

Pragmatic Readings of the Letters of Joan and Maria Thynne,
1575-1611

With Diplomatic Transcriptions of Their Correspondence

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Abstract

This is a study of the letters of Joan and Maria Thynne, 1575-1611. It achieves in bringing together archival research, close reading and socio-historical context with the methods and concepts from historical pragmatics. This cross-disciplinary and multi-dimensional approach is demonstrated to be a valuable way of providing more nuanced readings of the letters and of extracting their communicative forms and functions. These documents reward close scrutiny, and the findings of this study offer significant and important contributions to the fields of historical linguistics, early modern rhetoric, paleography, women's history and letter-writing, as well as for the Thynne family more specifically.

Following the theoretical introduction and a short biography of the Thynne family, there are five analytical chapters. The first, Chapter 3, asks how the letters' prose was organized into meaningful units of information – describing a variety of pre-standard uses for punctuation as well as the organizational and elocutionary functions of other pragmatic markers. Chapter 4 examines the sociopragmatic significance of performative speech act verbs such as *beseech* and *confess* and shows how individual manifestations of these forms actually reflect and reiterate larger aspects of early modern English culture and sociability. Chapter 5 compares Joan's holograph letters and those prepared for her by scribes, exhibiting the social, graphic and linguistic implications of using a scribe. The only direct correspondence from the letters – consisting of two letters sent between Joan and Lucy Audley (Maria's mother) in 1602 – is the topic of Chapter 6, which discusses rhetoric, language and text as ways of negotiating an awkward relationship, concluding that these features must be considered in respect to one another and in relation to the other letter in order to fully describe their significance. Chapter 7 extends a discussion on 'sincerity' begun in Chapter 6 by considering it alongside other 'voices' in Maria's letters – namely sarcasm and seriousness – which are described as interrelated communicative styles dependent upon an anxious awareness of the gap between expression and meaning.

The sum of these analyses not only proves historical pragmatics to be a productive method of investigating and systematically describing meaning in individual letter-collections from early modern England, but also suggests a range of new questions, which are presented in the conclusion. Newly prepared diplomatic transcriptions of all the letters are provided in Appendix 1.

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Abbreviations and Notes on Citation Practice

OED – *Oxford English Dictionary* (Online)

CEEC – *Corpus of Early English Correspondence*

CEECs – *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*

My citation practice throughout the chapters of this thesis differs from my transcription policy. In the transcriptions of the Thynne women's letters located in Appendix 1 (where the transcription policy is described in detail), lineation and deletions are represented as faithfully as possible in accordance with the manuscripts themselves. In the chapters lineation is not preserved, nor are other marks that represent additions and deletions, however, features such as original spelling and punctuation are maintained throughout. For ease of reference, I refer to letters using their volume and folio numbers from the manuscript collection of the Thynne Papers held at Longleat Library, Wiltshire. The volume number is given as a roman numeral and the folio in cardinal numbers (e.g. VIII.34 for 'volume eight, folio thirty-four'). This is also the first number in the reference heading of each letter in Appendix 1.

There has also been a need to emphasize different aspects of text throughout different parts of the thesis, for which I have employed italics and boldface. The use of italics is used primarily for two purposes. The first is to mark important theoretical terminology when they are first mentioned, e.g., 'the field of *sociopragmatics*'. The second use corresponds to referencing particular linguistic items, usually speech act verbs, e.g., 'the performative use of *pray*'. To facilitate easier reading, the use of boldface is limited to citations from the Thynne letters or other period texts. For example, when discussing the performative *pray*, specific examples are marked thus: '*Sr I pray yow* let this bearer be entertayned' (V.18).

Footnotes are self-contained within each chapter; therefore, each chapter begins with footnote '1'. The first time a reference is cited in a chapter, it is given in full in the footnotes and abbreviated thereafter. Finally, while reference is made to letters from the Thynne Papers written by writers other than Joan and Maria Thynne, unless otherwise noted, all the manuscript references given in footnotes refer to letters contained in this archive.

The total network and the individual pulses of affection relate dialectically to each other.
Only in the frame of the whole can we see what the letters really said; only in the
individual units of such communication can we sense what the Elizabethan ideological
sphere felt like from the inside.

-Frank Whigham (1981: 869)

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Research Objectives

This thesis brings together socio-historical and linguistic approaches, while performing the type of close analysis developed predominantly in literary study to provide pragmatic readings of a major corpus of material hitherto comparatively little examined by either social historians or historical linguists: the letters written by Joan and Maria Thynne in late Elizabethan and early Jacobean England. The decision to analyze these letters from this perspective can be seen in the context of a larger development in scholarly interest. On the one hand, specific groups of early modern familiar letters, many written by individuals and families otherwise unheard of, with few or no literary affiliations and less perceptible contributions to historico-political events, are increasingly being exploited by social, cultural and intellectual historians to produce individual accounts of period life and experience. Yet despite burgeoning interest in women's letters in particular, social histories, and even historical biographies, offer little reflection on the written documents and historically distant language which ultimately underpin their completion. From a distinct disciplinary perspective, oftentimes using editions created by historians, letters are also being incorporated into larger electronic corpora and used to search for predetermined data in quantitative historical linguistic studies.¹ And while these corpus studies have offered a great deal of information about particular aspects of the language extracted from letters, sometimes even with specific reference to gender, they seldom offer much information on the specificities of context, let alone familial histories of the correspondents themselves. The study of the Thynne women's letters accomplished in this thesis shows how an integration of these modes of investigation – from social history and historical linguistics – is applicable to a specific group of letters and of great value to a range of interests.

Adopting pragmatics as the guiding theoretical framework for this detailed treatment of the Thynne women's letters has made it possible to consider a multiplicity of departure points at the intersection of text, language and social history, reflected in the innovative and interrelated sub-questions that form the basis for the individual chapters that follow. In conjunction with the results of the analyses themselves, part of my research

¹ For a list of published editions of early modern letter collections which have also been used to create the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence*, see T. Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Appendix III: Letter Collections', in *Historical Sociolinguistics* (London, 2003), pp. 223-34.

objective throughout has been to show that the flexible, cross-disciplinary nature of pragmatics offers a rewarding and robust method of performing close readings of a specific group of early modern letters, outlining an approach for future analyses of other collections. The aims of this thesis, then, are essentially fourfold. First, to add a new dimension to our understanding of the Thynne women as individuals placed in their socio-historical and linguistic context, one which emphasizes the fact that our conception of these women from history is almost completely a product of the communicative events reflected in their surviving letters. Second, to provide more nuanced readings of the letters that offer material of multidisciplinary significance, notably for historical linguistics, social history and the history of rhetoric. Third, to develop a methodology for reading and analyzing a specific group of letters. And fourth, to open up avenues for future research.

Furthermore, and in addition to these, this thesis includes new, diplomatic transcriptions of all the letters by Joan and Maria Thynne, which are provided in Appendix 1. This was necessitated by the fact that the only pre-existing edition of Joan and Maria's letters is Alison Wall's *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611* (1983).² Wall's edition modernizes the text and is therefore unsuitable for analysis of features such as palaeography, original spelling and punctuation – all of which figure in the current study and have been identified by many recent researchers as of importance for the study of contemporary practices of literacy. The new transcriptions will be valuable to the scholarly research of historical linguists, sociolinguists and pragmaticians in the future. They also complement and could contribute to such electronic corpora as the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), which, as it relies on transcriptions produced elsewhere, is 'constantly in search of editions of high quality in order to improve'.³

The remainder of this introduction will provide an overview of the field of historical pragmatics, focusing on some of the most relevant areas of the discipline for this thesis, followed by a brief explanation of why I have chosen letters – and the Thynne

² Five of Maria's letters have also been transcribed and published separately in *Lay by Your Needles Ladies, Take the Pen: Writing Women in England, 1500-1700*, ed. S. Trill, K. Chedgzoy and M. Osborne (London, 1997).

³ M. Laitinen, 'Extending the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* to the 18th Century', *The Electronic Journal of the Department of English at the University of Helsinki* 2 (2002), <http://www.eng.helsinki.fi/projects-and-events/hes/Corpora/extending_the_corpus2.htm> Accessed July 11, 2009. For the moment, Wall's edition forms the basis for Joan and Maria's letters' inclusion in the CEEC Supplement, which was initiated in 2000. The Supplement contains letters from high quality editions published after 1998, but also letters which were available during the time of the original compilation of the CEEC, but were rejected because they did not comply with sampling criteria. Wall's edition falls into the latter category due to its modernized spelling. The transcriptions in Appendix 1 provide a potential replacement for Wall's. In addition to maintaining original spelling and punctuation, the transcriptions offered here also contain information on whether the letters are holograph or scribal (a distinction which is shown to be linguistically significant in Chapter 5).

letters in particular – as valuable for consideration from a pragmatic perspective. The introduction concludes with a synopsis of each of the five analytical chapters.

The Field of Historical Pragmatics: Theory and Methodology

Pragmatics, like the more traditionally recognized field of semantics, is primarily concerned with describing meaning: the difference between pragmatics and semantics lies in the types of meanings that are addressed. Whereas semantics is concerned with meaning as an abstract and formalistic entity, such as ‘dictionary meaning’, set apart from particular exchanges between individual language users, pragmatics is the study of meaning in communicative circumstances, i.e. how meaning operates in the settings of real, everyday interaction. Leech summarizes this distinction by way of two questions, where semantics asks the first, and pragmatics, the second:⁴

- 1) What does X mean?
- 2) What did you mean by X?

If, for instance, we consider X to be a word, the first question could (depending on the word) produce a multitude of possible senses for the form itself. The second question, however, refers to a specific utterance of X and how it functions for a specified speaker, ‘you’, in a particular interaction, to a particular addressee. What the addition of this third element (i.e. an actual context) does is to bring in aspects of communication which have traditionally been considered outside the realm of formalistic approaches to linguistics – features such as the relationship between individuals in an interaction, linguistic politeness and the function of text types, to name a few. Although some formal grammarians may consider these seemingly extra-linguistic features as better left to anthropologists or sociologists, pragmaticians take them as crucial to understanding how meaning is created in language and how we may come to describe the ways in which the formal elements of language function in communicative circumstances, both spoken and written.⁵

Of course, this is not to say that semantics and pragmatics are in opposition, or even that they are alternative theories as to the truth about meaning in language: the two are very clearly ‘complementary’.⁶ The way in which semantics and pragmatics operate together is

⁴ G. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London and New York, 1983), p. 6.

⁵ Pragmatics is by definition concerned with *performance*, and performance – as opposed to *competence* – has always been secondary for many schools of linguistics. See, e.g., R. A. Harris, *The Linguistics Wars* (New York, 1993), pp. 98-99 for the relationship between competence and performance within Chomskyan linguistics; see also *ibid.*, p. 249, where semantics and pragmatics are described as ‘out in the cold’. It has seemed to many working within what may be loosely called the generative paradigm, e.g. Paul Postal, that meaning was ‘a morass of unsolved [sic, i.e. ‘unsolvable’?] perplexities’; see *ibid.*, p.307.

⁶ Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, pp. 6-7.

illustrated well by the anatomy of the speech act and the way in which it is traditionally considered as consisting of three parts: the locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary act.⁷ If it is considered that the locutionary act is to do with literal, abstracted semantic meaning, then the illocutionary act is the speaker's actual meaning: the former functions as a base, separated from the specific context, whereas the latter is communicated by way of the former through all sorts of context-specific pragmatic clues, such as intonation, hedge words, body language, punctuation (depending upon whether the interaction takes place in spoken or written language). Take, for example, someone who sarcastically feigns excitement by uttering 'That's great', while also rolling their eyes. For something to be 'great', according to any literal, dictionary definition, is generally a positive thing (of course, the word can also refer to quantity – as in 'a great number of people'). However, in conjunction with the paralinguistic cue of rolling one's eyes, the literal interpretation is made unlikely. Instead, what the person is signaling by rolling their eyes is that they actually mean 'I could care less', or literally stated 'That is *not* great'. In this way, illocutionary significance builds upon locutionary meaning. Following, if pragmatic meaning is to some extent dependent on, or related to semantic meaning, then historical dictionaries are an important resource to pragmatics studying 'meaning-making processes in past contexts', in that both semantic and pragmatic meaning change over time.⁸ This complementarity is reflected most explicitly in the current study through frequent reference to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), incorporated into the practice of historical pragmatic reading.

The field of historical pragmatics, as recently described by Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice, 'focuses on language use in past contexts and examines how meaning is made', with specific emphasis on 'authentic language use'.⁹ Jacobs and Jucker have defined historical pragmatics as consisting of two approaches: *diachronic pragmatics* and *pragmaphilology*.¹⁰ Diachronic pragmatics 'focuses on the linguistic inventory and its communicative use across different historical stages of the same language'.¹¹ There are two ways of carrying out this type of study: *form-to-function* or *function-to-form* mapping.

⁷ The division of the speech act into these three parts, and indeed speech act theory in general, was first developed by J. L. Austin, notably in *How to Do Things With Words*, Second Edition, ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà (Oxford, 1975).

⁸ I. Taavitsainen and A. H. Jucker, 'Speech Acts Now and Then: Towards a Pragmatic History of English', in *Speech Acts in the History of English*, ed. I. Taavitsainen and A. H. Jucker (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 1-23 (p. 3).

⁹ I. Taavitsainen and S. Fitzmaurice, 'Historical Pragmatics: What It Is and How to Do It', in *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*, ed. I. Taavitsainen and S. Fitzmaurice (Berlin and New York, 2007), pp. 11-36 (p. 13).

¹⁰ A. Jacobs and A. H. Jucker, 'The Historical Perspective in Pragmatics', in *Historical Pragmatics*, ed. A. H. Jucker (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 3-33 (pp. 10-13).

¹¹ L. K. Aronovick, *Diachronic Pragmatics* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1999), p. 11.

Pragmaphilology, on the other hand, builds upon the vast tradition of historical linguistics but ‘goes one step further and describes the contextual aspects of historical texts, including the addressers and addressees, their social and personal relationship, the physical and social setting of text production and text reception, and the goal(s) of the text’; and furthermore, ‘adequate (i.e. pragmatic) analysis of historical texts must study these texts in their entirety including socio-historical context, their production process and – crucially – a faithful account not only of the syntactic/lexical level but also the physical and orthographic level’.¹²

In theory, the distinction between these two approaches is worth maintaining as the interests of each are significantly different to warrant a particular method of dealing with the texts in question – the textual dimension and the choice of texts being a factor which we must constantly be aware of in any historical linguistic study. For one, due to the greater span in consideration of timescales, diachronic pragmatics tends to deal with larger groups of texts and, like many historical sociolinguistic studies, uses electronic corpora in order to survey texts through authors and across periods – corpora such as the CEEC developed by researchers at Helsinki. Furthermore, whereas diachronic study is based heavily on comparative methodologies (such as those developed in current sociolinguistics and pragmatics to compare features between languages and cultures), pragmaphilology is more often qualitative and synchronic in that it provides sharp focus to do with particular texts at specific points in the past – essentially a linguistically-orientated version of what is known in literary criticism as the ‘close reading’ of a text.

