposition marked in Boyer & Nissenbaum as “Sarah Nurse v. Sarah Bibber”. Further study of the document reveals, however, that instead of being a witchcraft accusation it is quite the opposite: Sarah Nurse testifies that Sarah Bibber used pins on herself and then accused Nurse of being the one doing the pricking.

- (17) the Testimony of Sarah Nurs aged 28 years of th [Torn] a bouts who testifieth and saith that being in the Coun [Torn] this 29 of June 1692 **I sawe goodwife bibber pull [Torn] pins out of her Close and held them betwene h [Torn] fingers and Claspt her hands round her knese and then she Cryed out and said goody Nurs prict her** this I can testifie if Calld as witness my mark  
(emphasis added)  
BN-03

From the content it is clear that this is an accusation of Bibber being deceptive when accusing Nurse of witchcraft, and thus inadmissible to the source material.

The other case is that of documents BN-85 and BN-86; both made by Ann Putnam Jr. against George Burroughs. While looking at each of these documents on their own, both appear to meet the before-set criteria for depositions; only when looked at side by side does it become apparent how much alike these two documents are. Nearly identical, with some minor variation in word form and punctuation, it is conceivable to argue that one is a copy of the other. This supposition is further upheld by the fact that in one document the few lines at the bottom: “The above named Ann Putnam affirmed before the Grand inquest that the above written Evidence is the truth upon her Oath. sworne before the grand Jury Sept: 17. 1692” (BN-85) are clearly written by a different hand and—presumably—at a later time. In the other document these lines are written in the same hand as the body of the text, which supports the theory that it is a later copy of the original. As such, this second copy BN-86 has been omitted from the source material. This copy is also not part of the online version.

#### **4.3.4 Excluded Documents**

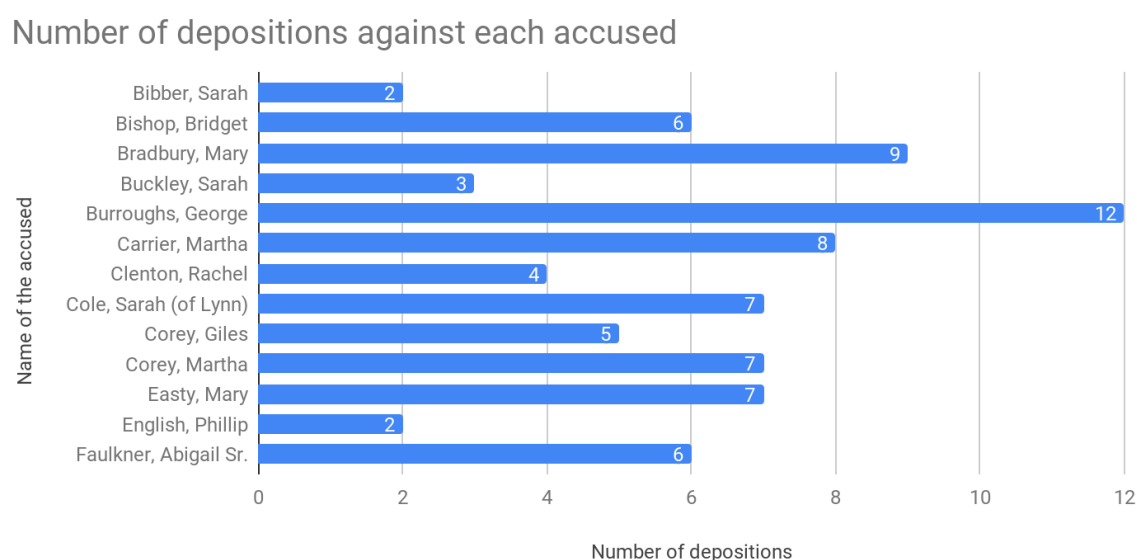
Of the material defined in the beginning of section 4.3, these further revisions done on the basis of the content of the texts have lead to the exclusion of 12 more documents, bringing the number of depositions to 78, when taking into account the four documents (BN-53, BN-66, BN-71, BN-79)) divided into two each. Eight of the twelve excluded documents fall into the hearsay and/or corroboration category, strongly suggesting that these kinds of testimonies were far from uncommon. In the absence of today’s visual and/or audio recording technology, the only way to establish something as having happened was to have a witness willing to corroborate the event. While the word ‘hearsay’ strikes a somewhat negative chord today, it is comforting to know that the judicial system of the time, however flawed it may have been, was not above requiring proof beyond that of the accuser’s word.

## 5 The Analysis

This analysis section begins with a breakdown of the material in terms of cases, gender, age and the number of occurrences of direct and indirect accusations. The directness of accusations is then considered as per case basis, taking into account the ultimate fate of the person accused. The aim of this chapter is to give a clear picture of the ways in which direct and indirect accusations were used during the Salem witchcraft trials, and by whom, and how that practice evolved and differed from case to case during the crisis.

### 5.1 The Distribution of Material Amongst the Cases

The material under analysis comprises 78 depositions, given against 13 different individuals. As can be seen from Figure 2, the number of depositions ranges from 2 against Phillip English (both by the same accuser) and Sarah Bibber (2 different accusers) to 12 against George Burroughs (11 different accusers). The gender of the accused seems to have little or no direct effect on the number of depositions given against them, or at least with a sample of this size, no apparent trends can be seen.



**Figure 2.** Number of depositions given against each individual in the source material.

The 78 depositions making up the material under discussion were given by 47 different deponents, most of whom gave only one deposition. Only nine people gave more than one



deposition, and of those, four people gave just two per person (specifics can be found in Table 1). Due to the limited number of people giving more than five depositions, not much comparison can be made on the development in depositions given by a specific individual.

| <b>Deponent</b>    | <b>Dep. given</b> | <b>Deponent</b>   | <b>Dep. given</b> | <b>Deponent</b>      | <b>Dep. given</b> |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| Putnam, Ann Jr.    | 8                 | Cole, John        | 1                 | Preston, Samuel      | 1                 |
| Walcott, Mary      | 8                 | Coman, Richard    | 1                 | Putnam, Edward       | 1                 |
| Hubbard, Elizabeth | 6                 | Cook, John        | 1                 | Reddington, Margaret | 1                 |
| Bibber, Sarah      | 4                 | Corey, Giles      | 1                 | Roger, John          | 1                 |
| Warren, Mary       | 4                 | Eaton, Mary Sr.   | 1                 | Smith, Samuel        | 1                 |
| Lewis, Mercy       | 3                 | Endicott, Samuel  | 1                 | Sprague, Martha      | 1                 |
| Beale, William     | 2                 | Foster, Rose      | 1                 | Stacy, William       | 1                 |
| Booth, Elizabeth   | 2                 | Fowler, Joseph    | 1                 | Toothaker, Allen     | 1                 |
| Brown, John        | 2                 | Fuller, James Jr. | 1                 | Walker, Richard      | 1                 |
| Sheldon, Susannah  | 2                 | Fuller, Mary Sr.  | 1                 | Webber, Samuel       | 1                 |
| Abbott, Benjamin   | 1                 | Gray, Samuel      | 1                 | Wellman, Abraham     | 1                 |
| Abbott, Sarah      | 1                 | Greenslit, Thomas | 1                 | Wellman, Elizabeth   | 1                 |
| Baker, William     | 1                 | Harris, Hannah    | 1                 | Wellman, Isaac       | 1                 |
| Boarman, Thomas    | 1                 | Keyser, Elizar    | 1                 | Willard, Simon       | 1                 |
| Carr, James        | 1                 | Louder, John      | 1                 | Williams, Abigail    | 1                 |
| Chandler, Phoebe   | 1                 | Phelps, Sarah     | 1                 | <b>all together</b>  | <b>78</b>         |

**Table 1.** The number of depositions given by each deponent.

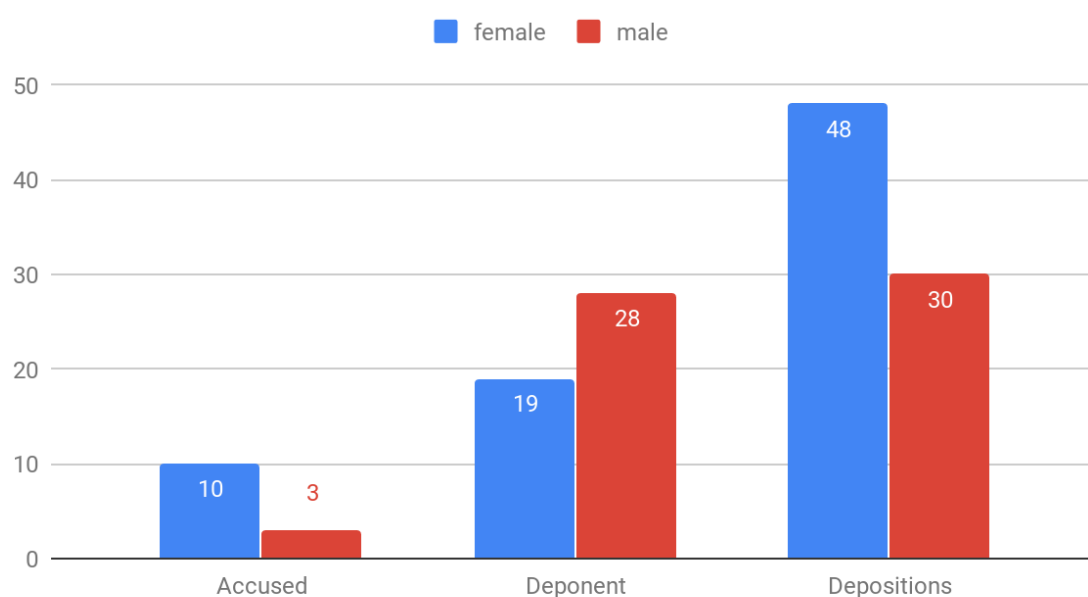
## 5.2 Overall Gender Breakdown

In the thirteen cases we are looking at, only three of the accused individuals are male, while ten are female. This is not unexpected, as women made up the majority of those accused of witchcraft both in the Salem witchcraft trials and in most other witchcraft outbreaks of the time, as the tendency “was to assume that women were peculiarly drawn to witchcraft and the devil” (Hall 1999: 7), and possibly more easily corrupted by his temptations. As Levack states, “To some extent women were suspected of witchcraft because they were believed to be morally weaker than men and more likely, therefore, to succumb to diabolical temptation.” (1995: 137). According to Hall (1999: 7), when men

were accused of witchcraft, they were often family members of women who had already been deemed witches. Of the men in this sample data, only Giles Corey conforms to this stereotype; his wife Martha was also among the accused. However, with only three male accused, this cannot be taken to be indicative of any larger pattern.

When it comes to the gender of the deponents, the ratio is 19 females to 28 males, which seems at odds with the idea that in the larger demographic of the Salem crisis, most accusers were (young) females. But this apparent contradiction is proved false when looking at the number of accusations made by gender, where regardless of their smaller number overall, the female accusers give significantly more depositions than their male counterparts, 48 to 30 (Figure 3). More information on whether gender makes a difference in who accused whom, i.e. were men more likely to accuse men, and women accuse women, can be found in the breakdown of accusations by case in section 5.6, and in section 5.7.

### Gender breakdown



**Figure 3.** Breakdown of gender in the depositions by accused, deponents and number of depositions made.

### 5.3 Age of the Accused and the Deponents

During this time period, accused witches tended to be of the older persuasion (Levack 1995: 142). If they were suspected of nefarious deeds by the community, the suspicion had most likely been growing for several years, necessitating a more advanced age, or if they were healers or wise women, they could not have been very young and achieve the knowledge and experience to be considered such (ibid.). Older and especially senile people could also exhibit “eccentric or anti-social behaviour which tended to make neighbours uncomfortable and to invite accusations of witchcraft” (ibid.).