Given these distinctions, the current analysis draws predominantly on the pragmaphilological method, or what has been more recently described as the ‘new philology’.¹³ To the present moment, the philological approach to historical texts from a pragmatic perspective has been much less explored when compared with the great amount of quantitative work accomplished using corpora; as observed by Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice:

Despite the increasing sophistication with which historical pragmaticians are able to conduct quantitative analyses, we are generally less capable of grounding a qualitative analysis in sound historical understanding [. . .] Of course, the lack of this kind of knowledge can threaten the integrity of our analyses.¹⁴

Therefore, this thesis contributes to new philology through its description of a full range of features specifically placed within the letters of Joan and Maria Thynne, including

¹² Jacobs and Jucker, ‘The Historical Perspective’, pp. 11-12.

¹³ Taavitsainen and Fitzmaurice, ‘Historical Pragmatics’, p. 22.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

palaeography, punctuation, rhetoric and language, as well as the social conditions under which the texts were written. All of these features, as this study demonstrates and asserts, were crucial factors in the texts' production and communication of meaning.

However, this is not to say that in conducting qualitative close readings one can forget the wider context, and it is not forgotten here. The fact that this study accounts for a multitude of features, many of which can only be understood when considered in relation to other examples, from other period letter collections, or indeed other text types, means that considerations made outside the Thynne letters are often important in contextualizing particular features in their specific socio-familial occurrences. Furthermore, while the current study is for the most part focused on a specific group of texts by the same women writing at broadly the same point in time, there is a significant amount of attention paid to the development of the pragmatic features of the letters under analysis before and after the period in which they were written – i.e. the late medieval and, less frequently, the later early modern period of English history – which has led to a number of diachronic considerations.

Given the dual emphasis on the specificity of the Thynne letters (i.e. micro-analysis) and their larger socio-historical context (i.e. macro-analysis), much of the theoretical orientation of this thesis is set within what is perhaps the newest area of pragmatic methodology, which is the field of *sociopragmatics*. First coining the term, Leech described socio-pragmatics (the hyphen being dropped since) as the area of pragmatics that interacts with the field of sociology and sociolinguistics.¹⁵ Taken from this perspective, sociopragmatics offers a bridge between the development of historical pragmatics and the related field of historical sociolinguistics. Specifically, historical sociolinguistics is concerned with observing patterns of variation by linking aspects of language use, and usually particular linguistic variables to do with morphosyntax, with predefined social categories such as *class*, *age*, *gender*, etc.¹⁶ And while the emphasis in historical pragmatics is more on communicative events, rather than on tracing variables of morphosyntax, it is also reliant on a consideration of social categories in as much as they contribute to the characterization of speakers and hearers in specific interactions. With regard to the analyses of Joan and Maria's letters offered here, there will be a significant amount of information drawn from historical sociolinguistic studies in order to better

¹⁵ The other interface Leech describes is *pragmalinguistics*, which interacts more with traditional grammar (1983: 11).

¹⁶ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Chapter 1: Introduction: Issues in Historical Sociolinguistics' and 'Chapter 2: Sociolinguistic Paradigms and Language Change', in *Historical Sociolinguistics*. These chapters also discuss the difficult problems inherent to adopting predefined social categories in historical sociolinguistics – especially in consideration of the fact that they are apt to change throughout history.

contextualize particular variables found in their correspondence. Sociopragmatics does, however, need to be defined separately from sociolinguistics.

Designating an analysis as sociopragmatic refers to the interchange between contextually-specific, formal aspects of language and text and the larger social world in which they operate and derive their situated significance; thus it ‘aims to account for both macro-level sociological factors and micro-level situational factors, explaining why people in a given situation use language in the way they do’.¹⁷ In a historical context, ‘historical sociopragmatics is much more at home amongst philological approaches’, where ‘its central focus is on language use in its situational context, and how those situational contexts engender norms which speakers engage or exploit for pragmatic purposes’.¹⁸ Given that this thesis is historical, its place within sociopragmatics concerns the way in which historical pragmatics relates to various aspects of social history – for which I depend on previous work completed by social historians on subjects such as familial relations, writing practices, etiquette and rhetoric.

In conjunction with these larger theoretical headings, *politeness theory* as it has been developed by Brown and Levinson (1987) has become a nearly ubiquitous aspect of historical pragmatics and terminology derived from this theory reoccurs throughout this thesis. According to Brown and Levinson, social interaction may be described in terms of two forms of politeness: negative and positive, which develop from people’s ‘face wants’. Roughly: positive politeness/face refers to the desire for intimacy, acceptance, to be liked, etc., and negative politeness/face characterizes interlocutors’ desire for space and freedom from social obligation. ‘Facework’, or politeness, refers to the linguistic strategies employed to provide for these wants, usually with the intent of minimizing threats to the face of oneself and/or others. Sub-strategies of politeness are described in great detail by Brown and Levinson and have also been used to create a model for *self-politeness* (Cheng 2001). These theories are most relevant to Chapter 6, which assumes familiarity with the terminology; however, as the terms and concepts are referred to at many points in the thesis, for reference, Appendix 3 provides a more detailed summary of politeness theory, terminology and individual strategies.¹⁹

¹⁷ M. Palander-Collin, ‘What Kind of Corpus Annotation is Needed in Sociopragmatic Research?’, *Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English*, ‘Volume 1: Annotating Variation and Change’ (2007), <<http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/journal/volumes/01/palander-collin/>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

¹⁸ J. Culpeper, ‘Historical Sociopragmatics: An Introduction’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10:2 (2009), pp. 179-86 (p. 181-2).

¹⁹ Although in many ways it remains the predominant model for politeness, Brown and Levinson’s theory has been challenged recently, most notably in Watts (2003). This is discussed briefly in the conclusion and Appendix 3.

Given the holistic approach to my analyses, I have found the method of close, manual reading of each letter to be a productive way of deriving the communicative significance from the letters' range of features. This is equally true of the small amount of comparative work done with some other period letter collections referenced throughout the chapters' analyses, like those of Lady Arbella Stuart (for which I use Steen 1994) and the letters of Elizabeth I (Marcus, Mueller and Rose 2000), as well as other archival letters from early modern collections (mostly from the Thynne Papers held at Longleat). Therefore, while there are several references to electronic corpora – namely the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (CEECS) – the use of electronic search software for the Thynne women's letters has not been necessary.

Why Letters?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the genre's history of being characterized as close to speech by historical and contemporary linguists alike,²⁰ letters have been identified as an area of special interest for historical pragmatics:

Letters, and in particular private letters, are a rich source of data for historical pragmatics. They contain more intimate and more colloquial language than other text types. It is an empirical question whether they are therefore closer to the spoken language than other more formal text types, but they contain many interactional features such as address terms, directives, politeness markers, apologies, and so on.²¹

The frequency with which letters appear as the primary source for research presented in the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, particularly in a special issue entitled 'Letter Writing', indicates this genre's importance in the field.²² An especially relevant example in relation to the current study is Johanna Wood's discourse analysis of the letters of Margaret Paston, which incorporates a multi-dimensional approach (modeled after Fairclough 1992) to a specific woman letter-writer, in which Wood describes text, discursive practice and social practice as in a 'dynamic and reciprocal relationship'.²³ Here 'multi-dimensional' should be distinguished from the terms 'multi-disciplinary' or 'cross-disciplinary', which, although also characteristic of this thesis, refer more generally to fields of inquiry (e.g. linguistics or history). A 'dimension', on the other hand, refers to a specific level of

²⁰ For example, H. C. Wyld, *A History of Modern Colloquial English*, Third Edition (Oxford, 1936), pp. 99-100; D. Biber, *Variation Across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge, 1988), especially pp. 132 and 168.

²¹ Jacobs and Jucker, 'The Historical Perspective', p. 8.

²² T. Nevalainen and S-K Tanskanen (eds.), *Letter Writing*, Special issue of *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 5:2 (2004).

²³ J. L. Wood, 'Text in Context: A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach to Margaret Paston', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 5:2 (2004), pp. 229-254 (p. 233).

understanding a letter, which may imply any number of disciplines. In reference to Wood's study, the textual dimension is one of the most obvious in linguistics in that (according to Fairclough's model) it refers to the range of formal features in language, such as verbs. Other aspects of the textual dimension are, however, less often treated as objects of linguistic study – features such as punctuation and handwriting (which are more often left to palaeographers), to name a few. All of these textual features play a significant part in the analyses performed in this thesis. The discursive dimension – to do with production, distribution and consumption – is also significant for the letters, especially in Joan's, where a number of letters are composed by scribes. Finally, the social level of practice contributes to the sociopragmatic significance of the former two categories, relating forms and practice with their socio-cultural and familial environments.

The methods of this thesis coincide, in a number of general respects, with those of Susan Fitzmaurice's *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (2002) in that the latter takes the 'registers of early modern English' as 'data for pragmatic analysis'.²⁴ In support of the methodology employed in the current thesis, Fitzmaurice articulates being 'convinced that what is needed is a treatment that will produce the subtle insights that literary criticism can provide, but in the transparent and systematic fashion that linguistic analysis affords'.²⁵ Fitzmaurice's title is, however, perhaps too broad for the material she covers as her focus is primarily on epistolary exchanges that took place within the literary communities of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England, by writers such as Jonathan Swift and Richard Steele. Furthermore, Fitzmaurice's study differs from the current one not only in period and genre, but also in the fact that its analyses are built around illuminating more abstract notions of 'epistolary worlds' and 'intersubjectivity', with much less attention given to aspects of the textual, discursive and social dimensions of the text that play a key role in the readings offered in this thesis.

Lynne Magnusson's treatment of early modern letters in *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (1999) also involves identifying a cross-disciplinary space, specifically where 'frequent references within historicist criticism to discourse and to discursive practices have seemed at times to gesture towards a sophistication of linguistic concept that is not always carried over into practical analysis'.²⁶ To facilitate such an analysis – mapping the verbal discourse in Shakespearean dialogue to the 'collective invention' of period sociability reflected in letters – Magnusson builds on

²⁴ S. M. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2002), p. 9.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁶ L. Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 7.

the type of rhetorical study developed in Frank Whigham's 'The Rhetoric of Elizabethan Suitor's Letters' (1981), adding pragmatic methods to her repertoire by considering speech act theory and Brown and Levinson's politeness theory. The fact that they analyze the rhetorical tropes found in letters contemporary with Joan and Maria's has made both Magnusson's and Whigham's studies valuable sources of information for contextualizing aspects of the Thynne women's letters.

A large amount of the previous work which has provided this thesis with direction in terms of social history and material to do with the communicative functions and writing practices of early modern epistolary culture does not make explicit claims at being pragmatic. By making much larger, more general observations than are possible in this highly focused treatment of the Thynne letters, studies such as the survey work accomplished by James Daybell, especially in *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (2006), and Gary Schneider's *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England* (2005) provide a wider context within which to situate Joan and Maria's writing activity, as women, and as letter-writers in their social and historical setting.

Clearly, the pragmatic study of early modern letters is by no means an undocumented area of investigation. However, it remains that, as Wood writes, 'historical pragmatics, as a relatively new field, is open to the development of new methodologies and the adaptation of established ones.'²⁷ This study contributes to this growing field and augments the findings of previous scholars in several innovative ways. For one, the extent and depth with which this study treats one group of letters in particular is unprecedented. By considering a range of features for such a specific group of writers this thesis may be seen as telling the story of Joan and Maria from a new perspective, that of historical pragmatics – based on analyses of text and language, contextualized by history and the different facets of pragmatic investigation. Furthermore, while this study does engage with the methodologies of other pragmatic studies, the analyses accomplished here also present previously unarticulated questions (described below) about communication and meaning in early modern England.

Beyond the specificity of pragmatics as my theoretical and methodological orientation, I have let the letters themselves guide my line of questioning and the individual chapters that follow the introduction and biography are the results of this process. This leads to the next question: why the Thynne women's letters?

²⁷ Wood, 'Text in Context', p. 229.

Why the Thynne Letters?

The letters of Joan and Maria Thynne are all held in the archives at Longleat, Wiltshire, which, given that Longleat was originally a Thynne estate, is where many of them were originally written or sent over four hundred years ago. Both women were clearly frequent, competent writers of letters and the forty examples which survive from Joan and the twelve from Maria are undoubtedly a mere fraction of what must have been a much larger output. Nonetheless, that this many letters have survived is significant and the number from Joan in particular is relatively high for the late sixteenth century. Daybell estimates that for the period 1540-1600 there are only thirty-five women for which there survive between eleven and forty-nine letters, and for most of these women there are fewer letters than from Joan.²⁸

Most of Joan's letters are to her husband, John Thynne (Jr.), and in addition to familiar well-wishing, they cover a range of topics, including the (clandestine) marriage of their son, legal suits to do with their land holdings, and shopping lists. The first two of Joan's letters are from the year she met John (and before they were married), in 1575, the last written in April of 1603, the year before John died. There is also a letter to a male 'cousin' in 1580 and a response she wrote to Maria's mother, Lucy Audley, in 1602. Then, in 1607, letters appear in the archive from Joan to her son, Thomas, of which there are six, written between 1607 and 1611 – almost exclusively to do with marriage prospects and dowry money for Joan's daughter, Dorothy. The letter written to Thomas in 1611 is the last surviving letter from her and she died the following year.

From Maria, there are five letters written to her husband (Joan's son), Thomas, and seven to Joan. Although Maria's letters are not always dated, the earliest surviving letter was written to Joan in 1601 and it would appear that her last, a letter to Thomas, was written early in 1610. Maria's letters to her husband are mostly to do with the managing of Longleat and its servants (a vocation Maria did not always relish), although there is also one which contains instruction on concocting folk medicines to prevent and cure the plague (letter VIII.4). Maria also had an accomplished ability to discuss things that went beyond the subject matter explicitly at hand – something evident in her only barely disguised sexual references in letters to Thomas. With regard to Joan, due to Thomas and Maria's clandestine marriage without the Thynnes' approval, six of the seven letters Maria wrote to her mother-in-law are carefully worded petitions in search of Joan's acceptance of Maria as her daughter. Her last letter (VIII.10), however, is a contrasting and biting piece of work,

²⁸ J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 40.

clearly meant to insult and belittle Joan. The two appear to have remained on poor terms until Maria's death in 1611.

The letters of the Thynne women provide an ideal opportunity to conduct pragmatic research. For one, the quantity of letters and the word count written by either woman is sufficient to make statements with confidence about individual characteristics of language, style and rhetoric. Joan's letters contain nearly 15,000 words, while Maria's number over 5,000. This corpus of just under 20,000 words is an optimum size for undertaking qualitative analysis, providing a wealth of material and a range of features, without being unmanageable given the scope of this study and the practice of close reading.

A feature of Joan's corpus which makes it especially suitable and interesting for pragmatic analysis is the fact that her letters were written over a period of 36 years. This means there is a variety of socio-familial contexts within which to consider her language and the potential communicative goals within these contexts. Perhaps the most significant aspect of Joan's correspondence in this regard is the way in which circumstances over time provide examples of letters written under Joan's own hand (i.e. *holograph*) and examples written by scribes (*scribal*). Although the scribal/holograph distinction is mostly dealt with in Chapter 5, it is of recurrent significance throughout this thesis and it is therefore worth making the palaeographic terminology clear immediately, consisting of four basic terms: *scripts* refer to the styles of handwriting, such as 'secretary' or 'italic', while the word *hand* designates (by way of metonymy) a person physically involved in writing the document, whether Joan herself or a scribe, when their contribution is identifiable. In cases where the evidence suggests that the letter was written by the person in whose name it appears, the letter is referred to as *holograph*. Likewise, *scribal* letters are those thought to have been written by a scribe, where scribe is a generic term for anyone but the author involved in composition.²⁹

The breadth of 36 years also means that it is possible to make observations on how particular aspects of Joan's language and the text may have changed over time. Although this feature does not figure heavily into the following analyses, it is very clearly significant for the palaeography of her letters and also for some of the formulaic opening and closings discussed in Chapter 3.

In the case of Maria, all her letters were written within the first decade of the seventeenth century and contain only a third of the word count in Joan's letters. However,

²⁹ A distinctive, conventionalized terminology for describing the compositional features of early English letters has yet to be defined. The terms *holograph* and *autograph* are often used interchangeably among editors of medieval and early modern texts, and even the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines them analogously. This becomes problematic when we consider that many letters were signed, but not written by the person in whose name they appear. Also, many holograph letters (i.e. letters written completely by the signatory) were written in one script and signed in another.

Maria's letters are an invaluable resource for pragmatic study in their colorful range of epistolary voices. In particular, several of her letters offer examples of irony and sarcasm unmatched elsewhere in period letters (which forms the basis of analysis in Chapter 7).

Finally, in a general sense, the way in which every letter fits into the larger family drama of the Thynne family provides this thesis with coherence in telling the women's story from a (socio)pragmatic perspective, as opposed to analyzing letters written by writers socially disconnected or separated by time. In many cases the letters from Joan and Maria responded to connected events, and in some cases both women wrote to the same addressee (i.e. Thomas Thynne), allowing for narrative continuity between chapter analyses. Structurally, this supports micro-contextual analysis and complements the theoretical/methodological continuities which link the chapters to one another. Biographical information on Joan and Maria, along with the socio-familial context of the letters, is given in more detail in Chapter 2, after which follow the analytical Chapters, 3-7.

Overview of Analytical Chapters, 3-7

Chapter 3 deals with punctuation and the textual organization of early modern epistolary prose in meaningful units of information – an area of investigation that has received very little attention in historical linguistics. Strictly speaking, the English sentence as we understand and use it today had not yet fully come into existence in the early modern period and uses of punctuation were varied, inconsistent and are oftentimes employed in ways that lack any immediate significance for the modern reader. However, as is exhibited in Chapter 3, this is not to say that the letters of Joan and Maria do not provide formal clues as to the meaningful organization of their texts. To support this claim, Chapter 3 investigates the way in which pragmatic markers (a term I use broadly in reference to a number of formal aspects of the text) were used to delimit sections of text into meaningful 'chunks' of information. In conjunction, it also discusses how these markers could add elocutionary force to sections of the text, where 'elocutionary' refers to the manner and style of delivery (not to be confused with the 'illocutionary act' from speech act theory). The first section discusses the varying uses and functions of punctuation – both 'rhetorical' and 'grammatical' – which elicits a number of observations to do with Joan's varied usage, Maria's consistency and either's relationship to scribal practice. Next, discourse markers, conjunctions, idiomatic expressions, opening and closing formulae and present participle forms of speech act verbs are discussed as text-organizing features, which could have made up for a lack of punctuation in many of Joan's holograph letters, and frequently coincide with the punctuation of scribal examples and the

letters by Maria. The results of this discussion lead to observations to do with the interrelatedness of organizational features, possible connections with the spoken language and a reconsideration of what it might have meant to ‘rule’ the epistolary text. The larger implications of this chapter point to a need and possibility in historical pragmatics to better account for the organizational features of early English letters, and indeed other text types from the history of written English, in terms appropriate to the period in question.

Chapter 4 deals with speech acts in the history of English, what is sometimes referred to as ‘illocutionary history’, which is perhaps the most intensely researched area of historical pragmatics to date.³⁰ The history and significance of performative speech act verbs, however, remains relatively unexplored, particularly in the early modern period.³¹ And while performative verbs are a much rarer occurrence in present day English usage, they form an integral part of the letters of the Thynne women. Chapter 4 takes these performative speech act verbs as its focus, considering their sociopragmatic significance and what they tell us about early modern letters as texts and spaces where particular types of activities were performed. ‘Sociopragmatic significance’ is used here to describe the aspects of meaning in performatives that, while undeniably related to lexical meaning, go beyond semantic interpretation, actually reflecting aspects of early modern English sociability and the performative social space that letters created for the literate classes. The performatives that appear in the letters are compared to other period examples and categorized using Traugott’s typology of speech act verbs in her historical study of English, which consists of four categories: representatives (what Searle refers to as assertives), directives, commissives and expressives.³² Perhaps unsurprisingly, directive performatives (such as those which perform requests) are the most frequent; which leads to the observation of communicative differences between, for example, verbs like *pray* and *beseech*. Other performatives, such as *remembering* and *confessing*, are also analyzed within their textual and socio-familial contexts to show how they provided a textual means of performing period-specific social functions, such as the expression of duty to one’s family members and the temperance of emotion in social intercourse. Additionally, on a more formalistic level, this chapter makes observations to do with the grammatical characterization of performatives in that, unlike present-day usage, clear performative

³⁰ See especially Arnovick, *Diachronic Pragmatics*; Taavitsainen and Jucker, *Speech Acts*.

³¹ There has been some attention given to performatives in earlier periods of English: G. Del Lungo Camiciotti, ‘Performative Aspects of Late Medieval English Wills’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 3:2 (2002), pp. 205-27; T. Kohnen, ‘Explicit Performatives in Old English; A Corpus-Based Study of Directives’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1:2 (2000), pp. 301-21.

³² E. C. Traugott, ‘English Speech Act Verbs: A Historical Perspective’, in *New Vistas in Grammar: Invariance and Variation*, ed. L. R. Waugh and S. Rudy (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 387-406.

realizations of speech act verbs also appear in present, and (to a lesser degree) past participle forms in the early modern period.

Chapter 5 takes as its point of departure the observation that many of Joan's letters were written by scribes. More specifically, all but one of her letters to her son, Thomas, is scribal. This chapter asks why this might be the case and what were the social, textual and linguistic ramifications, or meanings of using a scribe. Here sociopragmatics refers to the link between formal elements of the text – including handwriting, space and lexico-grammatical features – and cultural understandings of what using a scribe meant to correspondents in early modern England. Whereas graphic features (i.e. handwriting and spelling) were reflections of whose hand they were written under, considerations of the linguistic influence of scribes on morphosyntactic variation and 'formulaic and expressive language' in the Paston women's (especially Margaret Paston's) letters have concluded that letters were dictated verbatim.³³ However, no such comparisons have been provided for the early modern period, when there is in fact much more evidence in this period for comparing holograph and scribal letters from a single writer. This is particularly true of female writers, for whom there is very little in the way of holograph production until later in the sixteenth century. It is shown to be significant, then, that Joan's holograph letters differ from her scribal productions in several lexico-grammatical ways, including anaphoric language (such as *thereto* and *the said*) and the speech act verb *advertise*. This also has implications for corpus studies, particularly when the holograph/scribal dimension has not been incorporated or is made doubtful from reliance on editions which have not considered it.

Chapter 6 focuses on the letter from Lucy Audley (Maria's mother) to Joan in the summer of 1602, and Joan's reply, which form the only surviving direct correspondence in the Thynne women's letters. The chapter discusses how this pair of letters used rhetorical terms, politeness strategies, and even graphic and spatial features of the text itself as means of negotiating a difficult relationship. The mitigation of the social risks of writing under hostile conditions is reflected in Lucy's putting pressure on Joan to reply by implicating her reputation, which is then followed by Joan's justification of her delayed response. Furthermore, the women's differing presentations of past wrongs and possible 'friendship' are shown as reliant on more general understandings of early modern English sociability. In particular, the rhetoric of friendship presented by Lucy is contextualized as reflecting

³³ A. Bergs, *Social Networks and Historical Sociolinguistics: Studies in Morphosyntactic Variation in the Paston Letters (1421-1503)* (Berlin and New York, 2005), p. 80; Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, *Historical Sociolinguistics*, pp. 197-8; J. L. Wood, 'Structures and Expectations: A Systematic Analysis of Margaret Paston's Formulaic and Expressive Language', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10:2 (2009), pp. 187-214.

the period's anxiety to do with 'sincerity', whereas Joan responds with further qualification of the rhetoric of sincerity by referring to friendship by 'trial'. Brown and Levinson's politeness theory is used throughout this chapter in order to characterize the interaction as engaged in a struggle to artfully maintain, threaten and defend the 'face wants' of the correspondents – which are examined by way of larger rhetorical strategies and more minute linguistic variables, such as address terms or the use of parenthetical language. By considering the women's texts holistically, this chapter asserts that the range of features in epistolary texts must be accounted for together and in relation to other texts (in this case the other side of the exchange) in order to fully comprehend their significance and the overall communicative coherency of the letter. In this way, Chapter 6 outlines a way of reading exchanges that compliments and adds new dimensions of pragmatic analysis to those performed by Fitzmaurice (2002) for later periods.

Finally, Chapter 7 aims at contextualizing the rare example of non-literary sarcasm afforded by Maria's letters to Joan and her husband, which is juxtaposed with 'sincere' and 'serious' language in her other letters. The first part of this chapter deals with Maria's petitionary letters to Joan, extending the discussion of sincerity from Chapter 6. This discussion of sincerity builds upon more general observations about the period made elsewhere, particularly discussions from Trilling (1972), Bryson (1998) and Martin (2004), all of which describe the communicative difficulties which arose from growing period anxieties to do with the gap between external expression and internal thoughts or intentions (oftentimes referred to in terms of one's 'heart' or 'mind'). Together, Chapters 6 and 7 show how the language of sincerity served as a means of (what has been termed in the thesis as) 'rhetorical closure', in which period anxieties were addressed by superficially emphasizing the congruence between thought and expression. Then, the second part of the chapter presents a discussion of Maria's sarcasm (in her final letter to Joan) and playfully ironic language (in letters to her husband) as antithetical to the rhetoric of sincerity in that they exploit the potential incongruence between expression and meaning by subverting conventions of daughterly or wifely deference and submission in items such as address terms and speech act verbs. Thirdly, it is observed that Maria's frequent use of non-literal language in her letters to Thomas led to a need for a serious language as well, which is marked explicitly on several occasions and also reflected in linguistic variation between these styles, or 'voices'. In the conclusion to Chapter 7, there is a discussion of the way in which Maria's letters suggest that the same socio-textual conditions which gave rise to the rhetoric of sincerity may also have given rise to sarcastic expression.

Through these related chapters, the thesis exhibits how these innovative pragmatic readings are a rewarding method of transparently and systematically analyzing the

linguistic richness of these texts and of articulating new questions applicable to the communicative world of early modern England. Each chapter both answers and poses questions. The general conclusion then revisits these questions, reflects upon the ground that has been covered and reviews the achievements of the analyses. Ultimately, the conclusion emphasizes the value of the pragmatic approach when applied to a relatively small and related group of texts, and offer suggestions for future research both following the current methodology as well as more generally for historical pragmatics and the study of early modern letters.

CHAPTER 2

The Familial Backdrop

Historical (socio)pragmatic studies are highly dependent upon a clear understanding of the social and familial context of the language and texts which they analyze. And while more specific issues to do with family-related events, language and letter-writing culture – such as speech act verbs and methods of composition – will be addressed fully in the chapters that concern them, I would like to here offer a biographical introduction to the women at the center of this thesis, their familial backgrounds and a general account of the main events which took place while the letters were being written.¹

Joan

Joan Hayward was baptized in 1558, the daughter of Sir Rowland Hayward and his first wife, also named Joan (née Tillesworth). Rowland Hayward was a merchant and also the alderman of London who has been described as ‘a major figure in the politics as well as the business of the city of London[;] [he] emerges from the records of the corporation as the most active and energetic of Elizabethan aldermen, a man with a finger in every pie and an obsessive devotion to committee work’.² Roland’s success is indicated not only by his estate in London, but also by his country property of King’s Palace in Hackney, where he entertained Elizabeth I, to whom he is also known to have lent money on occasion. Joan’s mother was the daughter of a London goldsmith and therefore, like her husband, might have been considered of the aspirant ‘middling sort’.³ Joan was one of three daughters and her sisters were Elizabeth and Susan, both of whom also married (Elizabeth twice). Like most women from the early modern period, we have little account of Joan’s upbringing or education, and she only reappears after her baptism in surviving texts at the age of sixteen, when her parents began looking for someone suitable for her to marry.

Negotiations for Joan’s marriage to John Thynne Jr. began in 1575. Marriage amongst the aspirant and upper classes, while perhaps somewhat considerate of

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all the information in this chapter is taken from the letters themselves or from the historical work completed by Alison Wall (1983; 1990; 1995; 2001). In particular, as my own research has not included the study of the lengthy deposition material held at Longleat – to do with the legal dispute of the marriage between Maria and Thomas – I am particularly indebted to Wall’s account of it, along with other manuscripts in ‘For Love, Money, or Politics? A Clandestine Marriage and the Elizabethan Court of Arches’, *The Historical Journal* 38:3 (1995), pp. 511–33.

² P. Slack, ‘Hayward, Sir Rowland (c.1520–1593)’, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 2004), Online Edition (2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/37526>> Accessed July 11, 2009; see also W. Jay, ‘Sir Rowland Hayward’, *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society New Series* 6 (1933), pp. 509–27.