Considering the sporadic nature of reliable documents from the era in question, it comes as no surprise that the exact or even surmised ages of many of the accused witches (and deponents) in Salem are not known. I have included information from two sources below in Table 2, and while it is incomplete, it is indicative enough for the following discussion.

|                       | Roach                   | Rosenthal et. al |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| <b>Accused</b>        | <b>Age when accused</b> |                  |
| Bibber, Sarah         | -                       | c 36             |
| Bishop, Bridget       | 50s?                    | -                |
| Bradbury, Mary        | c 80                    | 77               |
| Buckley, Sarah        | -                       | c 55             |
| Burroughs, George     | c 42                    | c 42             |
| Carrier, Martha       | c 50                    | c 42             |
| Clenton, Rachel       | 63                      | c 63             |
| Cole, Sarah (of Lynn) | 34                      | 34               |
| Corey, Giles          | c 80                    | 71?              |
| Corey, Martha         | -                       | -                |
| Easty, Mary           | 58                      | 58               |
| English, Phillip      | 41                      | 41               |
| Faulkner, Abigail Sr. | 40                      | 40               |

**Table 2.** Ages of the accused witches, information from Roach (2002: Appendix) and Rosenthal et al. (2009: 930–936,939–940)

For Martha Corey neither source ventures even a guess, but considering that she had given birth to one son in 1677 and to another sometime between 1684 and 1690 (Goss 2008: 90),

she was most likely somewhere in her forties or fifties in 1692. Among all those accused of witchcraft in Salem, the ratio of accused witches (whose age is known) that were over 50 years of age was relatively low, at only 42 %, when compared to that of e.g. Geneva (years 1537–1662), where the number was 75 % or County of Essex, England (year 1645), with 87 % (Levack 1995: 142). From Table 2 it is apparent that the sample data for this thesis appears to follow the overall Salem ratio. If we leave Bridget Bishop and Martha Corey out of the count, and assume the age of Martha Carrier to be somewhere between the two given ages of 42 and 50, there are six individuals under 50 and five over 50, which comes to around 45 % of elderly witches.

As for the ages of the deponents, more than half of the depositions in the sample material give the age of the deponent at the beginning, and most others can be found in Rosenthal et al. (2009). From Table 3 it is apparent that most of the women giving depositions were teenagers, as 12 of them are 20 or under, with the youngest being Sarah Phelps at 10. The young age of the female deponents is even more pronounced among those giving multiple depositions, where Sarah Bibber is the oldest at 36, while all others are 20 or under, and Ann Putnam Jr. truly being the junior of the group at only 13 years of age.

| Deponent             | Dep. given | Rosenthal et al. | Depositions |
|----------------------|------------|------------------|-------------|
| Putnam, Ann Jr.      | 8          | 13               | -           |
| Walcott, Mary        | 8          | 17               | 17 (18)     |
| Hubbard, Elizabeth   | 6          | 17               | 16 (17)     |
| Bibber, Sarah        | 4          | c 36             | -           |
| Warren, Mary         | 4          | c 20             | -           |
| Lewis, Mercy         | 3          | c 17             | 19          |
| Booth, Elizabeth     | 2          | 18               | 18          |
| Sheldon, Susannah    | 2          | c 18             | 18          |
| Abbott, Sarah        | 1          | 31               | 32          |
| Chandler, Phoebe     | 1          | 12               | 12          |
| Eaton, Mary Sr.      | 1          | -                | -           |
| Foster, Rose         | 1          | 13               | -           |
| Fuller, Mary Sr.     | 1          | c 51             | 41          |
| Harris, Hannah       | 1          | -                | 27          |
| Phelps, Sarah        | 1          | 10               | -           |
| Reddington, Margaret | 1          | c 70             | 70          |
| Sprague, Martha      | 1          | 16               | -           |
| Wellman, Elizabeth   | 1          | 44               | 45          |
| Williams, Abigail    | 1          | c 11             | -           |

**Table 3.** The ages of the female deponents as found in Rosenthal et al. (2009: 927–963) and in the source material depositions, in the order of number of depositions given.

These ages are naturally approximations, which is underlined by the often used amendment ‘or thereabouts’ added to the age in the deposition, and the caveat ‘circa’ in the Rosenthal et al. (2009) information, and there are some larger discrepancies between the sources as with the age of Mary Fuller Sr. However, for the purposes of the discussion, this level of accuracy is sufficient. In this sample data it is clear that a handful of young women are making the most noise—most likely getting this level of attention for the first time in their lives—while more mature women are mostly absent and only giving singular statements. As Thurston (2001: 121) points out “[i]t was certainly unusual for adults, let alone a court, to give such credence to the testimony of children and adolescents.”

When it comes to the men making depositions, the age range is heavily tilted in the other direction in the source material, with most of the men being middle aged and older, as can

be seen in Table 4. Of the 28 men in this sample whose age is known, half are 40 or older, and only five are 18–25, with no-one under 18 years of age.

| Deponent          | Dep. given | Rosenthal et al. | Depositions  |
|-------------------|------------|------------------|--------------|
| Beale, William    | 2          | 64               | upward of 60 |
| Brown, John       | 2          | -                | 25           |
| Abbott, Benjamin  | 1          | 31               | 31           |
| Baker, William    | 1          | 46               | 36           |
| Boarman, Thomas   | 1          | 48               | 47           |
| Carr, James       | 1          | 42               | -            |
| Cole, John        | 1          | 52?              | -            |
| Coman, Richard    | 1          | c 32             | 32           |
| Cook, John        | 1          | 18               | 18           |
| Corey, Giles      | 1          | 71?              | -            |
| Endicott, Samuel  | 1          | 33               | 31           |
| Fowler, Joseph    | 1          | c 45             | -            |
| Fuller, James Jr. | 1          | 19               | 18           |
| Gray, Samuel      | 1          | -                | 42           |
| Greenslit, Thomas | 1          | c 40             | -            |
| Keyser, Elizar    | 1          | c 46             | 45           |
| Louder, John      | 1          | c 32             | 32           |
| Preston, Samuel   | 1          | c 41             | 41           |
| Putnam, Edward    | 1          | 38               | 38           |
| Roger, John       | 1          | 51               | 50           |
| Smith, Samuel     | 1          | c 25             | 25           |
| Stacy, William    | 1          | 36               | 36           |
| Toothaker, Allen  | 1          | 22               | 22           |
| Walker, Richard   | 1          | -                | -            |
| Webber, Samuel    | 1          | -                | 36           |
| Wellman, Abraham  | 1          | c 49             | 49           |
| Wellman, Isaac    | 1          | c 45             | 45           |
| Willard, Simon    | 1          | 43               | 42           |

**Table 4.** The ages of the male deponents as found in Rosenthal et al. (2009: 927–963) and in the source material depositions, in the order of number of depositions given.

So in this sample at least, there is a marked difference in the ages of the deponents, when the two genders are compared.

## 5.4 Direct Accusations

In the material under discussion, there can be found a total of 33 occurrences of the word ‘witch’, 7 occurrences of ‘wizard’ and 3 occurrences of ‘conjurer’. While there are some different nuances in the definitions of the words (see below), they are all synonyms.

### Witch

1. A man who practises witchcraft or magic; a magician, sorcerer, wizard.
2. A female magician, sorceress; in later use esp. a woman supposed to have dealings with the devil or evil spirits and to be able by their co-operation to perform supernatural acts.

(*OED*, s.v. “witch,” n.)

### Wizard

1. A man who is skilled in occult arts; in later use, a man who practises witchcraft (the male counterpart of witch)

(*OED*, s.v. “wizard,” n.)

### Conjurer

1. One who practises conjuration; one who conjures spirits and pretends to perform miracles by their aid; a magician, wizard.

(*OED*, s.v. “conjurer,” n.)

The latter two words are used only in conjunction with accused male witches, and appear simply to be the male equivalent of ‘witch’ in the source material, so for the purposes of this discussion all these words are counted together. Thus the material includes 43 instances of *a word meaning* ‘witch’ and 29 instances of ‘witchcraft’. Further on it must be mentioned that one of the instances of ‘witch’ occurs in the deposition of Sarah Bibber against Mary Bradbury (BN-16), and can only be inferred, because the left edge of the deposition has been torn in places. However, it can be stated with reasonable certainty that

the torn part in the sentence “[...]and I beleve in my heart that mis Bradbery is a **[torn part]** nd that she has often afflicted and tormented me[...]” (BN-16) originally contained the word ‘witch’, as the sentence around the torn part contains the ‘I believe in my heart that so-and-so is a (witch)’ and ‘she has often afflicted and tormented me’ constructions, both of which are commonly associated with direct accusations.

Not all of these instances of ‘witch’ or ‘witchcraft’ can be counted as direct accusations of witchcraft against the accused, however, as there are several different ways in which these words are used, e.g. in reported speech, referring to someone other than the accused, or simply confirming that the deponent believes some witchcraft to exist. A more closer looks is therefore in order.

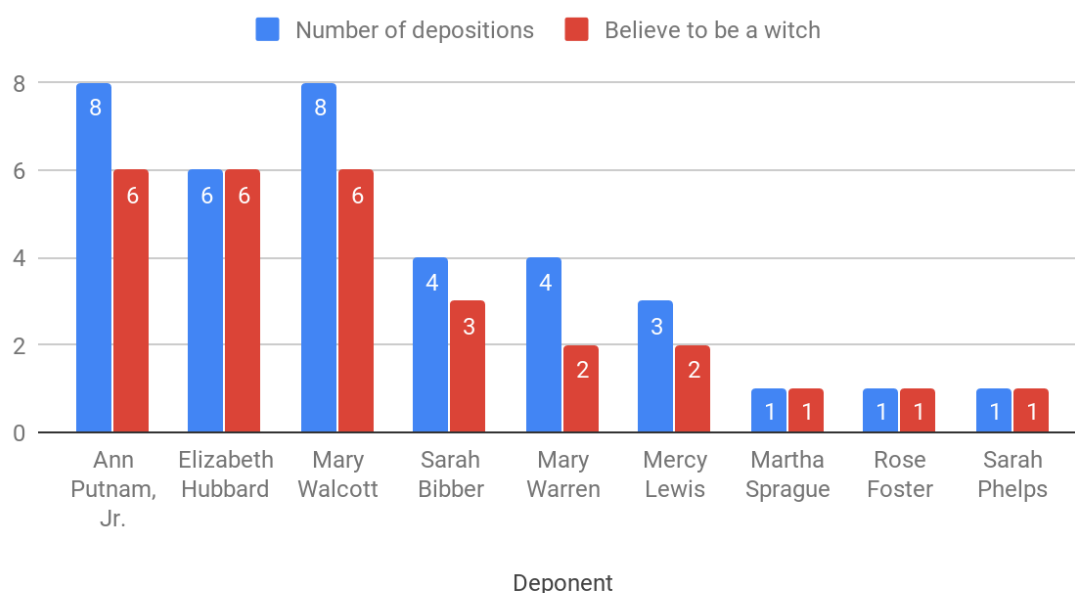
Of the direct witchcraft accusations, there are two distinct constructs that cover nearly all the direct accusations. I have named these as 1) *I believe s/he is a witch* and 2) *acts of witchcraft*. The first of these is realised with the phrase “I believe in my heart that the accused is a witch” with its various forms that usually only differ in the adjective selected to reflect the evilness of the witch and how profoundly the deponent wishes to profess their belief. Examples of this kind of accusation can be seen below.

- (18) I beleve in my heart that mi[s] Bradbery is [a witch] & that she has very often afflicted an[d tormented me] and several others by hir acts of wicthcraft  
BN-13
- (19) I doe beleve in my heart that Mist. Bradbery is a most dreadfull wicth sence she has been in prison she or hir Apperance has come to me and most greviously tormented me  
BN-15
- (20) I beleve in my heart that mr George Burroughs is a dreadfull wizzard and that he has most greviously tormented me and the above mentioned parson by his acts of wicthcraft  
BN-30
- (21) I beleve that Mis Bradbery is a most dreadfull wicth for sence she has been in prison she or hir Apperance has com to me and most greviously afflicted me  
BN-11



As is apparent from the examples, the witch can in some cases be further classified as being ‘dreadful’, and a further deviance is seen in the last example, where the form is otherwise the same, but the key words ‘in my heart’ are missing. This usually heartfelt declaration is more often than not found in conjunction with some form of “grievously afflicted me and/or others”. Another common part of this accusation is the use of “or her appearance” as a qualifier. In the sample material, this direct accusation is only used by women, with Ann Putnam Jr., Elizabeth Hubbard, and Mary Walcott using it the most often as can be seen in Figure 4.