³ Although the term ‘middling sort’ has been more widely appropriated by social historians, my own use is derived from K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580–1680*, New Edition (London, 2003).

personalities and compatibility, was primarily an institution that was meant to promote the expansion of wealth, power and influence for the families involved. And like most marriages that took place in these echelons of Elizabethan society, there were negotiations and go-betweens.⁴ The mediator between the two patriarchs (i.e. Rowland Hayward and John Thynne Sr.) was a man from Thynne's large network, Richard Young, one of many who reported back to Thynne regarding not only marriage prospects but a variety of news from England and the continent. More than a few letters from Young and his visits paid to the Hayward family have survived and contain detailed information on the family's disposition towards the match, characteristics of the potential bride and sensitive particulars to do with the ever-important matter of dowry. By Young's estimation, Joan was a very attractive match for the Thynne heir:

I assuar you the gentyllwoman is to be lykid for she is wyse & very wyll
brought vp bothe in larnyng & in all thyngs that do a parten to a
gentyllwoman, & god hathe Delte faverably *with* hor for she is to belykid
for god hathe gevyn hor favor & bewty to satysfey a nyman of reson⁵

And despite the fact that Roland told Young that 'hor fase is not so bewtyfull as some others',⁶ Joan seems to have been a particular favorite of her father's, his 'wyhyt dotar',⁷ which was emphasized as a factor in the Thynnes' favor as Roland was willing to provide well for her (although he did reserve the family's main estate in expectation of remarrying and having a son with another woman [if Joan's mother died]). For his part, John Sr. was keen on the fact that Roland was also a man born in Shropshire, one of his 'contereman & for that he had porchesid the lands in your countre that you had a desyar vnto & for that you did vndarstand that he was one of a good releyon [i.e. Protestant]'.⁸ Young was also instrumental in arranging a meeting between John Jr. and Joan: in fact he became quite persistent, and went so far as to devise a scheme which would make it appear that John Jr. came to London on other business, staying with a friend of Young's, but actually with the sole purpose of meeting Joan at her father's house. The two must have liked each other rather well because, before they were even married, Joan wrote at least two pseudo-poetic letters referencing the heat and fire from the 'hartes of faithfull frendes whiche shere In one desiere'. The occurrence of such 'doggerel verse' has been observed

⁴ D. O'Hara, 'Chapter 3: "Movers", "Sutors", "Speakers" and "Brokers" of Marriage: The Role of Go-Betweens as a "Means" of Courtship', in *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 99-121.

⁵ IV.73 (1575).

⁶ IV.87 (1575).

⁷ IV.73 (1575); The Second Edition of the OED (1989) lists an archaic sense for 'white, *a.*' (definition 9) as 'highly prized, precious; dear, beloved, favourite, "pet", "darling"'. Often as a vague term of endearment. (See also *white son* [. . .]).

⁸ IV.73 (1575).

elsewhere in women's letters from the period, 'perhaps indicative of the widespread social currency of poetry in Elizabethan England'.⁹

Yet, despite all the desirability of the match, and in addition to the negotiation of money and lands, the Haywards were also conscious of previous negotiations to match John Jr. with Lucy Marvin (later Audley), daughter of Sir James Marvin of Fonthill Gifford – 'perhaps the most prominent man in Wiltshire' and Esquire of the Body to Queen Elizabeth – and his wife, Amy Clarke.¹⁰ By all accounts, John Jr. had been led further into this match than his father had approved of and was eventually forced to pull out of the arrangement altogether. Following this upset, Marvin seems to have been set on spoiling Thynne's reputation, telling others of his ill treatment, something reiterated in words between Young and Thomas Gresham, then passed on to Thynne in letter IV.52 from Young in November of 1574: 'sr Iaims marven Dothe take in grat Eyll part & hathe complanyd to sr thomas of your vncortese as he dothe tarme hit.' This dispute initiated a bitter feud between the Thynne and Marvin families which led to public disputes, riots, court cases and at times escalated to bloodshed – making the clandestine marriage in the next generation (described below) all the more scandalous.¹¹ The proposed match with Lucy Marvin seems to be what Joan is referring in her first letter (V.4) to John in October of 1575, in which she expresses 'my heue harte and my pencefe mynde'.

Eventually, however, anxieties over the Marvin match were settled (from the Haywards' perspective) and Roland offered the Shropshire property of Caus Castle to the dowry agreement, which seems to have sealed the deal. Unfortunately, however, the Haywards' ownership of Caus Castle was contested by the previous owner, Lord Stafford, and remained one of the more significant difficulties the couple dealt with throughout the rest of their marriage – and suits against the Lord Stafford are a frequent item of business repeated in Joan's letters to John.

Because of relocation issues to do with the dispute over her dowry lands, Joan and John's first four years of marriage were spent without an estate to call their own, which amounted to the far less than ideal situation of Joan living with her husband's parents at Longleat and John in London with Joan's family. Separation was compounded by the fact that neither Joan nor John seemed to have got along very well with their in-laws. Joan was very unhappy with her treatment at Longleat and in letter V.12, written in 1576, complains that:

almst dayly my lady kepes her accustomed curtesy towards me, which I

⁹ J. Daybell, 'Interpreting Letters and Reading Script: Evidence for Female Education and Literacy in Tudor England', *History of Education* 34:6 (2005), pp. 695-715 (p. 710).

¹⁰ C. B. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (Oxford, 1999), p. 11.

¹¹ A. Wall, *Power and Protest in England 1525-1640* (New York, 2000), p. 150.

may cont a hell to heauenly Ioyes, or shuch ladyes loue that will force me to leaue this country, which I woulde be loth sith your peasure is to the contrary, but yt I hope you will not haue me staye where I. shall be so uyly abused as nowe I am, more metter for csome searuant then forone of my estaet, wherfor as you tender my case, I am most humbly to craue you to redresse ye same

The issue of Joan's 'estate' seems to have been a relevant issue not just for her. The fact that Joan's father had had to work hard to achieve his social position, and that he was a city official, would have been at odds with the higher notions of those nobility who were members of the gentry simply through their birth. The pretentious attitude which might be adopted even amongst people from similar backgrounds is displayed in a letter from Margaret, Countess of Derby, in 1577 to Joan's mother-in-law, Christian Gresham, in which she has nothing pleasant to say about Joan:

the Aldermans doughter desembleth not her kynd, She is altogether bente to disgrace you and belye you, and as I beleue doth greatly Inieure you and your house.¹²

Of course, Margaret was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's younger sister Mary and as a member of the royal line she was in the highest echelons of the Elizabethan nobility. But her gossip to Christian is ironic given the fact that Christian's father, Richard, was himself a London merchant and mayor, much like Joan's father.¹³ It might have been that this seemingly significant detail was overlooked in lieu of the highly esteemed reputation of Christian's family via her brother Thomas Gresham (who was knighted and greatly favored by Queen Elizabeth), which could have served as justification for her categorizing Joan as somehow 'injurious' to Christian's estate, not only by association but by her supposed bad behavior.

Joan's movements in this awkward period are difficult to track exactly, but it would appear she did not stay with her in-laws very long. There are several letters written for her by scribes, sent to her husband from London between 1576 and 1579. It is likely that Joan spent a large part of the 1570s in London with her aging mother. In letter V.23, 1579, a scribal composition from London, she asks John to 'come vp *with* my father *presently* that my mother may see you (before she dy) *wch* she doe gretly desyer'. Several of the letters written in this period address what seem to have been fairly severe disagreements between

¹² IV.147 (1577).

¹³ I. Blanchard, 'Gresham, Sir Richard (c.1485–1549)', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), Online Edition (2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11504>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

John and Joan's father, wherein she frequently entreats John to defer and 'sume what a aknowlag your fallts allthoug theyr be none'.¹⁴

Following the death of John's father in 1580, Joan and John's lives changed quite significantly when the couple inherited Longleat. All of a sudden, Joan became mistress to a large Elizabethan estate that has been acclaimed as having been 'the first great monument of Elizabethan architecture and perhaps, indeed, the greatest'.¹⁵ There are not very many letters from Joan to John during the 1580s, although there are many others addressed to John at Longleat, which suggests that the two spent much of their time in Wiltshire, with intermittent trips to London. It was also during this time that Joan gave birth to Thomas, in 1578. Thomas was the eldest of three children and all of his siblings were also born at Longleat: John in 1584, Dorothy in 1590 and Christian in 1592.

Caus Castle continued to be a matter of contention in this period and finally, in 1591, John Thynne, aided by the sheriff of Shropshire, took it by force while the Lord Stafford was away, expelling Lady Stafford and her 'small force'. Following this, Stafford did not give up his case and it was therefore necessary to occupy and actively defend Caus from potential return attacks. So, while John continued with his other suits in London and the management of his estates elsewhere, Joan took up nearly permanent residence at Caus. From the letters, it would appear that Caus was in some disrepair when Joan moved in and in addition to sleeping with rifles in her bedroom she also had to deal with problems to do with leaks and stonework.

The portrait of Joan held at Longleat shows us a stern, serious woman in dark clothing and with little jewellery and limited frilliness save a dull feathered hat which she holds somewhat disinterestedly to her side in one hand rather than wearing it placed ornamentally on her head. The letters from Joan, it might be argued impressionistically, seem to reflect this visual representation of her character in her unabashed hard-headedness towards matters of business and family drama. Like many other women of the period who 'had to learn the tripartite skills of submissiveness to authority, internal self-discipline and an ability to command',¹⁶ Joan was very clearly capable at managing households, finances, rents, as well as maintaining local social networks (which had significant implications for John's political career), in addition to the raising of her children.

John's successes are slightly more difficult to locate and despite Joan's chidings he was never awarded a knighthood, even as many of his peers were granted this honor. The lack of a knighthood would have placed him in the lowest rungs of gentry estates; and

¹⁴ V.14 (1576); Wall mistranscribes this last word as 'many', which would obviously give a very different meaning to Joan's advice.

¹⁵ J. Summerson, *Architecture in Britain 1530 to 1830*, Fifth Edition (Middlesex, 1969), p. 29.

¹⁶ F. Heal and C. Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 251.

although he was warranted the honorific ‘Sir’ in most of his correspondence, his reputation was not aided by the fact that he seems to have been poorly dressed, difficult to deal with and fairly irresponsible in his duties as a local Justice of the Peace in Wiltshire.¹⁷

Maria

Described in a wide survey of Tudor women letter-writers as ‘one of the most erudite, flamboyant, and menacingly acerbic of early modern female letter-writers’,¹⁸ Maria Touchet was born in 1578, the daughter of George Touchet, the eleventh Baron Audley and (later on) first Earl of Castlehaven (Ireland), and his wife Lucy (née Marvin). At her christening, which took place at her grandfather, James Marvin’s house in London, the marchioness of Northampton came with gifts serving as a proxy for the Queen herself, who was Maria’s godmother. Maria had two sisters, Eleanor (who married the poet and attorney general for Ireland, Sir John Davies) and Anne (married Edward Blount), and two brothers, Ferdinando and Mervin, second Earl of Castlehaven. Two of these siblings were notorious figures of the early seventeenth century. Eleanor became a prolific pamphlet writer, banned from the court of James I for her outspoken eccentricities: ‘one of the most prolific seventeenth-century prophets, and as one of the first English women to see her works through the press’.¹⁹ Then, slightly later, Mervin became the first member of the peerage to be convicted of a felony and executed under Charles I, due to evidence for sexual crimes the privy council described as ‘too horrid for a Christian man to mention’.²⁰

Considering the high level of literacy accomplished in her letters, alongside the clear ability exhibited by her sister, we can assume Maria’s education was privileged beyond the means of most women in the period, even those in the upper echelons of society. In her teens, she entered court as a maid of the Privy Chamber to Queen Elizabeth, from whom she had received the obligatory permission to travel to The Bell Inn, in Beaconsfield, outside the city of London on the night of May 16, 1594. It is here she first met Thomas Thynne, who was then a floundering student at Corpus Christi College Cambridge – but of course, more significantly, the eldest son of Maria’s family’s local archrivals.²¹ This last fact makes it all the more mysterious that the meeting was orchestrated by members of Maria’s family, perhaps most significantly by her mother, the

¹⁷ Wall, *Power and Protest*, pp. 56-7 and 89.

¹⁸ J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 195.

¹⁹ D. Watt, ‘Davies, Lady Eleanor (1590–1652)’, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), Online Edition (2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7233>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

²⁰ C. B. Herrup, ‘Touchet, Mervin, Second Earl of Castlehaven (1593–1631)’, in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004), Online Edition (2008), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/66794>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

²¹ Joan explicitly remarked on Thomas’ lack of scholarly ability in letter V.23, sent to John in 1595.

very same woman with whom Thomas' father had once been matched for marriage nearly two decades earlier (which was the cause of the families' feuding to begin with). Thomas was fifteen at the time and the red-headed Maria was approximately a year his elder. From all accounts it seems the two hit it off well and 'grewe into such good liking each of other as that they seemed desirous to be married presently'.²² Eager to encourage Thomas, Lucy had her daughter stand and turn about before him in order to show that her body was in no way 'deformed', assuring him that if he liked her physically 'for the disposicon of her minde it showld appeare to him to be much more perfecte'.²³ The impression made upon Thomas must have been sufficient persuasion as the two were married by a travelling minister by the name of Welles that very night.

All of this happened without the Thynne family's knowledge and it is unclear exactly why Lucy and her kin arranged the meeting and clandestine marriage in the first place. One thing that is clear, however, is that they were saved the trouble of providing a dowry by keeping Thomas' parents out of the negotiations. Despite the fact that Maria's family was of landed gentry, 'longevity without significant fortune was the family's principal distinction' and they may have seen the prospect of providing for one of their daughters without a dowry as a very real advantage.²⁴ A letter from Rowland Whyte suggests that the lack of a dowry was a key motivating factor, writing to Robert Sidney that 'Mistress Touchet hath catched Mr. Thinnes son and heire, and married her selfe unto him, to his father's mislike, for with hur shall he have nothing, but those vertuous qualities she brought from Court' (it is also interesting and perhaps indicative of Maria's personality that Whyte refers to her 'vertuous qualities').²⁵ More likely motivation to marry into the Thynne family, however, would have been to do with consolidating influence and material control of Wiltshire by joining what had up to that point been rival holdings.²⁶ Interestingly, in one of her letters to her 'cousin', Thomas Higgins, having recently been informed of the secret match (in 1595), Joan intimates that she suspected Maria's family would try something of this sort, that the 'boye was be trade by the maruens which I haue often toulde mr Thynne what the woulde do and now it is to sure'; writing five days later to her husband:

the Lade adely haue youseid all the polesy and coneinge to make it so shure that you nor I shall not breake it for after the contract she caseid a pare of sheteis to be Lade on a beid and her dafter to Lydon in her clotheis and the

²² Quoted from Wall, *For Love*, p. 513.

²³ Ibid., p. 513.

²⁴ Herrup, *A House*, p. 10.

²⁵ Wall, *For Love*, p. 515.

²⁶ This is essentially the conclusion reached by Wall, who writes that through the marriage Marvin had 'effectively neutralized [Thomas] as a potential enemy. Marriage into the family of an ally is a well-known weapon of political faction. Marriage into that of an enemy could be another' (1995: 533).

boye by her boteid and sporde for aletell while that it myght be saide the
ware abeid to gether hor selfe and edman maruen in the chanber aprete
waye of and hath caseid her dafter to write diuers leters vnto him in the laste
namainge her selfe mary Thynne which name I troste shee shall not longe
inloye²⁷

Clearly, Lucy did all in her power to make sure that Thomas and Maria performed the marriage and public bedding ceremony to the fullest extent possible, so as to provide legitimacy. Furthermore, letters passed between the two were perceived as an important signifier of the union – a point that would be cited later in court proceedings as important evidence in support of legitimizing the marriage, as ‘it is possible to consider the letter form when fully developed as replacing the need for ritual gift exchanges and symbolic modes of communication [in the making of marriage]’.²⁸

Unsurprisingly, once news of the clandestine match became public (almost a year later), it elicited strong emotional outrage from Thomas’ parents and a public scandal that may even have influenced Shakespeare’s taking up the story of *Romeo and Juliet*.²⁹ Thomas’ parents were very clearly not the only ones upset by the match. Queen Elizabeth is known to have been very controlling of the marriages of her ladies in waiting and Maria quickly lost her place at court and the Queen’s earlier promises to find her a good husband once she learned of the Marvins’ secret dealings. In the face of this double rejection, by the Thynnes and the monarch, Maria’s reputation was in severe danger and it was near this time that Maria, her mother and grandfather began a suit at the Court of Arches in the hope of verifying the marriage legally and saving Maria’s future. The Thynnes felt endangered in turn, clearly recognizing the marriage’s legitimacy to themselves, even if they outwardly refused it – a fact evidenced by Joan’s distressful letters and her questioning of a divorce in letter V.80. Thomas was kept under house arrest and under the strict, obsessive surveillance of his mother who was cautious of any possible epistolary contact with Thomas which could further implicate him. Thomas seems to have been unable or unwilling to approach his father directly at this point and Joan frequently served as a mediator, telling her husband of Thomas’ promises to abide by his parents from then onwards. John also enlisted the help of friends of influence, such as the courtier Katherine Newton, who wrote of the Queen’s feelings toward the case in December of 1599:

for the paper yow delyuered me; towchinge your sunne; her ma:*tie* hath read
yt euery word, and hath delyuered yt me backe agayne, and byds me keepe
yt; I find she doth very muche mysslyke of the prosedinge, yf yt were in

²⁷ V.82 (1595).

²⁸ O’Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*, p. 71.

²⁹ A. Wall, ‘The Feud and Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*: A Reconsideration’, *Sydney Studies in English* 5 (1979-80), pp. 84-95.

suche maner as ther yow reportt; The Queen seemes to myslyke, that yow
should Consede yor sunne³⁰

But regardless of the Thynne's efforts to annul it and the Queen's 'myslyke', the marriage was officially recognized in 1601, apparently on the basis of previously exchanged love tokens, which, apart from letters, included gloves, a waistcoat and a gold ring inscribed 'a frendes guifte'.

Despite the fact the two had probably never met in person and that Joan was still very upset at what she perceived as a great betrayal of herself, Maria's letters to Joan begin to appear in the archives at Longleat immediately following the official recognition of her marriage to Thomas. The practical and economic urgency of Maria's petitioning must have been clear to all those involved. At the time the young couple were living in one of Maria's parents' properties, Compton Bassett (not properly bestowed upon them), and were probably looking towards Longleat and Thomas' rights of inheritance as their prime hope for acquiring their own estate. But this situation remained risky as Thomas, although the eldest male heir to the Thynne's estate, was severely estranged from his parents, putting him at risk of being significantly disinherited, if not completely cut from his father's will. The anxiety this must have caused Maria is clear from the supplicatory entreaties in her epistolary attempts to be accepted by Joan. Maria mentions at least one response from Joan – referred to in letter VIII.22 of 1603. The letter itself does not survive, however, Joan's continued mistrust of Maria is suggested by the fact that she asked her letter to be 'redelivered' due to 'dowbte of Secrecye' – something the Mr. Daunte to whom it was redelivered found particularly humorous given that it was a matter between two women (presumably referencing the culture of women's gossip). Furthermore, in addition to Maria's own letters, her kin were also petitioning the Thynnes for Maria and Thomas. In letter VII.232, 1602, Lucy attempts to engender friendship with Joan, while also asking her to accept Maria as her daughter-in-law, to which Joan guardedly replied with caution and a reassertion of past 'wrongs' for whom she held the Audley/Marvin faction accountable for (this correspondence is the topic of Chapter 6). Also, the year following, James Marvin wrote to John Thynne in the hopes of persuading him to forgive Thomas and Maria – which, again, seems to have had little effect.

Then, again at the death of the Thynne patriarch, events turned when Thomas' father John died rather suddenly in 1604. The fact that he died intestate meant that Longleat along with all its estates and material wealth went immediately to Thomas, who, despite being estranged, was still his eldest son. Thomas and Maria moved into Longleat

³⁰ VII.154/5 (1599).

and Joan continued to reside at Caus Castle. Remaining more familiar with the Marvins, Thomas and Maria hired Marvin servants, and Thomas was even involved in the management of some of the Marvins' estates. This shift in power relations between Thomas and his mother also gave rise to a particularly bitter period in familial relations and caused yet more legal disputation as Joan insisted that her husband had intended that a significant amount of his material wealth be given to his daughters, while Thomas claimed that his mother was trying to convince his siblings to 'defraud' him.³¹ Although Maria's dealings in these matters are unclear, once she had at last acquired an estate of her own, the letters of supplication to her mother-in-law cease. Maria's final surviving letter to Joan was written from Longleat in 1605 and employed all means possible to subvert previous protestations of her daughterly love and duty found in the letters of petition, using insults and sarcastic language (discussed in detail in Chapter 7).

Eventually, an agreement between Thomas and his family was reached in which he agreed to support his brother and provide £1,000 to each of his sisters, either when they married or upon their reaching the age of twenty-one. Shortly after, Joan was proposing matches for Thomas' sister Dorothy in more formally worded and scribally written letters to him (analyzed in Chapter 5). One marriage prospect in particular, by the name of Whitney, Joan claimed to be a relative of Maria's, expressing the possibility of reconciliation through a legitimated marriage, 'wch to be solemnized & donne might renew a mutuall loue on euerie side to the comforte of many'.³² For unspecified reasons, none of the proposed matches in Joan's letters went forward and Thomas eventually paid Dorothy her money, in increments, after her twenty-first birthday.

It was also around this time that Maria's five surviving letters to Thomas begin, usually written to him while he was away in London. Judging from these, along with the account books at Longleat, Maria was adept at running household affairs, receiving rents and managing servants (despite ironic references to herself as a 'fool'). Yet despite her abilities, Maria seems to have been frustrated and melancholy with life in the Wiltshire countryside after her time spent at court: a sentiment not uncommon amongst those of her social position, in a period of centralization in which 'the boredom of country life became obtrusive to many people as the leisure industry arose in London'.³³ Maria's language in letters to Thomas reflects this and oftentimes exhibits her grasp of ironic expression, albeit to a different effect than in the final letter to Joan, and now with a need to distinguish irony from literal, seriously minded expression when she wrote about business (also discussed in

³¹ A. Wall (ed.), *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611* (Devizes, 1983), p. xxix; Joan's petition to the Lord Chancellor, VIII.330 (undated).

³² VIII.26.

³³ F. Whigham, 'The Rhetoric of Elizabethan Suitor's Letters', *PLMA* 96:5 (1981), pp. 864-82 (p. 867).

Chapter 7). In addition to her frequent sharp-wittedness and occasional anger, Maria's letters to her husband exhibit playfulness, warmth and thinly disguised sexual longing. Like Joan, care for her husband's health is also expressed in letters – particularly in one where Maria lists a folk preventative and remedy for the plague for Thomas to use 'yf you doo butt never So lyttle Susspect yr Selfe [to be infected]'.³⁴

Maria and Thomas had three sons, the first of whom, born in 1604, died young. Maria feared she would die in childbirth and had her portrait painted before giving birth to their third son, Thomas Jr., in 1611, when she would have been around thirty-four years old. The child survived, but Maria did not. The portrait depicts her demurely, with a soft smile, clearly in the later months of her pregnancy and dressed in maternity clothing, fine lace, holding a fan in one hand, a thistle in the other. On a recent tour of Longleat House she was described (to the author) as having been 'gentle' and 'sweet'. She very well may have been; however, this image of what was probably perceived as depicting the period's 'ideal woman' (chaste, silent and obedient) is complicated by the often sharp, sexual or sarcastic voice one finds in her letters.

Maria's death seems to have created new potential for reconciliation between Joan and Thomas and in Joan's final letter to her son (this time in her own hand), written the same year as Maria's passing, she thanks him for the loan of his London house and a 'satisfying' letter which he had written to her. Joan died shortly after in 1612.

³⁴ VIII.4 (undated).

CHAPTER 3

‘Ruling’ and ‘Chunking’: Punctuation and Pragmatic Markers as Text-Organizing Forms

The existence of a time or place beyond the pale of linguistic regulation is of course a chimera: one that in this instance is produced and thrown into the past – and into the domain of women [. . .] For language does not exist except as a set of rules: it can appear “unruled” only if the validity of the techniques according to which it is regulated are denied. In the sixteenth century English appears to have been not unruled, but ruled differently – perhaps in accordance with a rhetorical, rather than grammatical, lexical, and orthographic order. The identification of this “other” order as a period of misrule, and its concomitant association with women, is, I think, largely the work of that impulse towards a reorganized vernacular that forms part of the project of seventeenth-century English nationalism.¹

Early modern English texts, and particularly more familiar, non-literary examples by women, have often been characterized as idiosyncratic, occasionally even ‘illiterate’, in relation to later conventions of punctuation and textual organization.² This has led many editors – like Wall in her edition of the Thynne women’s letters (1983) – to modernize punctuation and paragraphing (in addition, of course, to spelling). However, if, as Fleming asserts (not without some degree of political fervour) language is a necessarily ‘ruled’ activity, and these rules change over time, the lack of those features regarded as the marks of appropriately regulated written expression today should not be seen as necessarily ‘unruled’. The question then becomes: to what extent can we establish the way in which texts were organized, albeit differently in comparison with later norms? Specifically, this chapter is concerned with how the Thynne women created textual cohesion in their letters, i.e. how they meaningfully emphasized and delimited information, thought and expression in their written prose.

Fleming’s suggestion that sixteenth-century English was governed rhetorically offers a possible approach to the identification of textually cohesive features, particularly when dealing with letters in English, which from their inception in the medieval period were based largely on identifiable rhetorical formulae such as the *ars dictaminis* (the ‘arts

¹ J. Fleming, ‘Dictionary English and the Female Tongue’, in *Privileging Gender in Early Modern English*, ed. J. R. Brink (Kirkville, 1993), pp. 175–204 (p. 190).

² For an account (and criticism) of nineteenth-century editors’ tendency to alter women’s texts in terms of spelling, punctuation and paragraphing, see S. J. Steen, ‘Behind the Arras: Editing Renaissance Women’s Letters’, in *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985–1991*, ed. W. Speed Hill (Binghamton, NY, 1993), pp. 229–38 (especially pp. 232–4).

of dictation'), *ars notaria* (originally used by the Chancery in official documents) and Anglo-Norman vernacular models – all of which divided sections of letters into a predictable format and 'satisfied the medieval need for clear definition of form and function during a century [i.e. the fifteenth] in which writers of anything in English were notoriously insecure, and with good reason'.³ To a large extent, rhetorical formulae would have removed the need for punctuation and other pragmatic markers for medieval letter writers of Chancery writs and Anglo-Norman-styled petitions: as long as a letter was short, to the point and adhered to the predictable progressions of rhetorical formulae, transitions in thought would have been minimal and changes from one section, or one meaningful unit of text to another would have been easily read (most likely out-loud) by those familiar with the rhetorical method of composition.

By the time Joan and Maria were writing, loose recapitulations of rhetorical formulae had been published for a lay audience, most notably by Angel Day in what was the first letter-writing manual in English that offered original examples, *The English Secreterie* (1586).⁴ Day's manual offered a mix of rhetorical formulae along with humanist interpretations of the familiar letter; however, 'with less explicit instructions for structuring letters in the way suggested by the Chancery model, for instance, and more detailed instructions for [a] wide range of rhetoric-functional types and their particular schemes and tropes'.⁵ In this way, although Day's manual provided model letters, writers were not encouraged to copy his examples, as 'the emphasis in Renaissance letter-writing was not on adherence to strictly imposed rules, but on adaptability and flexibility'.⁶ Furthermore, it is highly doubtful that Day and other manuals like his had any direct influence on the Thynne women, or formed part of a formalized education for women in general: it is much more likely that their knowledge of letters would have come from letters they encountered in the course of their own experience.⁷ In particular, Wall has noted how Maria's letters exhibit a style 'so specific and individually expressed that they

³ M. Richardson, 'The Dictamen and its Influence on Fifteenth-Century English Prose', *Rhetorica* 2 (1984), pp. 207-26 (p. 217).

⁴ Although William Fulwood's *Enimie of Idleness* (1568) preceded Day's work, it was not nearly as successful and was essentially a translation of the French *Le stile et maniere de composer, dicter, et escrire toute sorte d'epistres, ou letters missiues, tant par reponse que autrement, avec epitome de la poinctuation françoise* (1566) attributed to John de la Moine; although Fulwood omitted the final section devoted to French punctuation. For surveys of English letter-writers see C. Poster and L. C. Mitchell, *Letter-Writing Manuals and Instruction From Antiquity to the Present: Historical and Bibliographic Studies* (Columbia, South Carolina, 2007); K. G. Hornbeak, *The Complete Letter-Writer in English 1568-1800* (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1934); J. Robertson, *The Art of Letter Writing: An Essay on the Handbooks Published in England During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1942).

⁵ T. Nevalainen, 'Continental Conventions in Early English Correspondence', in *Towards a History of English as a History of Genres*, ed. H-J. Diller and M. Grolach (Heidelberg, 2001), pp. 203-24 (p. 214).

⁶ J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 19.

⁷ Nevalainen, 'Continental Conventions', p. 220; Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p. 23.

can owe little or nothing to [letter-writing] books, even if she knew of them'.⁸

Furthermore, while rhetorical features reiterated by Day have been shown to occur in at least some actual letters contemporary with the Thynne women's, this is mostly limited to very formal petitions,⁹ or is otherwise found only in the opening and closing formulae of letters.¹⁰ The text in the body of early modern (and even many late medieval) English familiar letters – given the differences of content and social function compared to those earlier, more formal medieval documents – fell outside the bounds of rhetorical formulae and were more often a matter of the writer's own construction. Yet, at the same time, and despite the rise of print culture, everyday written English was still very much in the early stages of becoming an elaborated language, 'grammatically to a large extent unregulated by prescriptive forces',¹¹ and without the standards of punctuation practice or clear understandings of the 'sentence' which we would use today in order to structure our writing.¹²

This chapter takes this historical situation as a point of departure for discussing text-organizing aspects of the Thynne women's letters. The initial hypothesis adopted here is that the accomplishment of textual organization was dependent upon a range of linguistic features not immediately obvious to the modern reader, features which could delimit and connect meaningful pieces of information in a letter. As a general methodological framework, this chapter maps the function of giving epistolary prose both organizational structure and elocutionary force onto the varying form(s) which accomplish this. This has led to considerations of punctuation, discourse markers, conjunctions, idiomatic expressions, present participles and opening and closing formulae. Although the term 'pragmatic marker' is sometimes used synonymously with the term 'discourse marker',¹³ the former term will be used here to refer to these forms generally, where in addition to semantic content the element of meaning comes from the authors' ability to organize and emphasize particular aspects of the text.

⁸ A. Wall, 'Deference and Defiance in Women's Letters of the Thynne Family: The Rhetoric of Relationships', in *Women's Letters and Letter-Writing in England 1450-1700*, ed. J. Daybell (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 77-93 (p. 79).