### Number of depositions given and the 'I believe s/he is a witch'



**Figure 4.** The occurrences of ‘I believe s/he is a witch’ by deponent, and the number of depositions they have given all in all.

The other direct way of accusing someone of witchcraft, i.e. the above mentioned *acts of witchcraft*, occurs together with some variation of “afflicted me”, where it is specifically stated that the affliction (or torment, etc.) has been achieved through the use of witchcraft, as can be seen in the excerpt of the deposition of James Carr, below.

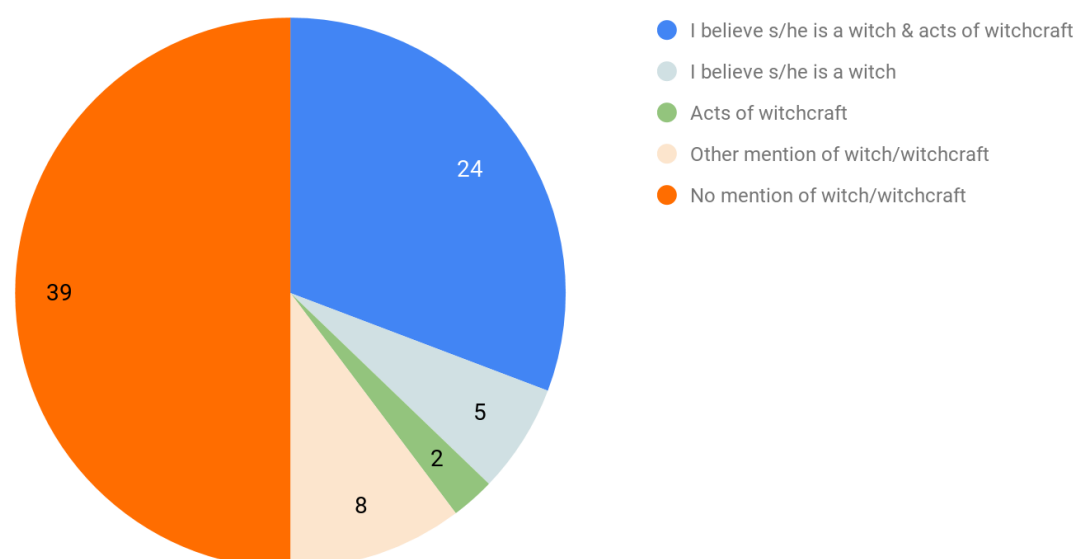
- (22) I beleve in my hart that mis Bradbery the prison'r att the bar has often afflicted me by acts of wicthcraft

BN-14

While these two types of direct accusations are often seen together in the same deposition, they can also occur independently of each other, and it would seem that they both carry equal weight in accusations.

## 5.5 Indirect accusations

When analysing documents from a witchcraft trial, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the word ‘witch’ (or equivalent, i.e. wizard or conjurer) would be flying around. When looking at the usage of the word in the source material, however, it becomes apparent that, at least during this episode in witchcraft history, ‘witchiness’ was just as much implied than directly reported. Of the 78 depositions, exactly half (or 39) mention witches or witchcraft, ranging from mentioning witchcraft almost in passing, or as reported by someone else, to directly saying that someone is a witch or has done witchcraft acts. So on the surface of it, half (see Figure 5) of the depositions seem to have nothing to do with witches or witchcraft at all. In order to define these depositions as indirect witchcraft accusations, we have to use the *indirect speech act* to say that the illocutionary force in all of the depositions in the source material is a witchcraft accusation, or assert that the *witchcraft activity type* is utilized.



**Figure 5.** Breakdown of which depositions mention witch/witchcraft, and in which way.

While looking at the depositions with the help of the witchcraft activity type, i.e. assuming that these statements do in fact have something to do with witches, because otherwise they would not be given as evidence in a witchcraft trial, it is clear that there are many different types of indirectly talking about witches. One of these types can be seen in BN-72, where Sarah Bibber almost seems to forget to mention that she verily believes Mary Easty to be a witch. This omission is especially glaring when compared to e.g. Rose Foster's condemnation of Abigail Faulkner Sr. (BN-80), a case which is a prime example of the almost carbon copy depositions given in some instances, and one which will be discussed in more detail later on in section 5.6.5.

- (23) Sarah: Viber: affirmed upon her oath: that she saw Mary: the wife of Isaac Esty: upon Jno Nortons:bed: when s'd Norton: was:ill: and s'd goody Esty flew out upon her: & **afflicted her**: s'd Vibber: and s'd Vibber affirmed: that since the time of the last examination of s'd Esty: s'd Esty: **has hurt & afflicted** mercy Lewis: and mary walcot & Ann:Putman: she or her Apperition: & she s'd Esty **has some times hurt & afflicted her**: s'd Vibber also since s'd:Esty her last examination: also: s'd Vibber: s'd: that: s'd Esty or her apperition **has Afflicted**: Eliz: Hubbard: this s'd Vibber owned: to be: the truth: before the Jury of inquest  
(emphasis added)  
BN-72
- (24) The deposition of Rose Foster who testifieth & saith I have ben **most grievously afflected and tormented** by Abigail Falkner of Andevour also I have seen Abigail Falkner or hir Apperance **most grievously afflict and torment** Martha sprague s sara phelps and Hannah Bigsbe sence the begining Augst and I verily beleve that Abigail Falkner is a **wicth** and that **she has often afflected me** and the affforesaid person by acts of **wicthcraft**:  
(emphasis added)  
BN-80

All the same elements are present in both depositions, with the exception of the missing direct accusation of witchcraft in the first. It is possible that the usual element of 'afflicting' someone is deemed enough to point to the witchiness of the accused, but considering how by rote the 'I verily believe that such-and-such is a witch' is included in most of these kinds of depositions, the omitting of it is curious.

Another kind of indirect accusation type can be found e.g. in BN-01, where Joseph Fowler states that Sarah Bibber was "very much given to speak bad words and would call her husband bad names & was a woman of a very turbulent unruly spirit". There is no mention

of witchcraft here either, more a common sort of confirmation that the accused is indeed a difficult or perhaps an evil person. There are two other types of indirect accusation: the description of something bad or unbelievable that has happened with the accused as a participant, and the even more indirect ‘these two or more things happened at the same time, draw your own conclusions’ explanation. An example of the first can be found in BN-23, where Samuel Webber describes how the accused George Burroughs bragged about being able to lift a barrel of Molasses with one hand, which is not immediately apparent as a witchcraft accusation at all. The latter type can be seen in BN-48, where William Baker tells of the time that Rachel Clenton visited his home and later walked up and down the lane, and how during that time a freshly brewed beer disappeared without a trace from a barrel.

The above given types and examples may give the impression that there are clear cut categories in which the indirect depositions can be neatly divided in, but it should come as no surprise that there is overlap between the types. This does not present a problem, as in order to discuss the differences between these types and types found in direct accusations, there is no need to categorize all of the indirect accusations into single specific types.

## **5.6 Accusations by case**

After discussing the directness and indirectness of accusations found in the material in more general terms in the previous sections, this section goes through the individual cases and their specific depositions, and all mentions of witch and/or witchcraft in them. The cases are divided into five groups, ranging from no mention of witches or witchcraft in the first group, to the fifth group, where every deposition contains a direct accusation. Table 5 gives an overview to the section, and some very succinct biographical information, i.e. the birth year of the accused (if known), and their fate during the trials. All the biographical information in Table 5 and used later on in this section is by Marilynne K. Roach (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 925-964).

|   | depositions, all | witch       |             | witchcraft  |             |
|---|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|   |                  | depositions | occurrences | depositions | occurrences |
| <b>Bibber, Sarah</b>  | 2                | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| c 1656, lived   |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Bishop, Bridget</b>  | 6                | 1           | 1 (herself) | 0           | 0           |
| year of birth unknown, tried, found guilty, hanged 10.6.1692                      |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Bradbury, Mary</b>   | 9                | 7           | 8           | 6           | 6           |
| 1615, tried, condemned, escaped   |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Buckley, Sarah</b>   | 3                | 3           | 4           | 3           | 3           |
| c 1637, arrested  |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Burroughs, George</b>  | 12               | 5           | 13          | 4           | 4           |
| c 1650, tried, condemn, hanged 19.8.1692  |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Carrier, Martha</b>  | 8                | 2           | 3           | 1           | 1           |
| c 1650, tried, condemn, hanged 19.8.1692  |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Clenton, Rachel</b>  | 4                | 0           | 0           | 0           | 0           |
| c 1629, arrested  |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Cole, Sarah (of Lynn)</b>  | 7                | 0           | 0           | 1           | 1           |
| 1658, accused, arrested   |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Corey, Giles</b>   | 5                | 4           | 4           | 2           | 2           |
| 1621?, arrested, refused to co-operate, pressed to death 19.9.1692                |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Corey, Martha</b>  | 7                | 2           | 2           | 3           | 3           |
| year of birth unknown, tried, condemned, hanged 22.9.1692                         |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Easty, Mary</b>  | 7                | 2           | 2           | 2           | 2           |
| 1634, arrested, jailed, released, arrested, tried, condemned, hanged 22.9.1692    |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>English, Phillip</b>   | 2                | 1           | 1           | 0           | 0           |
| 1651, accused, fled, arrested, escaped  |                  |             |             |             |             |
| <b>Faulkner, Abigail Sr.</b>  | 6                | 6           | 6           | 6           | 6           |
| 1652, arrested, confess, tried, condemned, pregnancy postponed exec & so survived |                  |             |             |             |             |

**Table 5.** Accused and mentions of ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’ in depositions against them. All biographical information by Marilynne K. Roach (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 925-964).

### 5.6.1 Group 1: Sarah Bibber and Rachel Clenton

Of the 13 individuals accused in the material, there are two cases in which the words *witch* or *witchcraft* were not used even once, Sarah Bibber (2 depositions against) and Rachel Clenton (4 depositions against). Sarah Bibber was both an accuser and accused, but it is impossible to say if this had any effect on the accusations levelled at her. In any case, the depositions given against her did not lead to trial or punishment. As there are only two depositions given against Sarah Bibber, comparing them to each other is a very straightforward thing. Neither of the depositions by Joseph Fowler (BN-01) and Richard Walker (BN-02) mention anything related to witches or witchcraft, but Joseph Fowler especially does describe Sarah Bibber as an unpleasant sort of woman both to her neighbours and her husband. There is one common turn of phrase in the depositions, “very turbulent unruly spirit” (BN-01) and “unruly turbulent spirit” (BN-02), respectively. This kind of repetition or mirroring of descriptions or declarations can be seen in many of the cases, as will become apparent later on. So the indirect accusation in this case is merely a retelling of the accused having a bad temper. As can be seen from Table 6, there are no direct accusations in this group, and the deponents are predominantly men.

| Accused         | Accuser | Direct accusations | Indirect accusations |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Bibber, Sarah   | female  | 0                  | 0                    |
|                 | male    | 0                  | 2                    |
| Clenton, Rachel | female  | 0                  | 1                    |
|                 | male    | 0                  | 3                    |

**Table 6.** Direct and indirect accusations against Sarah Bibber and Rachel Clenton.

As for Rachel Clenton, a total of four depositions are given against her, one each by Mary Fuller, Sr. (BN-46), Thomas Boarman (BN-47), William Baker (BN-48), and James Fuller Jr. (BN-50). As with Sarah Bibber, none of the depositions mention witches or witchcraft, but are instead descriptions of various misfortunes, credited more or less directly to Rachel Clenton. Mary Fuller Sr. (BN-46) outright accuses Rachel Clenton of causing her relative to fall into a curious paralysis for several hours, while James Fuller Jr. (BN-50) (Mary’s brother) tells of the same incident, but without directly blaming Rachel Clenton for the

seizure. Both Fullers do mention Rachel Clenton coming to the house with the specific intention of accusing them and their family of telling lies about her, an accusation which only James (BN-50) takes the time to refute in his deposition.

- (25) my Brother Joseph Fuller's boy Com in and said their Betty was fall Downe Ded and this was as shee S'd Rechell pased by: hur: A comming to our house and further Run up to my Brothers Joseph Fullers house for the space of Three hours with out any [motission] of Life. spoke I Get hur hold up hur hand If S'd Rachell was the caus of it and shee ded: and when shee could Speke shee S'd The womman with A white cape pased by and struck hur: on the forehead  
BN-46
- (26) whilst he and I was talking Rachell Clinton Cam in to our house & sat Downe by the fier I asked hur what shee came bother for at this time of night, & shee said **shee Came to see what Lies them were that we raised of hur & I tould hur I Ded not know as I had Raised Eny of hur:**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-50

The two other depositions are even more circumspect in their accusations. Thomas Boarman (BN-47) relates the dislike between several other people and Rachel Clenton, and also talks about a hard-to-catch little dog and a large turtle, both of which vanished when he thought of Rachel Clenton. William Baker (BN-48) laments how his beer disappeared from the barrel without a trace, around the time that Rachel Clenton had apparently been walking several times up and down the lane to Baker's residence. Whether both men are unwilling to directly come out and say they believe her to be a witch, or whether they think that their narratives are strong enough to say it for them, is impossible to know.

As a result though, Rachel Clenton was arrested, but no other steps were taken to bring her to justice (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 934). There is no mention of Sarah Bibber being arrested or tried.

### **5.6.2 Group 2: Bridget Bishop, Sarah Cole (of Lynn), and Philip English**

Whereas the depositions against the two accused in the previous group did not mention witches or witchcraft at all, some of the depositions against the three cases in this group do,

while still not actually making any direct accusations. There are six depositions given against Bridget Bishop by William Stacy (BN-04), Samuel Gray (BN-05), John Louder (BN-06), Richard Coman (BN-07), Susannah Sheldon (BN-08), and John Cook (BN-09), and the only mention of a witch in them is reportedly Bridget Bishop's own utterance in BN-04. Of the seven depositions given against Sarah Cole by Mary Eaton Sr. (BN-51), Elizabeth Wellman (BN-52), John Brown (BN-53a & BN-053b), Abraham Wellman (BN-54), John Cole (BN-55), and Isaac Wellman (BN-56), only John Cole (BN-55) (Sarah's husband) mentions witchcraft once, and even then it is not in direct relation to his wife. There is another supernatural mention in Mary Eaton Sr.'s (BN-51) account, where she reports of the accused, Sarah Cole, calling a sick cow bewitched, but no follow through is included. As for Philip English and the two depositions by William Beale (BN-79a & BN-79b), a single mention of 'witch' can be found, but similarly there is no direct accusation paired with it. As can be seen from Table 7, this group does not include any direct accusation, and the majority of the deponents are men.

| Accused               | Accuser | Direct accusations | Indirect accusations |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Bishop, Bridget       | female  | 0                  | 1                    |
|                       | male    | 0                  | 5                    |
| Cole, Sarah (of Lynn) | female  | 0                  | 2                    |
|                       | male    | 0                  | 5                    |
| English, Phillip      | female  | 0                  | 0                    |
|                       | male    | 0                  | 2                    |

**Table 7.** Direct and indirect accusations against Bridget Bishop, Sarah Cole, and Phillip English.

The first mention of 'witch' in this set of depositions, is in William Stacy's (BN-04) deposition against Bridget Bishop, below.

- (27) she askeing this Deponant whether his father would grind her grist: he put it to the said Bishop why she Asked: she answered because folks counted her a **witch** this Depo't made answer: he did not Question but that his father would grind it  
(emphasis added)  
BN-04



The word ‘witch’ is clearly just reported speech by Bridget Bishop, who seems to be well aware that some people think she is a witch. In John Cole’s (BN-55) deposition there is one mention of witchcraft, which can be seen below.

- (28) W'th in a week or 8 Days after S'd Cole saw a great Cat of an un-usuall bignes at my door, staring me in the face I pursued it w'ch went into the stalks near the house and tho it was very calm all the stalks did wave as if there had been a strong wind -- and he thinks since this some of his children have been afflicted by **witch-craft**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-55

The rest of his deposition mainly deals with run-ins with mysterious cats and dogs, and other unexplained phenomena at their house. The wife of the deponent mentioned, but the text gives no indication said wife is somehow held responsible for these things. The last instance of ‘witch’ in this group can be found in William Beale’s (BN-79a) account, below.

- (29) w'ch way came hee hither so soone this morneinge by land or by water or hath hee been at marbllee Head all nighte & then laboring to correct my [torn] not to thinke that hee was **a wich**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-79a

In contrast to the previous examples, this mention of a witch appears to give some indication of William Beale at least considering the possibility of his nightly visitor being a witch, but that is as far as it goes, and no accusation is made. The two depositions by William Beale (BN-79a & BN-79b) are among the longest of all in the material (612 and 402 words, respectively), but he has remarkably little of substance to say. His first deposition mainly covers his stay at the house where he saw the likeness of Philip English, with only the last quarter or so of it covering the various messages concerning his sons health and eventual death. The other deposition is an even more long-winded and circumspect accounting of a land dispute that Philip English was a part of.

Four of the six depositions against Bridget Bishop are among the longest depositions in the material (William Stacy (BN-04) 682, Samuel Grey (BN-05) 345, John Louder (BN-06) 633, and Richard Coman (BN-07) 449), with the striking exception of Susannah Sheldon’s

account (BN-08) (62), and to a lesser degree John Cook's (BN-09) (154). In contrast to this, the depositions against Sarah Cole are on the shorter side, the word count being as follows: Mary Eaton Sr. (BN-51) 121, Elizabeth Wellman (BN-52) 148, John Brown (BN-53a & BN-53b) 140 & 105, Abraham Wellman (BN-54) 160, John Cole (BN-55) 274, and Isaac Wellman (BN-56) 59. So inside the group at least, the length of the deposition does not give any indication of whether or not 'witch' or 'witchcraft' is mentioned. This topic will also be looked at in the following groups.

Of the other depositions against Sarah Cole, both Mary Eaton Sr. (BN-51) and Abraham Wellman (BN-54) reference misfortunes with cows, while Elizabeth Wellman (BN-52) tells of her inability to find said Sarah Cole in the woods after just having seen her with a black shape.

- (30) upon a Time Sarah Cole wife of Jno Cole of Lyn and myself had some Difference and with in avery Litle time **I had a Cow taken in a Strange maner** and at that same time the afores'd Goodw. Cole came to my house and Stood at my window and Said that she saw Something on the Cow. in the Barn  
(emphasis added)  
BN-51
- (31) I had a Cow which some told mee Sarah Cole Wife of Jno Cole had a great Desire to have & **the s'd Cow was taken with fitts** though before she was as Gentle a Cow as I would Desire to set Paill under after this time when she see any person coming to milk her she would run & let none come near her for about a week, **when s'd Cole was brought upon her examination that night & next morning, wee sent on of our Children to milk s'd Cow, but she was wild as before**, but after s'd Sarah Cole was sent from her own house to Cambridge when she was gone as wee thought to Redding or there about I sent one of my Children to milk her the Cow stood still & gave down her milk & did from that day till this time  
(emphasis added)  
BN-54

Such misfortunes with domestic animals, especially cows, are plentiful in the depositions, especially in indirect accusations. This is no wonder, as was mentioned in the introduction chapter, occurrences of maleficium often involved everyday lives, and livestock was a big part of it. In contrast, John Brown's two depositions discuss Sarah Cole talking about all church members and her husband being in league with the devil (BN-53a) and baking an

Indian pudding that turned red like blood (BN-53b), respectively. Isaac Wellman's (BN-56) succinct deposition testifies of Sarah Cole having wished harm upon her husband.

Without invoking the Witchcraft activity type or indirect speech acts, these depositions could hardly be considered evidence in a witchcraft trial. As for the fate of the accused, Bridget Bishop was tried, found guilty, and hanged on the 10th of June 1692, Sarah Cole was accused and arrested, but never went to trial, and neither did Philip English, who first fled and then, after having been arrested, managed to escape again (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 930, 935, 939). So in these first two groups combined, neither of which had any instances of direct accusations of witchcraft, only one in five of the accused was found guilty and hanged.

### 5.6.3 Group 3: Martha Carrier, Martha Corey, and Mary Easty

In the third group we see for the first time direct accusations of witchcraft, but the indirect accusations are still more numerous. Of the eight depositions against Martha Carrier, two include the word 'witch' and one 'witchcraft'. For Martha Corey, 'witch' is mentioned twice and 'witchcraft' three times in seven depositions. And as for Mary Easty, in seven depositions there are two mentions of each of 'witch' and 'witchcraft'. As can be seen from Table 8, this group includes the first direct accusations, and also for the first time, the majority of the deponents are women.

| Accused         | Accuser | Direct accusations | Indirect accusations |
|-----------------|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Carrier, Martha | female  | 2                  | 2                    |
|                 | male    | 1                  | 3                    |
| Corey, Martha   | female  | 2                  | 3                    |
|                 | male    | 0                  | 2                    |
| Easty, Mary     | female  | 2                  | 4                    |
|                 | male    | 0                  | 1                    |

**Table 8.** Direct and indirect accusations against Martha Carrier, Martha Corey, and Mary Easty.

The first instance of ‘witchcraft’ can be found in John Roger’s deposition against Martha Carrier (BN-39), and for the first time in the material examined so far, the word in question is in fact a direct accusation.

- (32) I did in my Conscience beleive then in the day of it & have so done Ever since & doe yet beleive that Martha Carrier was the occasion of those Ill accidents. **by Meanes of Witchcraft** she being a very Malicious Woman  
(emphasis added)  
BN-39

Unlike the instances in the previous groups, this time ‘witchcraft’ is clearly used in a direct accusation. Same is true of the other mentions of ‘witch’ or ‘witchcraft’ in depositions against Martha Carrier, which can be found in those given by Elizabeth Hubbard (BN-44) and Mary Walcott (BN-45), shown below.

- (33) I verily beleve in my hart that martha Carrier is a most **dreadful wicth** for severall times sence martha Carrier #[or hir Apperance] has been in prison she hath or hir Apperance com to me and most greviously tortured me by pinching pricking and [and] almost choaking me to death: which I beleve she could not doe if she ware not a **witch**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-44
- (34) I beleve in my heart that Martha carrier is a most **dreadfull wicth** and that she hath tormented me and the parsons affore named by **hir acts of wicthcraf**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-45

In addition to both depositions containing a direct accusation, the word ‘witch’ is also paired with the adjective ‘dreadful’, and the previously mentioned construction of the accused person afflicting or tormenting someone is also present. Many of the indirect accusations against Martha Carrier again mention problems with cattle, with one example below.

- (35) wife Martha Carrier was greatly troubled att & gave out Threatening words) that my husband Benjamin Abbott has not been only afflicted in his body, as he testifies, but alsoe that **strange & unusuall**

**things has happened to his Cattle, for some have died suddenly  
& strangely**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-38

As for the seven accusations against Martha Corey, the depositions by Elizabeth Hubbard (BN-67) and Mercy Lewis (BN-69) both contain a clear direct accusation of witchcraft, same as with those above against Martha Carrier.