⁹ Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, pp. 240-6.

¹⁰ S-K. Tanskanen, "'Best patterns for your imitation": Early Modern Letter-Writing Instruction and Real Correspondence', in *Discourse Perspectives in English*, ed. R. Hiltunen and J. Skaffari (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2003), pp. 167-95.

¹¹ T. Nevalainen, *An Introduction to Early Modern English* (Edinburgh, 2006), p. 42.

¹² Considering the amount of attention that has been recently afforded historical syntax and morphosyntax, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that so little has been written on the history of the English sentence. Ian Robinson has contributed significantly to what one would hope to be the beginning of a scholarly discussion on the subject: 'Appendix 1: The History of the Sentence' in his *The Establishment of Modern English Prose in the Reformation and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 166-84.

¹³ D. Blakemore, 'Chapter Ten: Discourse Markers', in *The Handbook of Pragmatics*, ed. L. R. Horn and G. Ward (Oxford, 2004), pp. 221-40 (p. 221).

Primarily, the focus will be on the letters of the Thynne women; however, for comparative purposes, other letters – mostly early modern but also from the medieval period – as well as data from other places such as writing manuals and period drama will be used to contextualize the features discussed in the Thynne letters in relation to the larger corpus of early English writing. In some places, senses of particular words or expressions will be clarified by referencing the OED, the citations from which will allow for comment on the type of texts in which particular features appear.

In the chapter's conclusion, it is proposed that the cross-over between the correlating pragmatic functions of these items provides support for a new approach to understanding early modern epistolary prose organization, emphasizing how textual, speech-based, rhetorical and grammatical functions interacted to create coherency in the Thynne women's letters.

Punctuation

Before the end of the sixteenth century, very little punctuation was employed in 'private manuscripts', including familiar letters.¹⁴ However, like many of their contemporaries writing at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, both Joan and Maria used punctuation marks in their letters quite frequently.¹⁵ For the most part, the punctuation of familiar texts has received very little attention and when period punctuation has been subjected to scholarly scrutiny, it is usually restricted to printed texts, and then almost exclusively to that of the grammarians and the elocutionary features of Shakespeare's dramas.¹⁶ Likewise, Malcolm Parke's *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (1993), which is the only monograph study of its kind, provides an excellent introduction to classical traditions and later specialized social groups such as the humanists in Renaissance Europe, but makes little mention of more quotidian examples of punctuation practice. Therefore, my consideration of Joan and Maria's punctuation here is a type of analysis largely unprecedented for the early modern period.

¹⁴ V. Salmon, 'Chapter Two: Orthography and Punctuation', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language Volume III: 1476-1776*, ed. R. Lass (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 13-55 (p. 31).

¹⁵ I will not be considering factors such as capitalization or word-division in this section but strictly punctuation marks used for pointing a text: the period, semi-colon, virgule, etc.

¹⁶ For example: R. King, 'Seeing the Rhythm: An Interpretation of Sixteenth-Century Punctuation and Metrical Practice', in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page*, ed. J. Bray, M. Handley and A. C. Henry (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 235-52; W. J. Ong, 'Historical Backgrounds of Elizabethan and Jacobean Punctuation', *PMLA* 59 (1944), pp. 349-60; V. Salmon, 'English Punctuation Theory 1500-1800', *Anglia* 106 (1988), pp. 285-314.

Parkes has described punctuation as ‘a feature of the “pragmatics” of the written medium’.¹⁷ And in order to describe the pragmatic significance of punctuation, it is first necessary to locate a descriptive terminology that can accurately describe the potential reasons why, or the pragmatic functions to do with how a writer would employ their marks. Typically, the distinction is made between rhetorical, or ‘elocutionary’, and grammatical, or ‘syntactical’ systems of punctuation. Scholarly opinions vary, but it seems fairly clear that while the rhetorical element was still considerable (as it remains today), grammatical concerns were becoming more and more a conscious part of punctuation theory during the late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries.¹⁸ Even as early as 1551, John Hart’s *The Opening of the Unreasonable Writing of Our English Tounge* offers a description of punctuation marks which is at least loosely based on sentential criteria not far from our own understanding of their usage.¹⁹ An ‘appropriate grammar for explaining modern punctuation’, however, was not fully developed at least until the early eighteenth century.²⁰ Furthermore, theory is often at odds with practice and it is likely that the theories circulating among the minute percentage of the population that were in fact thinking about punctuation from a theoretical point of view would have had little, if any, direct effect on the familiar writing of Joan and Maria’s period.

Also, the distinction between the two systems is not always clear when looking at specific examples, for it is quite possible that texts designed to be spoken aloud (e.g. drama) differed in their treatment from those designed for ‘silent’, private consumption (e.g. a book on etiquette).²¹ This distinction is of course blurred when considering letters, which, in the medieval period, were originally designed, and their prose structured, to be read out-loud (by the messenger) upon delivery.²² And while by the late sixteenth century letters were more likely to have been read solely by the addressee upon delivery, the genre is (as described in the introduction) frequently likened as closer to the spoken language than many other text types.²³ The rhetorical/grammatical difference is then somewhat arbitrary, and perhaps best described as a range of variation rather than as a clear-cut binary distinction. I will therefore, in preference, be referring to the sentential, clausal and

¹⁷ M. Parkes, *Pause and Effect: An Introduction to the History of Punctuation in the West* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), p. 2.

¹⁸ See especially Salmon, ‘English Punctuation’.

¹⁹ Nevalainen, *An Introduction*, pp. 34-5.

²⁰ Robinson, *The Establishment*, p. 33.

²¹ J. Lennard, ‘Mark, Space, Axis, Function: Towards a (New) Theory of Punctuation on Historical Principles’, in *Ma(r)king the Text: The Presentation of Meaning on the Literary Page*, ed. J. Bray, M. Handley and A. C. Henry (Aldershot, 2000), pp. 1-11 (p. 1); J. Lennard, ‘Punctuation: And – “Pragmatics”’, in *Historical Pragmatics*, ed. A. H. Jucker (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 65-98 (p. 68).

²² M. Camargo, ‘Where’s the Brief?: The *Ars Dictaminis* and Reading/Writing Between the Lines’, *Disputatio* 1 (1996), pp. 1-17

²³ H. C. Wyld, *A History of Modern Colloquial English*, Third Edition (Oxford, 1936), pp. 99-100; D. Biber, *Variation Across Speech and Writing* (Cambridge, 1988), especially pp. 132 and 168.

phrasal (conventionally understood as grammatical categories), as well as the emotional, and the deictic and equiparative uses of punctuation – the latter set in particular will be explained as they arise.²⁴

The first point to emphasize is that Joan's holograph letters are anything but regularly or consecutively punctuated: some texts are heavily punctuated while others contain almost none at all. This means that for the most part – although there are some continuities between texts – the study of Joan's punctuation must be undertaken on a text-by-text basis. Starting with a relatively short example, Joan's letter V.80, of 1595, employs very minimalistic use of punctuation marks: there are only two. V.80 is the only surviving letter from Joan to her 'cousin' (Wall [1983] suggests a Thomas Higgins), whom she is petitioning in the name of her son to make amends between the boy and his (then) estranged father:

omy Good cosen how harde Is my hape to lyue to se my chefest hope of
loye my greatest grefe and soro for you kno how much I haue all waise
dislykeid my sonn to mach in this sorte but alas I fere it is to late but If there
be any remede for it good cosen **let there be spede order for it:** he is
contented to leue her seinge nether I nor his father am contented with the
mach alas the boye was be trade by the maruens which I haue often toulde
mr Thynne what the woulde do and now it is to sure but I troste the ma
bedeuorsed for I thinke it is no good mareg in laye for that he is vnder ages
and therefore **I pra you persuaue mr Thynne for the beste:** I woulde be
glad to here som good nuse of your prosedeingeis from you I pra god it ma
be beter then the laste was to me and so not douttinge of your frendely
persuadeinge mr Thynne how I hope will aquante you with my leter and my
cosens that you ma se at large the desateis that hath byn yoused to deseue
asily childe which is moste soryfull for his falte desires you to be amene to
his father for him and so commendeing me to your good selfe I take my
leau from cause castell the xv of aperll²⁵

Despite the multiple transitions, both clausal and sentential, the only two punctuation marks in this letter are the two colons which occur fairly equidistantly in the text after the sections I have highlighted. It would not be accurate to describe these marks as separating the body of the letter into three subject-orientated sections as the subject matter is for the most part continuous throughout. Instead the punctuation here may have

²⁴ Although historical studies of punctuation oftentimes refer to punctuation as demarcating rhetorical *periods*, which are further divided into *cola* and *commata*, I will not be using these terms here as their application to familiar writing is less helpful than in literary texts. Here and throughout this chapter I will be using 'sentential' to distinguish groups of words which form units superordinate to the clausal and phrasal – as the grammatical sentence is understood today: a group of words expressing a complete thought.

²⁵ While original lineation is a potentially significant text-structuring aspect of letters, I have encountered very little indication of this in the letters of Joan and Maria. Perhaps this is to do with the unpredictable nature of line breaks and the fact that a writer would on most occasions (in familiar letters at least) try to maximize their use of the space (as paper was expensive): this would make it difficult and uneconomical to plan any meaningful shift in a letter around the end of a line. It is for this reason that, in accordance with my citation practice for the rest of the thesis, I have not maintained the original lineation of the manuscripts in this chapter; although this information is available in the transcriptions in Appendix 1.

to do with emphasizing Joan's directive speech acts. Before each colon, Joan builds up to the two speech acts directed at her cousin by offering an account of her own feelings and beliefs – beginning with the rather dramatic discourse marker 'Omy' (i.e. 'oh, my good cousin') – as well as the feelings of her son regarding his clandestine marriage to Maria. Before the first colon she uses the directive sense of the verb *let*, then, before the second, *pray*. That the colons are matched with speech acts shows how Joan was using this marker as a pragmatic marker superordinate to both clausal and (what we would see as) sentential structure: discourse markers separate expressive speech acts from a directive one, but the first directive act is separated differently from the second directive so as to emphasize the importance of her requests through the use of a colon. What this practice does is draw attention to a particular speech act as primary to all that precedes it, creating an episodic build-up to the action she desires from her addressee (which is, of course, primarily why she wrote this letter in the first place). From the perspective of text types within the letter-writing genre, this practice also reflects the fact that letters of this period were oftentimes written in order to perform directive speech acts; for example, to *pray* for things.

The use of colons to mark speech acts can be found in other letters from Joan as well, as in the beginning of letter V.95, written to John in 1600:

Good mr Thynne I was in good hope to a harde from you but you haue in som sorte deseaued my expeictacion and there fore hereafter I will not loke for it but how so euer it is **I will wish you as much good as your selfe can ether desire or desarue:** my sister hath writen vnto you [. . .]

Following the punctuation here and in letter V.80 above, Joan does not use a pragmatic marker, but at every other transition, some sort of marker is in place to help move the reader through the text (e.g. 'for' and 'alas' in V.80, or 'but' and 'howsoever' in V.95). In the instance above, Joan is very clearly half-heartedly *wishing*, perhaps even with some amount of sarcasm, due to her displeasure at John's not writing to her as she expected (with the use of the future auxiliary *will* signalling the insincere nature of her *wish* – a feature discussed more in the following chapter). Whether or not one could describe this usage of punctuation as rhetorical because it does not conform to grammar as we would use it today is doubtful. The usage does not correlate with spoken delivery; however, it contributes to the force with which Joan's directive speech acts are delivered, on the page.

Joan's letter V.97/98, an especially long text written to John in 1600, may be similarly analysed. This letter is one of her most consistently punctuated texts, and to exemplify Joan's usage on this occasion I quote two sections here:

Good mr Thynne I am glad to here of your good helth desiring the continuances of the same to my only comfort: **for my cosen higgins** I am sorry that he hath vsed him selfe so ill and vnkindely towards you, wch is

contrary to his speeches he had with me. I am hartly sory you had suche a hard and longe Iurne, and to no pourpose in respeickt mr snage faled of his repare theyther, but yett I here it was not all together in vane of which I am very glad to here that there is Loue and frenshipp betuene your brother francis and you: **I haue reseaued** the wheate which is very lettell and not so muche as we shall nede at this tyme not by forty bussheles, for this will not sarue one of your feledes, and for the sakeis the shall be presently retourned vnto you agayne, the demande much more then you write that I should geue them for the careg of the mellstone but he shall haue no more then you haue sett done: **I haue reseaued** ahondered and forecore pounce fife sheleinges and fore pences, there is agreate parte of it owinge, and for the reste I will make what spare I can [. . .]: **I haue reseaued** the xij quarters of malte from glostersheare and there moste be prouided for after the rate of the note here in closed: **I haue sent** vnto my cosen williams for the cartificatt and as sone as he hath sente it vnto me I will sende it vnto you to london: **richardsonn hath mended** the windos all redy so much as he can but yett it raneth in for all that he hath mended, and therefore I haue sente for aplomer to mende the ledeis wch will be very chargeabell I feare: **simeis hath byn tould** for the lokeinge vnto of the game but I thinke this wett doth rott many of them for those that he bringeis into the howse are very much cored all redy: **mr eston hath not yett keptt** your courteis but now the shall be very shortly: **dauis hath byn tould** what your plesher is and he is contented to sarue you at arate for foule and not to com here: **streten men cam not as yett** but I will send vnto them

Here we see how Joan was capable of using marks to delineate recognizable clausal and sentential structures. Again, the colon separates episodes in this letter, facilitating changes of subject. Some clauses are marked as well, although this is not as consistent as the subject-orientated marking that is accomplished through the use of colons. Furthermore, Joan reserves the colon for the separation of subject-orientated episodes, never using it in this letter to mark clausal structure. For clauses she uses a comma (although some clauses appear unmarked). The way in which the comma oftentimes precedes a conjunction in these clauses suggests that Joan at least had some intuitive, pseudo-grammatical feeling for the difference between the two reasons for marking sections of the text with different punctuation marks. Late medieval letter-writers would have more likely used the pragmatic marker *item* to demarcate what is essentially a list of happenings to do with what Joan and others have (which is the repeated verb) done regarding their involvement in the management of the Thynnes' estates. Joan uses the colon for this task.

The types of punctuation considered so far in the letters from Joan are what Parkes describes as 'deictic', where the punctuation is meant to emphasize particular aspects of the text.²⁶ In other letters, however, punctuation marks are either too numerous or too scarce (often non-existent) for them to emphasize any one aspect of the text over another.

²⁶ Parkes, *Pause and Effect*, p. 303.