(36) I beleve in my heart that martha Cory is a **dreadfull wicth** and that she hath very often **affle[c] ted and tormented me and the affor-mentioned parsons by acts of witchcraft**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-67

(37) I beleve in my heart that martha Cory is a most **dreadfull wicth** and that she hath very often **affleted me a[nd] severall others by hir acts of witchcraft**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-69

Both ‘dreadful witch’ and the mention of affliction are also present. The third accusation against Martha Corey that mentions ‘witchcraft’ is by Edward Putnam (BN-68), and must be classified as an indirect accusation, because the word in question is used in reporting another person’s actions, as can be seen below.

(38) see his dauter ann Putnam: **ho had Charged martha Cory to her face that she had hurt her by witchcraft**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-68

There is no other mentions of ‘witchcraft’ in the deposition, which is a lengthy (624 words) description of exactly how Martha Corey has been torturing Edward Putnam’s daughter Ann by her mere presence.

Of the two depositions against Mary Easty that reference ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’, both are clearly direct accusations. One of them is by Ann Putnam Jr. (BN-74) and contains the, by now familiar, refrains of “I veryly beleve in my hart that mary Estick is a most dreadfull wicth” and “she hath very often affleted me and the persons affore named by hir acts of

witchcraft”. The other one is by Mary Walcott (BN-71b) and is more interesting because it is a later addition to her first deposition (BN-71a), which does not mention either ‘witch’ or ‘witchcraft’.

Of the five indirect accusations given against Mary Easty, three of them (BN-71, BN-72, and BN-73) all mention the accused afflicting the deponent and/or others, but give no further information on the motives of said Mary Easty. The last two depositions are by Samuel Smith (BN-76) and Margaret Reddington (BN-77), each whom only has this one deposition in the material, which might be one explanation as to why their depositions are more descriptive than rote. Both of the depositions are very benign in comparison to the others in this case, Samuel Smith (BN-76) relates a tale of exchanging some words with Mary Easty and then experiencing a small mysterious blow to his shoulder, while the nearby stone wall rattled and spooked his horse. Margaret Reddington (BN-77) on the other hand tells of being sick and seeing an apparition of Mary Easty offering her some rancid meat.

Martha Carrier was tried and hanged on the 19th of August 1692, Martha Corey was tried and hanged on the 22nd of September 1692, while Mary Easty was first released, then re-arrested, tried and hanged on the same day as Martha Corey (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 933, 936, 939). So the survivability of the accused makes a sudden drop in this group when compared to the previous two groups.

#### **5.6.4 Group 4: Mary Bradbury, George Burroughs, and Giles Corey**

In this group there are mentions of ‘witch’ and/or ‘witchcraft’ in over half of the depositions, thus making direct accusations common for the first time. Mary Bradbury has seven mentions of ‘witch’ and six of ‘witchcraft’ in nine depositions. In the twelve depositions against George Burroughs, ‘witch’ is mentioned thirteen times and ‘witchcraft’ four. For Giles Corey the occurrences of ‘witch’ and ‘witchcraft’ are four and two, respectively, in five depositions. Women comprise the clear majority of the deponents in this group, and the direct accusations are also more prevalent than before, as can be seen from Table 9.

| Accused           | Accuser | Direct accusations | Indirect accusations |
|-------------------|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Bradbury, Mary    | female  | 7                  | 0                    |
|                   | male    | 1                  | 1                    |
| Burroughs, George | female  | 4                  | 4                    |
|                   | male    | 1                  | 3                    |
| Corey, Giles      | female  | 4                  | 1                    |
|                   | male    | 0                  | 0                    |

**Table 9.** Direct and indirect accusations against Mary Bradbury, George Burroughs, and Giles Corey.

In all the other depositions against Mary Bradbury by Ann Putnam Jr. (BN-11 & BN-17), Mary Warren (BN-13), James Carr (BN-14), Mary Walcott (BN-15 & BN-19), Elizabeth Hubbard (BN-16), and Sarah Bibber (BN-18), there is a direct accusation either by sincere belief in the accused being witch or a profession of affliction by witchcraft by the accused, or both. Only Samuel Endicott's deposition (BN-12) is an indirect accusation, and he too mentions the word 'witch', but is in reported speech, i.e. his account of others professing such belief as can be seen below.

- (39) w'ch made the men very much disturb'd about itt and say thatt **they heard mrs Bradbury was a witch** and thatt they verily beleived she was soe  
 (emphasis added)  
 BN-12

His is also the longest deposition in this group with 395 words, and is mostly a description of various unfortunate happenings aboard a ship, with no-one being afflicted or tormented by anyone. James Carr's (BN-14) deposition is almost as long as Samuel Endecott's (BN-12) with 378 words, and includes a detailed account of his dealings with Mary Bradbury and all the physical sufferings befalling him afterwards. The depositions given by women in this case all fall between 100–250 words, and are all remarkably similar to each other, in that they in addition to the already mentioned direct accusation models only include further repetition of the accused tormenting them or others, without any specific details or differences in the accounts. So it seems that whether or not there is a direct accusation, the male deponents either had much more to say, or indeed were encouraged to say it.

George Burroughs is one of the most famous characters in the Salem witchcraft crisis, so it is no wonder that the depositions against him number the highest at 12. The first three depositions in this group by Samuel Webber (BN-23), Thomas Greenslit (BN-24), and Simon Willard (BN-25) form an interesting trio by themselves; not only do they not contain any mention of ‘witch’ or ‘witchcraft’, but even in the light of a witchcraft trial and the presupposition of the Witchcraft activity type or indirect speech acts, are curiously mild.

- (40) George Burroughs was then Minester there, and haveing heard much of the great strength of him s'd Burroughs; he Coming to our house wee ware in discourse about the same and he then told mee that he had **put his fingers into the Bung of a Barrell of Malasses and lifted it up, and carryed it Round him** and sett it downe againe.  
(emphasis added)  
BN-23
- (41) he Saw Mr George Burroughs **lift and hold Out a gunn of Six foot barrell or thereabouts putting the forefinger of his right hand into the Muzle of s'd gunn** and So held it Out at Armes End Only with that finger and further this deponent Testifieth that at the Same time he Saw the **Said Burroughs take up a full barrell of Malasses w'th but two fingers of one of his hands** in the bung & Carry it from the Stage head to the Door at the End of the Stage Without letting it downe  
(emphasis added)  
BN-24
- (42) George Borroughs his great strength saying **he Could take:a barrill of mallasses out of a Cannoe or boat alone:** and that he Could. take it in his hands or arms out of the Cannoo or boat and carry it and set it on the shore  
(emphasis added)  
BN-25

These accounts of George Burroughs' above average strength are among the most innocuous accusations in the entire source material, as they contain no personal injuries or hardships whatsoever. They are also diametrically opposite to the other accusations made against George Burroughs in this group, where not only direct accusations are made, but the descriptions of his deeds are rife with different kinds of horrific violence and murder. The mildest of the other depositions is that of Hannah Harris (BN-27), which similarly omits any mention of ‘witch’ or ‘witchcraft’, but is much more negative in tone, telling of



the harsh way George Burroughs treated his wife and suggesting that he was in fact the reason for his wife's sickness.

- (43) he hath **often scolded wife** and told her that he knew what they said when he was abroad and further saith that upone a time when his wife had Laine In Not above one weak that he fell out with his wife and kept her by Discorce at the Dore **till she fell sicke** In the place and grew wors at night so that the above said hannah harres was afraid she would dye and thay called In thare Naibours and the above said **burroses Daughter told One of the women that was thare the cause of her mothers Ellness** and the above said burros chid his Daughter for telling  
(emphasis added)  
BN-27

There is one occurrence of witch in the depositions against George Burroughs that is not a direct accusation, in Mercy Lewis' (BN-31) account below.

- (44) he againe tortured me most dreadfully and threatened to kill me for he said I should not witnes against him also **he tould me that he had made Abigaill Hoobs: a wicth** and severall more  
(emphasis added)  
BN-31

The rest of the depositions in this case, regardless of the directness of their accusations, are conspicuously more violent in nature than other depositions looked at thus far. Not only is George Burroughs reported tormenting, torturing, and choking the deponents in all manner of ways, but in most of the depositions there are also accusations of him having murdered several different people. These accusations are either heard directly from the apparition of George Burroughs, or his various victims appearing in spirit form to tell tales of his murderous exploits, as can be seen in the examples below.

- (45) then presently he tould me that his name was George Burroughs and that he had had three wives: and that he had **bewitched the Two first of them to death:** and that **he kiled Mist. Lawson** because she was so unwilling to goe from the village and **also killed Mr Lawsons child**  
(emphasis added)  
BN-28

- (46) Im-mediately there appeared to me mr.Burroughs two first wives in their winding sheets whom I formerly well knew and tould me that mr. Burroughs **had murdered them** and that their blood did crie for vengance againt him  
(emphasis added)  
BN-35

Two further details emerge in the depositions given against George Burroughs, that show up only sporadically and rarely in all the rest of the material: the devil and the devil's book. In depositions with direct accusations, the devil is mentioned in BN-28 & BN-36 and the book in BN-28, BN-32 & BN-34, while in depositions with indirect accusations they are mentioned in BN-31 and BN-31 & BN-33, respectively. The book is also mentioned in three of the depositions against Giles Corey, BN-57, BN-58, and BN-59, together with direct accusations of witchcraft. So as is apparent, both terms individually or together are prevalent in these two cases. In all the rest of the source material there are only four other depositions where these terms are used: two of which are depositions given against Martha Corey, the wife of Giles Corey (BN-63: devil & book & BN-67: book). The other two instances are one mention of the devil in deposition BN-53a, given by John Brown against Sarah Cole, and on mention of the book in deposition BN-22, given by Mary Walcott against Sarah Buckley.

It is of course entirely possible that other such cases rife with descriptions of the devil and his book are among the other depositions not included in this thesis, but from this source material at least it can be said that depositions given against men are much more likely to contain them, versus depositions given against women. As we can probably rule out the possibility of George Burroughs or Giles Corey actually working together with the devil, something about them as accused, or their specific cases—be it gender, age, status, time frame, etc.— seem to have made it more likely for the devil to make an appearance in the depositions given against them. This one aspect alone would be worth further study, as to who was seen to be in league with the devil and who merely tempted by him.

Of the five depositions against Giles Corey, all of them profess that he has afflicted the deponents and only Mary Warren (BN-60) fails to mention her clear belief in him being a wizard. The deposition by Elizabeth Hubbard is the shortest deposition in all of the material, just 32 words, and contains absolutely no supernumerary information.

- (47) Eliz Hubbard. to the Jury of Inquest. that Giles Cory hath several times afflicted [me] with several sorts of torments. I veryly think he is a wizzard & afflicted me by wichcraft  
BN-61

This it seems, is the absolute bare minimum information that a direct accusation of witchcraft can contain. The other depositions are somewhat longer and give more information on the ways that Giles Corey has been tormenting the deponents. And, in the depositions by Ann Putnam Jr. (BN-57), Mercy Lewis (BN-58) and Sarah Bibber (BN-59), there is also the common thread of Giles Corey urging the girls to write in his book.

Mary Bradbury was tried and condemned, but escaped, George Burroughs was tried and hanged on the 19th of August 1692, and Giles Corey, who refused to co-operate, was pressed to death on the 19th of September 1692, the only victim of the trials to die by other means than hanging (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 931, 932, 936). Thus far the first two groups have fared best, in terms of survival. In the previous third group all accused were hanged, and the accused in this group are not faring that much better, as the only survivor was the result of a lucky escape after being found guilty.

### **5.6.5 Group 5: Sarah Buckley and Abigail Faulkner Sr.**

This last group contains two cases, those of Sarah Buckley and Abigail Faulkner Sr. and it is a polar opposite of the first group, in that in both cases all depositions contain both a direct statement of belief in the accused being a witch and a further mention of her having afflicted the accused and/or others with acts of witchcraft. This is not particularly surprising, as the deponents against Sarah Buckley were Ann Putnam Jr. (BN-20), Elizabeth Hubbard (BN-21), and Mary Walcott (BN-22), and three of the six deponents against Abigail Faulkner Sr., were Mary Walcott (BN-81), Mary Warren (BN-83), and Ann Putnam Jr. (BN-85), each of whom had already given depositions in previous groups, most of which have included direct accusations. Rose Foster (BN-80), Martha Sprague (BN-82), and Sarah Phelps (BN-84) also gave depositions against Abigail Faulkner Sr., those being their only depositions in the material of this thesis, but their one and only occurrence certainly fits in with the other women. In addition to all the depositions including direct accusations, the deponents in this group are all women, as is apparent from Table 10.

| Accused               | Accuser | Direct accusations | Indirect accusations |
|-----------------------|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Buckley, Sarah        | female  | 3                  | 0                    |
|                       | male    | 0                  | 0                    |
| Faulkner, Abigail Sr. | female  | 6                  | 0                    |
|                       | male    | 0                  | 0                    |

**Table 10.** Direct and indirect accusations against Sarah Buckley and Abigail Faulkner Sr.

As was mentioned before, depositions against the same person have a tendency to somewhat mirror each other in descriptions or events, but the case of Abigail Faulkner Sr. takes this to a whole new level, as can be seen when comparing the following depositions by Mary Walcott (BN-81) and Ann Putnam Jr. (BN-85).

- (48) The deposition of mary walcott who testifieth and saith that about the 9.th August 1692 I was most dreadfully afflicted by a woman that tould me hir name was abigail Falkner.but on the 11th. of August being the day of the examination of Abigail falkner she did most dreadfully afflict me during the time of hir examination I saw Abigail falkner or hir Apperance most greviously afflet and torment sarah phelps and Ann putnam: and I veryly beleve in my heart that Abigail Falkner is a wicth and that she has often afflicted me and the afforesaid persons by acts of wicthcraft

The above name mary Walcutt affirmed before the Grand inquest that the above written Evidence is truth upon her Oath 17: Sept.: 1692  
BN-81

- (49) The deposition of Ann putnam who testifieth and saith that about the 9th of August 1692 I was afflicted by a woman which tould me hir name was Falkner: but on the 11th of August being the day of the Examination of Abigail Falkner she did most dreadfully torment me during the time of hir examination also on the day of hir examination I saw Abigaill Falkner or hir Apperance most greviously afflict and torment mary walcot sarah phelps. and I beleve that Abigal Falkner is a wicth and that she has often afflicted me and severall others by acts of wicthcraft

The above named Ann Putnam affirmed before the Grand inquest that the above written Evidence is the truth upon her Oath.  
sworne before the grand Jury Sept: 17. 1692  
BN-85

As is apparent, there are very little differences between the two. The other four depositions against Abigail Faulkner Sr. in this group are similarly almost carbon copies of these two. There are some minor differences in that not all of them specifically mention the date 11th of August, a few give additional information about Abigail Faulkner Sr. choking the

deponents with a mere look, and there is some variation on adjectives used, but all in all they resemble each other uncannily. The three depositions against Sarah Buckley have a little more range, but have the same basic components as well.

Sarah Buckley was arrested, but never brought to trial, whereas Abigail Faulkner Sr. confessed and was condemned to die after her trial, but as she was pregnant the execution was postponed, and never put into action, so regardless of the very direct accusations against her, Abigail Faulkner Sr. survived (Rosenthal et al. 2009: 932, 940). And while her survival seems more a twist of fate than something naturally arising from the circumstances, in the five groups discussed the only one where all the accused were both found guilty and executed is group 3. As the cases under discussion cover only a portion of the full Salem material, added with the, frankly lucky, escape by pregnancy of Abigail Faulkner Sr., no definitive conclusions can be drawn on the survivability of accused in regards to the directness of accusations against them. That said, the results of this sample show it being more likely for an accused to survive, if a) no-one or b) everyone directly accuses them, than if they c) have a mixed set of direct and indirect accusations levied against them.

## **5.7 Further discussion on gender trends**

As became apparent in sections 5.6.1–5.6.5, individuals making direct accusations of witchcraft were predominantly women. In the whole source material there are only three men who made a direct accusation; James Carr against Mary Bradbury (BN-14), Elizar Keyser against George Burroughs (BN-36), and John Roger against Martha Carrier (BN-39). As there are only three instances of such accusations, two against women and one against a man, no conclusions can be drawn on whether men were more likely to directly accuse women over men. Especially as the majority of the accused were women, the two accusations against women conform to the general gender distribution. As for women making direct accusations, of the 30 direct accusations 22 were made against other women. This number also conforms to the overall gender distribution among the accused, so it is difficult to say anything conclusive about it. But when looking at the ratio between 48 depositions made by women having 30 direct accusations compared to the 30 depositions made by men having only 3 direct accusations, it can be confidently be stated that, in this

material at least, in Salem women made significantly more direct accusations in their depositions than men.

## 6 Conclusion

The source material of this thesis came from the body of original documents surviving from the Salem witchcraft crisis of 1692, where much of Massachusetts was in the grip of a paranoia-style round-robin of witchcraft accusations. The directness and indirectness of accusations was the subject of study, along with the classification of the different documents and the sorting out of those deemed depositions. As one might expect, the differences between direct and indirect accusations in the Salem witchcraft records are not at all clear cut, but on more of a spectrum. The depositions range from short and to the point unambiguous accusations through depositions that contain many same elements but sometimes include the ‘I believe s/he is a witch’ (or similar) construction and sometimes do not, to the other end of meandering descriptive prose which the reader is hard pressed to understand as an accusation of witchcraft at all, unless the context of a witch trial is taken into account.

### 1) The distribution of direct and indirect accusations in the Salem witchcraft depositions.

The source material included 78 depositions, given against 13 different individuals, by 47 different deponents. The word ‘witch’ or ‘witchcraft’ was mentioned in half of them, but not all such occurrences were direct accusation, but instead e.g. reported speech. Thus there were more indirect accusations than direct in the material, as can be seen from Table 11.

| Accuser | Direct accusations | Indirect accusations |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------|
| female  | 30                 | 18                   |
| male    | 3                  | 27                   |

**Table 11.** Total number of direct and indirect accusations.

## **2) What kinds of trends and constructions can be found in them?**

Two clear constructions of direct accusation emerged from the analysis of the depositions, the above referenced ‘I believe s/he is a witch’ and the ‘acts of witchcraft’, both of which made an appearance numerous times (29 and 26, respectively). In the indirect accusations there was much more variance, some being very close in form and substance to those depositions containing direct accusations, while others varied greatly from those and each other. In such depositions the loosely common elements were a narrative of happenings or misfortunes befalling the deponent—sometimes incredibly mild and unsuspecting events—and some proximity to the accused, no matter how innocent, and bovine misfortunes were often described.

## **3) Does the age or gender of the accusers and accused play a role in the directness of the accusations?**

Of the accused individuals in the thirteen cases under analysis only three were male, while ten were female. In deponents, the gender ratio was 19 females to 28 males, but with the women giving more depositions per person, the gender ratio in depositions was 48 to 30. As for the gender of the accused, there was no apparent correlation between the gender of the individual and the number of depositions given against them. The depositions given by women as opposed to men tended on average to be somewhat shorter and significantly more often contained direct accusations and formulaic structures, whereas depositions given by men had a larger number of “individualistic” description narratives.

## **4) How does the directness of the accusations reflect the outcome of the accusation, i.e. is there a difference between trial outcomes for directly and indirectly accused individuals?**

Without looking at all the surviving deposition of the Salem witchcraft crisis, it is impossible to draw any definitive or far-reaching conclusions on how the directness or indirectness of accusations reflects the survival of the accused. However, for the cases studied in this thesis the results show that an accused individual is more likely to survive if there is a consensus in the accusations, i.e. if all accuser levy either direct or indirect



accusations. The death toll was highest among the individuals who had a mixed set of direct and indirect accusations made against them.

The work done in this thesis has aimed to answer the set research questions as best it can, though with the full understanding that there is room for much further and more detailed analysis of the directness of accusations in the Salem witchcraft documents in general, and even in this more limited sample specifically. An interesting future research possibility would be to contrast the results in this thesis with a study of scribal influences in the depositions. However, the reader will hopefully now have a clearer idea of the directness and indirectness of accusations in the depositions, and how they are formulated and presented.

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# Appendix A: Source material

from: <http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/category/swp.html>

SWP number in brackets is the identifier for the online version. Word count of the depositions, excluding any detached dates, further affirmations given in court, signatures and other additions, has been added in bolded curly brackets { } after the name of the deposition.

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Case names are as they appear in the book version of The Salem Witchcraft Papers.

## I. Sarah Bibber (SWP No. 012)

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n12.html>

**BN-01** (page 79, SWP No. 12.2)  
Joseph Fowler v. Sarah Bibber **{73}**

**BN-02** (page 80, SWP No. 12.4)  
Richard Walker v. Sarah Bibber **{40}**

~~**BN-03** (page 80, SWP No. 12.5)~~  
Sarah Nurse v. Sarah Bibber  
**Excluded (statement of defense)**

## II. Bridget Bishop, Executed, June 10, 1692 (SWP No. 013)

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n13.html>

**BN-04** (page 92, SWP No. 13.8)  
William Stacy v. Bridget Bishop **{682}**

**BN-05** (page 94, SWP No. 13.9)  
Samuel Gray v. Bridget Bishop **{345}**

**BN-06** (page 99, SWP No. 13.11)  
John Louder v. Bridget Bishop **{633}**

**BN-07** (page 101, SWP No. 13.13)  
Richard Coman v. Bridget Bishop **{449}**

**BN-08** (page 104, SWP No. 13.16)  
Susannah Sheldon v. Bridget Bishop **{62}**

**BN-09** (page 104, SWP No. 13.17)  
John Cook v. Bridget Bishop **{154}**

### **III. Sarah Bishop (SWP No. 014)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n14.html>

~~**BN-10** (page 111, SWP No. 14.2)~~  
James Kettle v. Sarah Bishop  
**Excluded (hearsay/corroboratorion)**

### **IV. Mary Bradbury (SWP No. 016)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n16.html>

**BN-11** (page 121, SWP No. 16.9)  
Ann Putnam Jr. v. Mary Bradbury **{110}**

**BN-12** (page 122, SWP No. 16.10)  
Samuel Endicott v. Mary Bradbury **{395}**

**BN-13** (page 123, SWP No. 16.11)  
Mary Warren v. Mary Bradbury **{169}**

**BN-14** (page 124, SWP No. 16.13)  
James Carr v. Mary Bradbury **{378}**

**BN-15** (page 125, SWP No. 16.14)  
Mary Walcott v. Mary Bradbury **{120}**

**BN-16** (page 126, SWP No. 16.16)  
Elizabeth Hubbard v. Mary Bradbury **{184}**

**BN-17** (page 127, SWP No. 16.17)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. Mary Bradbury **{243}**

**BN-18** (page 128, SWP No. 16.18)  
Sarah Bibber v. Mary Bradbury **{167}**

**BN-19** (page 128, SWP No. 16.19)  
Mary Walcott v. Mary Bradbury **{233}**

### **V. Sarah Buckley (SWP No. 021)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n21.html>

**BN-20** (page 148, SWP No. 21.5)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. Sarah Buckley **{162}**

**BN-21** (page 148, SWP No. 21.6)  
Elizabeth Hubbard v. Sarah Buckley {77}

**BN-22** (page 149, SWP No. 21.7)  
Mary Walcott v. Sarah Buckley {311}

**VI. George Burroughs, Executed, August 19, 1692 (SWP No. 022)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n22.html>

**BN-23** (page 160, SWP No. 22.12)  
Samuel Webber v. George Burroughs {85}

**BN-24** (page 160, SWP No. 22.13)  
Thomas Greenslit v. George Burroughs {142}

**BN-25** (page 162, SWP No. 22.15)  
Simon Willard v. George Burroughs {142}

~~**BN-26** (page 162, SWP No. 22.16)~~  
Mary Webber v. George Burroughs  
**Excluded (hearsay/corroboration)**