In letter V.122/3 (1603) Joan's punctuation marks – colons, commas and periods – run rampant through almost the entire text; however, it is difficult to make much sense of sections that read:

I feare, there will not be much left: of the. hounded and xxxj pound,
which I reseaued: but what is possibell to spare: I proteste I will do my,
beste, in itt: but for the discharginge of basit: as yet, I can not spare him,
nether do I know, who to put in his rome:

or, slightly later in the same letter:

hounbely desiringe: you, aboue, all thinges, to haue respectt, vnto your
helth: and not to defar: the tyme of takeing ficake: and Lett your greatest
care: be for the preseruacion of your helth. in whose well doinge consistes
my only Ioye: and comfort, and therefore suett mr Thynne: if you Loue or
make acounte of me haue aspeshall: regarde, of itt:,

Conversely to the deictic style, Parkes also describes a style of punctuation he calls 'equiparative', or 'punctuation where extensive pointing (or the absence of points) produces a neutral interpretation of a text, which attributes equal value to all possible emphases'.²⁷ However, it is doubtful that Joan has made a conscious effort here to give equal weight to all possible emphases, particularly given her use of several different punctuation marks in what appears to be an interchangeable fashion. Perhaps she was somehow trying to replicate pauses, or rhythms in speech, but even this seems like a difficult conclusion with the comma after 'I feare', or the two placed around 'beste'. Heather Wolfe, in her edition of the letters of Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, observed a similar usage of punctuation, concluding:

While inconsistent capitalisation, punctuation, and spelling are quite typical of early modern letters, Lady Falkland's widespread deployment of commas is less usual, giving her letters a sort of staccato phrasing which insists upon the acuteness of her needs.²⁸

It would seem that Joan at times did use punctuation to mark clauses and grammatical structure, but also in the more detached 'staccato' style – which is, by comparison, more extreme than that of Elizabeth Cary. Its appearance in letter V.122/3 (above) could have been due to the 'acuteness' of Joan's concerns to do with money and John's health (he died not long after this); in which case her punctuation could have served as a readable reflection of her worried mental state. In relation to this, Salmon describes the primary function of punctuation as a method of conveying meaning not expressed lexically, with one variation of this being '*emotional*, marking a speaker's attitude to a statement'.²⁹ Although it is difficult to speculate, given the limited occurrence of this type of

²⁷ Ibid., p. 304.

²⁸ *Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland: Life and Letters*, ed. H. Wolfe (Tempe, Arizona, 2001), p. 228.

²⁹ Salmon, 'Chapter Two', p. 348.

punctuation in Joan's letters, it is worth keeping in mind that she was writing before the advent of the exclamation point or other emotional emphazisers in punctuation, such as ALL CAPS. Considered this way, staccato style punctuation may very well have been an effective means of inscribing a letter with emotional content, or at least a way of adding to the emotions described more explicitly in the letter.

The scribal letters from Joan offer yet another level – literally, another person's hand and practice – to the punctuation of her correspondence. Occasionally, uses of punctuation between holograph and scribal examples are similar; for example, the use of the colon to create compound units of meaning, here linked with the conjunctive *but* in both a scribal and the holograph letter to Thomas:

I intreated Mr Chelmecke to staie his triall and *perswaded* Mr Gough because of *yor* request; and promise to *come* vnto me: **but** seeing *yow* come not I am yll thought of, and *yow* much condemned;³⁰

[. . .] to be pade vnto her at London or other wise where she shall apount: **but** to breake the some shee is very vnwilinge³¹

One difference between these two passages is that, unlike Joan, her scribe uses punctuation to indicate phrasal structure – as in the semi-colon separating 'yor request' and 'and promise to *come* vnto me'. Joan's own use of punctuation to make distinctions below the clausal level is limited and, as has been seen in letter V.122/23, staccato in style. The scribal letters are also different from Joan's own in the range of punctuation marks used. That by Joan's scribes is wider than her own and in some cases emphasizes grammatical aspects of what is being expressed in a way closer to present-day practice. For example, unlike anywhere in Joan's holograph letters, her scribes use round brackets:

Good sonne. *lres* are come to myselfe (as to others freeholders of the lands *wch* were the Duke of Buckingham) from the *lds* and others of his *Mats* most hoble: priuie counsell³²

Good Sonne. fforasmuch as the day of paiement of *yor* sister dorotheies mony draweth nere *wch* is vpon the first daie of October next (she accomplishing her full age of .xxj. yeres vpon the xvjth daie of Aprill Laste) and *yow* not yet come hether to me according to *yor* promise, when I might haue signified soe much in *person* to *yow*, I thought good haueing this fitt oppurtunity to acquainte *yow* therewth³³

³⁰ VIII.36 (1611).

³¹ VIII.37 (1611).

³² VIII.28 (1608).

³³ VIII.34 (1611).

The first of these is probably best described as what we understand today as a parenthetical statement, or aside. The second set of brackets, however, seems to be used as emphasis for particularly relevant information: that Thomas's sister has reached the age of twenty-one and therefore would be expecting the money she was due from Thomas as current male head of the family. Significantly, this latter use of brackets has been identified as part of the 'Elizabethan specialisation of scribal punctuation by which each symbol develops a particular set of uses', as witnessed in a study of period legal manuscripts written by various hands.³⁴ It is not that Joan was incapable of constructing this level of grammatical complexity – and she may have dictated these lines herself – the difference is to do with experience and training *in writing* and the way in which the written text was organized by visual, readable means.

As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, the strategic use of scribes in cases of legal sensitivity was not uncommon for early modern women writers, and this habit seems to have been at least part of the reason Joan used scribes to write most of the surviving letters to Thomas, in that professional scribes would have added to the legitimacy of her claims through their rendering of text in a more professional-looking way. Along with the number of other sociopragmatically significant features scribes brought to the text and language of Joan's letter, they also carried with them a system of punctuation which resembles that of other Elizabethan legal documents. In addition to rounded brackets, scribes use the virgule and the tilde (~), neither of which Joan herself uses in her holograph letters, and again in a way consistent with that of other legal manuscripts. As with Elizabethan warrants, the virgule is used by the scribe of letters VIII.34 and VIII.36 to mark major sections of text. The tilde is also consistent with legal style as it was used to fill space at the end of lines. Much more economical with her space, and probably with a mind for saving expensive paper, Joan, on the other hand, uses the double hyphen to carry words over to the following line if she runs out of space, whereas formalized scribal practice did not allow for this.

Maria's letters are much more consistently punctuated than Joan's, using a mixture of features, some of which are like Joan's own, others closer to that of her scribes. To begin with, as one would today, she demarcates her opening address (if one is given) by placing a colon or comma afterwards. Maria's sentential units are usually much longer than Joan's and therefore tend to involve much more clausal and phrasal coordination. She regularly uses the comma to mark clauses, phrases and sentences. Like the more legal

³⁴ J. Calle-Martin and A. Miranda-Garcia, 'The Punctuation System of Elizabethan Legal Documents: The Case of G.U.L. MS Hunter 3 (S.1.3)', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 59 (2007), pp. 356-37 (p. 376).

style of Joan's scribes, Maria uses the virgule at the end of most of her letters (although she does use the double-hyphen, even in her petitions, to carry words over the line). She also uses the virgule to emphasize changes in subject or episodes (like Joan's occasional use of the colon), which on many occasions simultaneously indicates a moment of elocutionary force. For example, in letter VIII.12 to Thomas she increases the force of her expressions of boredom and sexual frustration at being left at home in the country by the strategic placement of a virgule:

when my Systers wyllbe in lundon att ther pleasure, I am talkeinge of foxes
& rudder Beasts att home / **wyll doo** butt make hast home & make much of
thy Mall when thow doste Come home

The virgule here could indicate some sort of meaningful pause as Maria ends her complaint and then moves on to suggest she expects a great deal of attention when Thomas returns home. The speech-like quality of this transition is further suggested by her use of the phrase 'wyll doo', which lacking a subject appears somewhat colloquial (similar to the omission of the first person pronoun in present-day English *will do!*³⁵). In this way, Maria's punctuation demonstrates how speech-like, elocutionary qualities and grammatical uses of punctuation coincide.

What the punctuation of both Joan and Maria's letters seems to demonstrate is that, when writing, neither woman saw herself as constructing strict rhetorical formulae, nor were they writing sentences as we would today. Instead, they were putting their thoughts, which were quite often requests or demands, but also expressions of worry or disapproval, on paper in a comprehensible way where punctuation would have aided the task by emphasizing desires or feelings that one wanted to get across to their recipient. The observations here resonate with Lennard's conclusion that,

[. . .] the significance of any mark, space, or unit of punctuation is in the end relative, not determined by an absolute value which every ., , or , [sic] must have, but interpreted by the reader with greater or lesser regard for convention and for the contexts of writing and reading.³⁶

The great variation in Joan's letters, not just between texts but also within a single letter itself, makes it hard to distinguish some overall principle underpinning her practices of punctuation. However, the correlation in her surviving letters, both scribal and holograph, of punctuation marks with speech acts, interpersonal functions and (in some cases) grammatical concerns suggests the mixing of approaches, both rhetorical and grammatical. Furthermore, the way in which scribal usage differs from that in Joan's holographs demonstrates how punctuation practice was dependent upon the writer's training and the

³⁵ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'will, v¹', 11, c.

³⁶ Lennard, 'Punctuation: And – "Pragmatics"', p. 69.

sociopragmatic purpose of the text itself (a topic which will be returned to in Chapter 5). The fact that Maria's punctuation is more consistently sensitive to grammatical concerns than Joan's could be a reflection of a movement during the period towards the more modern punctuation with which we are familiar today, something hitherto undocumented in familiar writing. In the following sections I will consider several other ways in which Joan and Maria's text were organized, sometimes (in the case of Maria) in conjunction with punctuation marks, sometimes (in the case of Joan) as an alternative way of creating emphasis and marking transitions.

Discourse Markers

Discourse markers are a necessarily fuzzy linguistic category; however, when described from the perspective of prototypes, there are some basic characteristics which most linguists do agree upon. The definition used here is derived from two previous studies which synthesize the prototypical aspects of discourse markers in English.

The first study is by Andreas Jucker, also focused on early modern English texts, where he defines a prototype for discourse markers by distinguishing how they work in 'phonology, syntax and semantics, and the descriptive features on the functional and stylistic level'. Briefly: at the level of phonology discourse markers are frequently shortened versions of longer phrases and are often of a 'separate tone group'. Although these tone groups may be somewhat difficult to decipher from silent early modern texts, they will prove useful in thinking about how discourse markers might have contributed to the elocutionary force of what was oftentimes emotionally charged epistolary expression. At the syntactic level, the prototypical discourse marker is usually found at the beginning of a sentence and is either not at all necessary for the sentence to remain grammatical or is only loosely attached to it. Likewise, they tend to contain none or very little actual semantic content, although some markers may have 'residual meanings' connected to earlier lexical content. Finally, discourse markers are characterized as serving a number of linguistic functions, but are more common in spoken language and are very often associated with more informal styles.³⁷

A second source is a study by Laurel Brinton, which offers more in the way of how what she refers to as 'pragmatic markers' function at a textual level. Brinton points out the various pragmatic functions discourse analysts have attributed to discourse markers, i.e.:

³⁷ A. H. Jucker, 'Discourse Markers in Early Modern English', in *Alternative Histories of English*, ed. R. Watts and P. Trudgill (London and New York, 2002), pp. 210-30.

- (a) to mark various kinds of boundaries (to initiate or end a discourse or to effect a shift in topic), and
- (b) to assist in turn-taking in oral discourse or “chunking” (marking of episode or paragraph) in written discourse;
and on the interpersonal level:
 - (a) subjectively, to express speaker attitude, and
 - (b) interactively, to achieve intimacy between speaker and addressee (for example, by appealing to the addressee or expressing shared or common knowledge)³⁸

These functions seem particularly relevant to the current study in that they reiterate the concerns of this chapter’s focus on the organization of text in both a topical and elocutionary sense.

Brinton’s description of pragmatic functions is useful in exploring the hypothesis that, in a period before conventionalized punctuation, discourse markers are potentially a very useful textual resource in the organization of epistolary prose. Medieval Latin prose had the *cursus* (literally ‘course’), which was a regularized system of sound cadences that allowed writers to move from one subject to another, but this practice had little if any effect on English prose, especially with regard to lay writing.³⁹ Instead of strict reliance on sound patterns, everyday writers in English used lexical items or short phrases to demarcate sections of their texts:

Because late medieval letters were so irregularly punctuated, if at all, letter-writers often marked off division in thought by repetition of one word or phrase throughout a single letter: “Furthermore,” “Also,” “Item,” “Sir,” “And as touching,” “And as for,” etc. These conjunctions or connectors are less evident in official letters, which usually stick to a single subject.⁴⁰

A particularly common example of this can be seen in the Paston letters, where the word *item* is used repeatedly to mark changes in subject. In his edition, Davis uses this word as a cue to open new modernized paragraphs (a practice that does not correspond with the manuscript letters themselves). Other such markers in the Paston letters that can be found at the beginning of Davis’ paragraph divisions are *also*, *as for*, or simply *and*.⁴¹ The fact that Davis uses these markers as indices to guide his edition’s paragraphing correlates with what Brinton has to say about their pragmatic function, particularly their assistance in marking shifts in topic and textual ‘chunking’.

³⁸ L. Brinton, *Pragmatic Markers in English: Grammaticalization and Discourse Functions* (Berlin and New York, 1996), p. 6. Although Brinton’s use of the term ‘pragmatic markers’ is for the most part limited to lexical items, I will continue to use it as inclusive of all the features studied in this chapter, including opening/closing formulae and punctuation.

³⁹ N. Denholm-Young, ‘The Cursus in England’, in *Collected Papers on Medieval Subjects* (Oxford, 1946), pp. 26-55.

⁴⁰ Richardson, ‘The Dictamen’, p. 214.

⁴¹ N. Davis, *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 2004).

Based on what Jucker and Brinton have to say, and following Davis' medieval example, this section will discuss Joan and Maria's use of discourse markers as multi-functional. I will first locate markers in the letters, keeping in mind the prototypical features outlined by Jucker's analysis. Next, I will consider the possibility of their textual function within the letters by referring to Brinton's first two points. Also, what are listed as 'interpersonal functions' will be used as a starting point for discussing several of the markers' elocutionary forces and their possible links to the spoken language. This analysis will not cover all the discourse markers found in the letters of Joan and Maria, but only a few of the more salient examples.

One of the most emotionally charged discourse markers to be found in any of either woman's letters is the emphatic *well*. Maria uses this marker on two occasions, both in letters to Thomas. The first instance comes in letter VIII.1, where Maria is complaining to Thomas of his mistrust of her judgement: '/ **well** mr Thynne beleeeue I am both Sory & ashamed that any Creature should see that you hold such a Contempte of my poore wyttes'. The integration of this marker into her text not only helps create textual cohesion, but also adds significant elocutionary force to her complaint. The OED lists this sense as employed 'to introduce a remark or statement, sometimes implying that the speaker or writer accepts a situation, etc., already expressed or indicated, or desires to qualify this in some way';⁴² here Maria's qualification of Thomas' disapproval being an expression of her anger at being treated like a 'fool' (which is the word she uses in her letter). This usage affirms Brinton's set of interpersonal functions in that it serves to express Maria's attitude, while also reinforcing the familiarity between her and Thomas (an intimacy that runs freely throughout all of her letters to him). Its informal colloquialism is also suggested by the fact that although found infrequently in the more formal Folio of Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, it is common in the earlier Quarto text, which has been described as being for 'less sophisticated audiences'.⁴³ This marker serves a slightly different pragmatic function in letter VIII.6, which is one of the more sexually charged examples of Maria's flirtatious disposition. After making references to the repeated sex that she and Thomas will have upon his return home to her, she makes an attempt to switch her tone: '[. . .], **well now** layeing a side my highe Choller, know in Sober sadnes that I am att longe leate'. The different tone group that *well* could possibly add as a 'topic changer' in this transition serves to demarcate the shift in attitude (from flirtation to estate business) and, again, this adds significant force to Maria's writing, almost adding the visual presence of her facial expression or physical gestures (pragmatic cues that are otherwise lacking from

⁴² OED, Second Edition, 'well, *adv.*', VI, 23, a.