**BN-27** (page 163, SWP No. 22.17)  
Hannah Harris v. George Burroughs {218}

**BN-28** (page 164, SWP No. 22.18)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. George Burroughs {326}

**BN-29** (page 166, SWP No. 22.21)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. George Burroughs {414}

**BN-30** (page 167, SWP No. 22.23)  
Sarah Bibber v. George Burroughs {197}

**BN-31** (page 168, SWP No. 22.24)  
Mercy Lewis v. George Burroughs {401}

**BN-32** (page 170, SWP No. 22.25)  
Elizabeth Hubbard v. George Burroughs {315}

**BN-33** (page 171, SWP No. 22.26)  
Susannah Sheldon v. George Burroughs {189}

~~**BN-34** (page 171, SWP No. 22.27)~~  
Benjamin Hutchinson v. George Burroughs  
**Excluded (hearsay/corroboration)**

**BN-35** (page 174, SWP No. 22.30)  
Mary Walcott v. George Burroughs {309}

**BN-36** (page 176, SWP No. 22.34)  
Elizar Keyser v. George Burroughs {429}

**VII. Martha Carrier, Executed, August 19, 1692 (SWP No. 024)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n24.html>

**BN-37** (page 189, SWP No. 24.8)  
Benjamin Abbott v. Martha Carrier {269}

**BN-38** (page 190, SWP No. 24.9)  
Sarah Abbott v. Martha Carrier {161}

**BN-39** (page 190, SWP No. 24.10)  
John Roger v. Martha Carrier {245}

**BN-40** (page 191, SWP No. 24.11)  
Phoebe Chandler v. Martha Carrier {407}

~~**BN-41** (page 192, SWP No. 24.11)~~  
Bridget Chandler v. Martha Carrier  
**Excluded (hearsay/corroboration)**

**BN-42** (page 192, SWP No. 24.13)  
Allen Toothaker v. Martha Carrier {314}

**BN-43** (page 193, SWP No. 24.14)  
Samuel Preston v. Martha Carrier {134}

**BN-44** (page 194, SWP No. 24.15)  
Elizabeth Hubbard v. Martha Carrier {188}

**BN-45** (page 195, SWP No. 24.16)  
Mary Walcott v. Martha Carrier {196}

**VIII. Rachel Clenton (SWP No. 032)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n32.html>

**BN-46** (page 216, SWP No. 32.3)  
Mary Fuller, Sr., v. Rachel Clenton {145}

**BN-47** (page 217, SWP No. 32.4)  
Thomas Boarman v. Rachel Clenton {204}

**BN-48** (page 217, SWP No. 32.5)  
William Baker v. Rachel Clenton

~~**BN-49** (page 218, SWP No. 32.6)~~

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Mary Edwards v. Rachel Clenton  
**Excluded (more than one accuser)**

**BN-50** (page 219, SWP No. 32.7)  
James Fuller, Jr., v. Rachel Clenton **{292}**

**IX. Sarah Cole (of Lynn) (SWP No. 034)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n34.html>

**BN-51** (page 230, SWP No. 34.7)  
Mary Eaton, Sr., v. Sarah Cole **{121}**

**BN-52** (page 230, SWP No. 34.8)  
Elizabeth Wellman v. Sarah Cole **{148}**

**BN-53** (page 231, SWP No. 34.9)  
John Brown v. Sarah Cole

Divided into:

BN-53a **{140}**

BN-53b **{105}**

**BN-54** (page 231, SWP No. 34.10)  
Abraham Wellman v. Sarah Cole **{160}**

**BN-55** (page 232, SWP No. 34.11)  
John Cole v. Sarah Cole **{274}**

**BN-56** (page 233, SWP No. 34.12)  
Isaac Wellman v. Sarah Cole **{59}**

**X. Giles Corey, Pressed to Death, September 16, 1692 (SWP No. 037)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n37.html>

**BN-57** (page 241, SWP No. 37.4)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. Giles Corey **{160}**

**BN-58** (page 242, SWP No. 37.5)  
Mercy Lewis v. Giles Corey **{127}**

**BN-59** (page 242, SWP No. 37.6)  
Sarah Bibber v. Giles Corey **{138}**

**BN-60** (page 243, SWP No. 37.7)  
Mary Warren v. Giles Corey **{80}**

**BN-61** (page 244, SWP No. 37.7)  
Elizabeth Hubbard v. Giles Corey **{32}**



~~BN-62~~ (page 244, SWP No. 37.8)  
Benjamin Gould v. Giles Corey  
Excluded (more than one accused)

**XI. Martha Corey, Executed, September 22, 1692 (SWP No. 038)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n38.html>

~~BN-63~~ (page 258, SWP No. 38.8)  
Abigail Williams v. Martha Corey {92}

~~BN-64~~ (page 259, SWP No. 38.9)  
Ephraim Sheldon v. Martha Corey  
Excluded (hearsay/corroboation)

~~BN-65~~ (page 259, SWP No. 38.11)  
Giles Corey v. Martha Corey {221}

~~BN-66~~ (page 263, SWP No. 38.13)  
Elizabeth Booth v. Martha Corey

Divided into:

BN-66a {39}

BN-66b {48}

~~BN-67~~ (page 263, SWP No. 38.14)  
Elizabeth Hubbard v. Martha Corey {191}

~~BN-68~~ (page 264, SWP No. 38.15)  
Edward Putnam v. Martha Corey {624}

~~BN-69~~ (page 265, SWP No. 38.16)  
Mercy Lewis v. Martha Corey {181}

**XII. Ann Dolliver (SWP No. 041)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n41.html>

~~BN-70~~ (page 271)  
Elizabeth Nicholson v. Ann Dolliver  
Excluded (hearsay/corroboation)

**XIII. Mary Easty, Executed, September 22, 1692 (SWP No. 045)**

<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/n45.html>

~~BN-71~~ (page 296, SWP No. 45.13)  
Mary Walcott v. Mary Easty

Divided into:

BN-71a {160}

BN-71b {76}

**BN-72** (page 296, SWP No. 45.14)  
Sarah Bibber v. Mary Easty {112}

**BN-73** (page 297, SWP No. 45.15)  
Mary Warren v. Mary Easty {43}

**BN-74** (page 298, SWP No. 45.16)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. Mary Easty {91}

~~**BN-75** (page 301, SWP No. 45.19)~~  
Edward Putnam v. Mary Easty  
Excluded (hearsay/corroboation)

**BN-76** (page 301, SWP No. 45.20)  
Samuel Smith v. Mary Easty {130}

**BN-77** (page 302, SWP No. 45.21)  
Margaret Reddington v. Mary Easty {104}

**XIV. Esther Elwell (SWP No. 046)**  
<http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/n46.html>

~~**BN-78** (page 306, SWP No. 46.2)~~  
Testimony of James Stevens  
Excluded (hearsay/corroboation)

**XV. Phillip English (SWP No. 049)**  
<http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/n49.html>

**BN-79** (page 317, SWP No. 49.5)  
William Beale v. Phillip English

Divided into:

BN-79a {612}

BN-79b {402}

**XVI. Abigail Faulkner, Sr. (SWP No. 052)**  
<http://saalem.lib.virginia.edu/n52.html>

**BN-80** (page 330, SWP No. 52.4)  
Rose Foster v. Abigail Faulkner {72}

**BN-81** (page 330, SWP No. 52.5)  
Mary Walcott v. Abigail Faulkner {104}

**BN-82** (page 330, SWP No. 52.6)  
Martha Sprague v. Abigail Faulkner {76}

**BN-83** (page 331, SWP No. 52.7)  
Mary Warren v. Abigail Faulkner {98}

**BN-84** (page 331, SWP No. 52.8)  
Sarah Phelps v. Abigail Faulkner {120}

**BN-85** (page 332, SWP No. 52.9)  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. Abigail Faulkner {104}

~~**BN-86** (page 332, not included in the online version)~~  
Ann Putnam, Jr. v. Abigail Faulkner  
**Excluded (copy)**

# Appendix B: Suomenkielinen tiivistelmä

Tämän tutkielman aiheena ovat suorat ja epäsuorat syytökset Salemin vuoden 1692 noitaoikeudenkäynneistä säilyneissä valaehdoissa todistuksissa (depositions). Tutkielma vastaa kysymyksiin siitä, miten materiaali jakautuu suoriin ja epäsuoriin syytöksiin, miten syytökset eroavat toisistaan, vaikuttaako todistusten antajien sukupuoli ja/tai ikä syytösten suoruuteen, ja miten syytösten suoruus vaikuttaa syytettyjen yksilöiden kohtaloon, toisin sanoen onko syytösten suoruus merkittävä tekijä syytetyn yksilön selviämisen/teloittamisen. Johdannon ja yhteenvedon lisäksi tutkielma sisältää teoriaosuuden, jossa perustellaan miten todistusten voidaan määrittää sisältävän suoraa tai epäsuoraa syytöksiä, tutkimusosan, jossa käydään lyhyesti läpi Salem-asiakirjoja käsitteleviä muita tutkimuksia, materiaaliosan, jossa käydään läpi materiaalivalinta analyysiosaa varten, sekä analyysiosan, jossa valittu tutkimusmateriaali käydään läpi suorien ja epäsuorien syytösten pohjalta, ja jossa esitellään näistä syytöksistä esiin nousevia seikkoja ja trendejä.

Puheaktiteoria perustuu John Searlen teorioihin, ja vaikka kaikki hänen näkemyksensä eivät olekaan yleismaailmallisesti hyväksytyjä, niin suorien ja epäsuorien puheaktien olemassaolosta ei ole ristiriitaa. Puheakti on yksinkertaisuudessaan suullinen tai kirjallinen ilmaisu, jonka tarkoitus on välittää jokin tietty merkitys (Searle 1972:44). Tässä työssä esitetään, että kaikki lähdemateriaaliin valitut valaehdoiset todistukset voidaan määrittää noituussyytöksiksi, vaikka kaikissa niissä syytöstä ei tuodakaan suoraan sanallisesti esille. Tämä väite perustuu epäsuoriin puheakteihin, joiden avulla voidaan osoittaa, että suoraan sanotun lisäksi lausahduksella voi olla myös toinen, epäsuora merkitys.

Gricen *yhteistyöperiaate* ja *maksimit* (määrä, laatu, yhteneväisyys ja tapa) määrittävät periaatteita keskustelulle. Yhteistyöperiaatteen (Grice 1993: 26) mukaan kaikki keskustelu on riippuvaista osallistujien yhteistyöstä. Maksimit (Grice 1993: 26–27) puolestaan asettavat lisäehtoja keskustelulle; *määrä* rajoittaa osallistujaa sanomasta liikaa tai liian vähän, *laatu* vaatii osallistujaa puhumaan totta, *yhteneväisyys* olettaa osallistujan pysyvän asiassa, ja *tapa* kieltää osallistujaa olemasta epäselvä- tai määräinen. Vaikka tutkittava materiaali vaikuttaa ensi näkemältä rikkovan näitä määreitä, etenkin yhteneväisyyttä ja tapaa, todellisuudessa maksimeja noudatetaan *lisäoletuksen* (implicature) ja *epäsuorien puheaktien* (indirect speech acts) avulla. Lausahdus on asiaan liittyvä ja ymmärrettävä, jos

kuulija (tai lukija) sen sellaisena ymmärtää, mikä pitää paikkansa Salem-asiakirjojen kohdalla. Voimme siis sanoa, että todistajat pyrkivät mahdollisuuksien mukaan noudattamaan yhteistyöperiaatetta ja maksimeja, koska he osallistuvat viralliseen lakiprosessiin, jonka sääntöjen noudattaminen on yksittäisten henkilöiden oman edun mukaista, etenkin noitasyytösten aikana.

Lausuntojen *merkitys* on ensiarvoisen tärkeää Salem-asiakirjojen analysoinnissa. Kuten Mey toteaa, meidän pitää ymmärtää mitä ihmiset sanovat, jotta voimme ymmärtää mitä he tarkoittavat (1994:100). Searlen mukaan yksinkertaisin merkitys muodostuu siitä, että puhuja tarkoittaa juuri sitä mitä sanoo (1975:59). Näistä lähtökohdista joudutaan kuitenkin siirtymään kohti epäsuoria puheakteja, koska jo ylimalkainen silmäys Salem-asiakirjoihin osoittaa, että niissä merkityksen muodostaminen ei ole näin helppoa ja selkeää.

Kun lauseella on lisäoletus, sillä on toinen, pinnallista merkitystä syvällisempi merkitys. Lisäoletus eroaa *implikaatiosta* (implication) siten, että siinä merkitys ei suoraan johdu selkeästä loogisesta syy–seuraus-päätelmästä, ja sen oikea ymmärtäminen edellyttää lisätietoa lausahduksen olosuhteista. Lisäoletuksia on kahdenlaisia, *konventionaalinen* (conventional) ja *keskustelullinen* (conversational), mutta vain keskustelullisella on merkitystä Salem-dokumenttien analysoinnissa. Lisäoletus on myös hyvin laaja-alainen määritelmä, joten analyysissa on tarpeen huomioida myös puheaktit, suorat ja etenkin epäsuorat.

Teoriakappaleessa osoitetaan vielä, että *kielikuva* (metaphor) ja *eufemismi* (euphemism) eivät sovellu määritelmiksi Salem-dokumenttien epäsuorien syytösten analysoinnissa, koska molemmissa niistä se mitä sanotaan, ei pidä kirjaimellisesti paikkaansa. Analysoitavissa lausunnoissa sen sijaan se mitä sanotaan on totta, mutta sen lisäksi lausunnolla on myös toinen, piilossa oleva merkitys (epäsuora syytös).

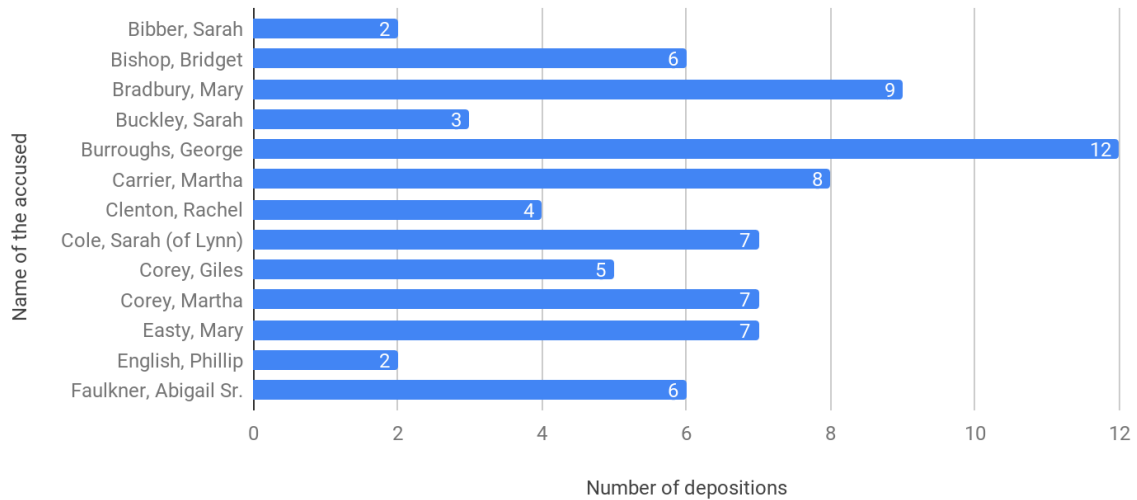
Yhteenvetona voidaan vielä todeta, että menestyksekkäs viestintä ihmisten kesken edellyttää tiettyjen yhteisten sääntöjen noudattamista, sekä tietoista aikomusta välittää viesti. Lisäksi on mahdollista välittää tietoa sanomalla jotain, mutta tarkoittamalla lisäksi jotain muuta (lisäoletus), ja tällaisen viestin onnistunut tulkinta edellyttää, että vastaanottajalla on tarpeellinen tieto tilanteesta, jossa lausahdus on tehty. Tällaiset viestit välitetään epäsuorien

puheaktien avulla, joissa näkyvän (ja todenmukaisen) pintamerkityksen alla on toinen, piilossa oleva, merkitys.

Tutkielman materiaalivalinta on tehty Boyer & Nissenbaumin kirjan *The Salem Witchcraft Papers: Verbatim Transcripts of the Legal Documents of the Salem Witchcraft Outbreak of 1692* (1977) pohjalta. Materiaalin analysoinnissa ja viitteissä on käytetty myös kyseisen teoksen online-versiota (<http://salem.lib.virginia.edu/category/swp.html>), josta materiaali on saatu digitaalisessa muodossa käyttöön. Liite A sisältää listan lähdemateriaalin asiakirjoista, sekä linkit online-versioon. Osiossa käydään läpi valaehtoisen todistuksen määrittäminen, sekä lisärajoitukset, joiden perusteella materiaalia on karsittu sopivan kokoiseksi otannaksi. Materiaalista on suljettu pois seuraavat todistukset: a) kaikki sellaiset todistukset, joissa on useampi syytetty tai syyttäjä, b) kaikki sellaiset todistukset, jotka koostuvat pelkästään kuulopuheista, ja c) kaikki jonkun **puolesta**, eikä vastaan annetut todistukset. Näiden määritysten jälkeen materiaalin otettiin kaikki rajoituksia noudattavat Boyer & Nissenbaumin (1977) kirjan ensimmäisen osan valaehdot todistukset. Lopullinen tutkimusmateriaali sisältää 78 todistusta, jotka on annettu 13:a eri henkilöä vastaan.

Analyysiosassa käydään läpi valittu materiaali ja esitellään löydökset. Annettujen todistusten lukumäärissä on suurta vaihtelua sekä sen suhteen, kuinka monta todistusta yksittäistä henkilöä kohtaan on annettu, että sen, kuinka monta todistusta yksittäinen henkilö on antanut. Vähiten todistuksia on annettu Phillip Englishiä (2) ja Sarah Bibberia (2) vastaan, kun taas eniten todistuksia on annettu George Burroughsia vastaan (12 kpl). Muut tapaukset asettuivat kohtalaisen tasaisesti tälle vaihteluvälille, kuten alla olevasta taulukosta näkyy.

### Number of depositions against each accused



### Taulukko 1. Syytettyjä vastaan annetut valaehitoiset lausunnot.

Tässä materiaaliotoksessa syytetyn henkilön sukupuoli ei osoittautunut vaikuttavaksi tekijäksi todistusten määrän suhteen. Todistuksien antajista suurin osa antoi vain yhden todistuksen ja ainoastaan kymmenen henkilöä antoi kaksi tai useamman todistuksen. Näistä vain kaksi oli miehiä, jotka molemmat antoivat kaksi todistusta. Eniten todistuksia antoivat Ann Putnam Jr. ja Mary Walcott, molemmat kahdeksan kappaletta. Syytettyjä materiaalissa oli 13 kappaletta, joista kolme oli miehiä ja kymmenen naisia. Todistuksen antajista 19 oli naisia ja 28 miehiä, mutta naiset antoivat yhteensä 48 todistusta miesten antaessa vain 30. Tältä osin on siis todettavissa, että syyttäjän sukupuolella vaikutti olevan enemmän merkitystä kuin syytetyn. Todistuksen antajien ikähaarukka oli 10–70. Naisista lähes kaksi kolmasosaa oli 20-vuotiaita tai alle, kun taas miehistä puolet oli yli 40-vuotiaita. Kolmesta eniten todistuksia antaneista naisista Ann Putnam Jr. oli 13-vuotias, ja Mary Walcott sekä Elizabeth Hubbard n. 17-vuotiaita.

Materiaalissa sana ‘noita’ (witch) esiintyi 33 kertaa, ‘taikuri’ (wizard) 7 kertaa, ja ‘silmänkääntäjä’ (conjurer) 3 kertaa. Analyysissä kaikki kolme sanaa tulkittiin saman termin esiintymiksi, joten niiden yhteenlaskettu lukumäärä oli 43. Sana ‘noituus’ (witchcraft) esiintyi materiaalissa 29 kertaa. Kaikki sanojen ‘noita’ ja ‘noituus’ esiintymät eivät kuitenkaan olleet suoria syytöksiä, sillä osassa todistuksista niitä käytettiin kuvaamaan jonkun kolmannen osapuolen käyttämää termiä, tai osana yleistä lausuntoa noituuden olemassaolosta. Suorista syytöksistä esiin nousi kaksi yleisesti käytettyä

rakennetta, joista ensimmäinen, ‘uskon hänen olevan noita’ (I believe s/he is a witch), esiintyi usein rakenteen ‘hän on vakavasti koetellut minua ja/tai muita’ (grievously afflicted me and/or others) kanssa (esimerkki molemmista löytyy mm. todistuksesta BN-11). Toinen yleinen tapa esittää suora noituussyytös on variaatio ylempänä mainitusta lisärakenteesta, jossa suoraan todetaan kyseisen koettelun tapahtuneen noituuden avulla (esimerkki tästä löytyy mm. todistuksesta BN-14). Nämä kaksi suoraa syytöstä esiintyvät materiaalissa sekä yhdessä että erikseen ja niillä vaikuttaa olevan yhtäläinen painoarvo syytöksen suhteen.

Materiaalin 78 todistuksesta tasan puolessa mainitaan sana ‘noita’ tai ‘noituus’. Suoria syytöksiä on 33 ja epäsuoria 45. Epäsuorissa syytöksissä on huomattavasti eroja toisiinsa nähden, osa on niin epäsuoria, että niiden sisältöä olisi vaikea tulkita noituussyytökseksi tietämättä niiden olevan annettu noituusoikeudenkäyntiä varten, kun taas osassa vaikuttaa jopa siltä, että suora syytös on vain unohtunut todistuksen antajalta (tai sen kirjoittajalta). Esimerkki tästä löytyy todistuksesta BN-72, joka on muuten lähes identtinen todistuksen BN-80 kanssa, sisältäen useita mainintoja siitä miten syytetty on koetellut ja vahingoittanut todistuksen antajaa, mutta jättäen kuitenkin mainitsematta sanan ‘noituus’, joka puolestaan löytyy todistuksesta BN-80. Muuten epäsuorissa syytöksissä yleensä kuvaillaan jokin todistuksen antajaa kohdannut vastoinkäyminen tai onnettomuus, usein karjaan kohdistuva, joskus yhdessä syytetyn esittämien uhkausten tai solvausten kera.

Analyysiosan toisella puoliskolla valittu materiaali jaettiin viiteen ryhmään sen perusteella, miten sanat ‘noita’ (eri ilmenemismuodoissaan) ja ‘noituus’ niissä esiintyivät, ja käytiin kyseisten ryhmien todistukset tarkemmin läpi. Ensimmäisessä ryhmässä sanoja ei esiintynyt lainkaan, toisessa esiintymiskertoja oli muutama, mutta lähempi tarkastelu osoitti, että niiden käyttö ei täyttänyt suoran syytöksen määritelmää. Kolmannessa ryhmässä suoria syytöksiä esiintyy, mutta epäsuorien määrä on selkeästi suurempi, kun taas neljännessä ryhmässä tämä kääntyy päinvastaiseksi. Viidennessä ryhmässä kaikki todistukset sisältävät suoran syytöksen. Koska tämän tutkielman materiaali kattaa vain osan kaikista Salem-asiakirjoista, ei materiaalista voi vetää varmuudella kattavia johtopäätöksiä syytösten suoruuden tai epäsuoruuden vaikutuksista syytettyjen kohtaloon. Tässä materiaalissa käsiteltyjen syytettyjen kohdalla kuitenkin on ilmeistä, että syytetty selvisi todennäköisemmin hengissä, jos a) kukaan todistuksen antajista ei syyttänyt häntä suoraan tai b) kaikki todistuksen antajat syyttivät häntä suoraan. Huonoin



selviytymisprosentti oli niillä syytetyillä, joita vastaan esitettiin sekä suoria että epäsuoria syytöksiä.