⁴³ Jucker, 'Discourse Markers', pp. 223-4.

the written text), before trying to move on to more business-like matters to do with preparing the estate for Thomas' return.⁴⁴ The OED lists variations of *well*-constructions such as *well then* and *well now* as 'introducing a conclusion or further statement, or implying that one can naturally be drawn or made', with citations beginning at the end of the fifteenth century, further attesting to a correlation of sense between present-day usage and the examples found in Maria's letters. Two examples found in the OED from close to the time Maria wrote her letters come from a play by Ben Jonson and a sermon preached by Thomas Adams (subsequently printed in a collection of his sermons):

- (a) 1599 B. JONSON *Ev. Man out of Hum.* IV. iv, **Well now** master Snip, let mee see your Bill.
- (b) 1615 T. ADAMS *Spiritual Navig.* 19 **Well yet**, as salt and bitter as this Ocean the world is, there is some good wrought out of this ill.⁴⁵

The fact that these, and most of the other OED citations for this usage, come from speech-based texts provides support that *well* was based in speech and that it was from her experience with the spoken language that Maria was deriving the word. The dual functionality of *well* is corroborated by Jucker's much more general study, wherein the marker is described in Shakespeare's plays as having been 'used both with a textual function, marking a topic boundary, and with an interpersonal function, marking a potentially face-threatening situation'.⁴⁶

Although there are no occurrences of *well*-constructions in any of Joan's letters, there are several other discourse markers which appear with similar communicative roles. On one occasion, Joan uses *now for* as a discourse marker to switch topics in letter VII.237 to Lucy: ';**Now for** mr Thynnes callinge of your honor in question I can not denie but I hau harde ytt'. The functional purpose and semantic content is similar to the first example of *well* given from Maria's letters, and is listed in the OED as 'Introducing an important or noteworthy point in an argument or proof, or in a series of statements. Also *now then*.'⁴⁷ Similarly, Finell classifies *now*'s pragmatic significance in personal letters as a 'topic introducer'.⁴⁸ Maria also uses *now for*, in the petitionary letter VIII.22, in which she writes of a previous letter from her mother-in-law that Joan has requested she redeliver to someone else due to her mistrust for Maria: '/ **now for** yr Letter, thoughe I wer vnwellinge to Leaue so greate a Comphorte, so longe Labored for [. . .]'. On other occasions, *for*

⁴⁴ The discourse functions of markers such as *well* are described as 'topic changers' in A. Finell, 'The Repertoire of Topic Changers in Personal, Intimate Letters: A Diachronic Study of Osborne and Woolf', in *History of Englishes: New Methods and Interpretations in Historical Linguistics*, ed. M. Rissanen et al. (Berlin and New York, 1992), pp. 720-35.

⁴⁵ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'well, *adv.*', VI, b, 26-7.

⁴⁶ Jucker, 'Discourse Markers', pp. 221-4.

⁴⁷ OED, Draft Revision (December, 2008), 'now, *adv.*, *conj.*, *n.*¹, and *adj.*', II, 6.

⁴⁸ Finell, 'The Repertoire', p. 722.

appears on its own as a prepositional discourse marker, as in letter V.103, by Joan, which begins, ‘I am sory to here that you are crasi [i.e. unwell] I hope the worste is paste: **for** the mony which you sent by noubery for carlet I haue pade yett vnto him:’; and then once in her letter to Lucy Audley:

I am not soe redy to ronge inferiour parsones, much les an honorable Lady, of your place and reputacione, and so conseue of me, for soe you shall euer finde me, **for** your Dafter I can not yett account of her, as you may of my sonne, for that I haue not had the triall of the one, as you haue had of the other⁴⁹

In all of these examples, the *now/for*-phrase is preceded by punctuation, which while common for Maria’s practice, is rarer for Joan. With respect to Joan’s writing, this may have something to do with the fact that two of the examples are from the incredibly neatly written letter to Lucy, which, in addition to its flourished italic script and controlled spacing, also employs a style of punctuation much more consistent, and therefore more like Maria’s, than in other examples from Joan.

Alas, also classifiable as an interjection, occurs in Joan’s writing, in letter V.80, of 1595 (discussed in the section on punctuation above): ‘I haue all waise dislykeid my sonn to mach in this sorte but **alas** I fere it is to late’, and then later in the same letter, ‘he [Thomas] is contented to leue her [Maria] seinge nether I nor his father am contented with the mach **alas** the boye was be trade by the maruens’. Significantly, this marker appears nowhere else in all of Joan’s letters, which suggests stylistic parameters. In particular, this letter was written during an especially turbulent period of Joan’s life, directly following her and her husband’s discovery of the clandestine marriage between Thomas and Maria. Calling on all possible human resources in the hopes of illegitimizing the match, Joan engages with the feminine rhetoric of vulnerability to exaggerate her desperation, where the dramatic qualities of *alas* – ‘an exclamation expressive of unhappiness, grief, sorrow, pity, or concern’⁵⁰ – would have added to such a performance.⁵¹ Again, it is worth noting that most of the OED citations for this marker, as well as the *now/for*-variations, are derived from speech-based texts.

These few examples reflect larger trends in the Thynne women’s letters where in Joan’s letters discourse markers have the potential of making up for a lack of punctuation in their ability to chunk together different parts of discourse while also providing elocutionary emphasis, serving both an organizational and interpersonal function. In Maria’s letters, discourse markers frequently correlate with punctuation, which makes their

⁴⁹ VII.237 (1602).

⁵⁰ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘*alas*, *int.*’

⁵¹ See especially J. Daybell, ‘Scripting a Female Voice: Women’s Epistolary Rhetoric in Sixteenth-Century Letters of Petition’, *Women’s Writing* 2:1 (2006), pp. 3-20.

text-structuring function less pronounced than in her mother-in-law's letters, although the elocutionary function remains significant. Also, what Maria's letters suggest – in the way in which speech-derived discourse markers usually correlate with written punctuation – is that her use of punctuation may have been partly based on her knowledge of the elocutionary qualities of the spoken language.

Conjunctions

Closely related to discourse markers in terms of textual functionality, conjunctions serve to mark transitions, although they usually occur between clauses, relating one section of information to another, whereas discourse markers more often open new sentential chunks of text. Therefore, unlike discourse markers, conjunctions tend to be more crucial to the grammatical meaning of a text, while their expressive, interpersonal function is less pronounced.

For was the most common causal conjunction in early modern English,⁵² and after *and* and *but*, it is by far the most common of all the conjunctions in both the Thynne women's letters where it was used most often to create subordinate or coordinate clauses. Examples from Joan's letters include:

mr Thynne Ima not in pute it vnto you for not writting vnto me, **for ether** the mesenger are vere slake in bringe or you slothuful for not writting tome **for I ether** thynke that your helthe is not so prfat as I wolde it ware or that your besnes falth otherwise then you lokod for⁵³

preuente danger in him [i.e. Thomas] and his brother here after in alouinge one to teth ['teach'] him and his brother which will be but one charge to you and beter for them both to lerne together **for now** this doth but lose his time and all longe of your selfe which if I myghit remede as you ma it should not be as it is **for all thoth** he will neuer be good coler yet if there ware one that coulde teth him with decreschen and parsuagens I thinke he woulde lerne more now after this trobell then here tofore he hath don⁵⁴

Each of these uses of the conjunctive *for* serve to supply support for the speech act that precedes them in either extract. The example from Joan in V.10, in which she writes that she does not 'impute' (i.e. 'charge' or 'condemn') John for not writing to her, is an expressive speech act, followed by two sets of hypothetical explanations for his delay – one of which contradicts her claims of not imputing him in that she refers to him as 'slothful' – which she links to the initial speech act by using a pair of conjunctive *for*-

⁵² M. Rissanen, 'Chapter Four: Syntax', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language Volume III: 1476-1776*, ed. R. Lass (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 187-331 (p. 305).

⁵³ V.10 (1576).

⁵⁴ V.73 (1595).

clauses. Then, in letter V.73, Joan employs an imperative, directing John to ‘preuente danger’ in Thomas (it seems she is suggesting that by pairing the boys together under one teacher this will somehow keep Thomas out of trouble – presumably out of contact with the Audley/Marvin faction). And as in the previous example, the *for*-phrases are used to add successive justifications for putting the brothers together. In this sense, the conjunction is used for ‘introducing the ground or reason for something previously said’.⁵⁵ Additionally, all these examples of *for* appear with other conjunctive elements, i.e. *either*, *now* and *although*. This is also true of some of the examples from Maria’s letters, such as:

good Thomken remember wee are bownd in Conciencie to maintayne lyfe as long as ys possible, and though gods power can worke mericles, ytt wee cannot builde vpon ytt that be cawse he can, he wyll, **for then** he wolde not Saye he made herb for the vse of man : /⁵⁶

Here Maria’s use of the conjunction is accompanied by a punctuation mark – as it is elsewhere in her letters – while Joan’s examples (except the first, at the very opening of a letter) are used without any additional marks.

Therefore is an especially important conjunction in the letters of Joan.⁵⁷ It occurs frequently in the holograph letters, sometimes more than once per letter, when Joan is performing a directive speech act – which she does quite frequently – usually as some variation of the phrase *and therefore I pray you*. In rhetorical terms, this phrase would have been used, according to dictaminal theory, as an injunction to the final clause, where the phrase links the narrative part of the letter to the request itself, leading the reader from what has happened to what action (of the recipient) is desired (by the author) because of this.⁵⁸ However, the way in which Joan uses it more than once in several of her letters undermines any strict adherence to dictaminal structure. Significantly, the conjunction does not seem to have been subject to stylistic variation as it also occurs in the letter to Lucy Audley in 1602, where Joan is explaining her dislike of Thomas’ clandestine marriage to Maria, and trying to maintain social distance despite Lucy’s petition for ‘friendship’: ‘**therfore** blam me not, if I can not att the first concar my oune pacience, which hathe binne to much vrged, by lousinge him that once I loued mor then my selfe’.⁵⁹ Despite the fact that Joan felt deceived by the actions of Lucy Audley and her kin, the woman was still her social superior, which is acknowledged in the letter when Joan repeatedly refers to her ‘Ladishipe’ or ‘an honorable Lady’. The italic, spacing and punctuation of this letter are much neater and more consistent than in all of Joan’s other

⁵⁵ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘for, conj.’, 4, a.

⁵⁶ VIII.4 (1575).

⁵⁷ Whether or not *therefore* is an adverb or conjunction is debatable, as noted in the OED’s definition.

⁵⁸ Richardson, ‘The Dictamen’, pp. 213-4.

⁵⁹ VII.237 (1602).

holograph letters, signifying that she was attempting to make an impression and therefore would not have used terminology she herself perceived as markedly informal or overly familiar. This particular conjunction seems to have been less characteristic of Maria's writing and she uses it only a few times: once in her final letter to Joan and twice in her letters to Thomas and never with the performative *pray* that is common to Joan's use.

The conjunction *so as* occurs more frequently than *therefore* in Maria letters. In VIII.6, after admitting to being flushed due to a flirtatious letter sent from Thomas, she writes to him of their correspondence that 'thow threatnest Sownde payment, & I Sownd repayment, **So as** when wee meete, ther wyll be paye, & repaye, wch wyll pass & repass'. And in the same letter, of the unruliness of some of their estate servants, complaining that 'mr morgan is more then halfe Spoyled *with* the doge boye & the other boyes **So as** I desyer nothings more then to haue one to Cudgell them to ther woorke'. The semantic content of *so as* in Maria's letters is very similar to Joan's use of *therefore*: 'In consequence of that; that being so; as a result or inference from what has been stated; consequently'.⁶⁰

So and *as* also share proximity in Joan's letters; however, they are used as split-cohesive elements (i.e. they are separated by other words) and not as a conjunction. In both of Joan's short premarital letters (V.4 and 5) she employs several '*as. . .so. . .*' constructions: once in her first letter and three times in the second. In the first she ends by writing '**as** the distance Is short **so** I thinke youre abcence longe'. In the second, she begins similarly: 'mr thine **as** the owres be short **so** I haue thout the tyme longe since I last sawe you'. Considering that this construction occurs only once in all the rest of her letters, and the premarital letters are only around 100 words each, it would seem that Joan was aiming for some stylistic effect here. This intent is made obvious at the end of the second letter, V.5, written in 1575, when after the body of the letter she adds a short attempt at verse:

But **as** fiere can not be separated frome heat nor heate from fiere **so as** the hartes of faithfull frendes whiche shere In one desiere

Joan's amorous references to 'heat', 'fiere' and 'frendes' were all conventional aspects of lovers' poetry from the period and can be seen in numerous examples from verse collections such as *Tottel's Miscellany*.⁶¹ The *as. . .so* construction occurs only once in all of Joan's other letters. This comes in letter V.14, written the year following her first two letters, in which she writes of her father's desire that John write him a letter of apology (apparently Joan's father, Rowland Hayward, had somewhat of a sensitive temperament) in

⁶⁰ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'therefore, therefor, *adv. (n.)*', II, 2.

⁶¹ *Tottel's Miscellany (1557-1587)*, 2 Volumes, Revised Edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1965).

his own hand: ‘thearfor **as** he Is very well content to haue your companye and to forget all **so** wold he haue you to fullfell his mynd In puting awaye of your man **as** I wold weshe you so to do and to wryte to him a letter’. Why this construction appears several times in her early letters and then not at all later on is difficult to speculate, but it does provide evidence for stylistic change over time – here differentiating Joan as a young newlywed from her later years as a married woman.

Unlike discourse markers, these conjunctions have little specificity towards spoken registers, at least in their English histories. All of them go back into the medieval period, with the OED’s citations mostly from prose and poetry, further removed from the spoken language. Conjunctions also seem to carry less elocutionary force, or interpersonal function in the Thynne women’s letters, which is perhaps due to the processes of grammaticalization they have undergone from use in written registers. Nonetheless, with regard to their organizational functions, like discourse markers, Joan’s letters benefit from these markers in that there is oftentimes lack of punctuation otherwise, while Maria’s use tends to correspond with punctuation marks.

Idiomatic Expressions

In addition to discourse markers and conjunctions, there are also a number of colloquial-sounding and idiomatic phrases that appear in the Thynne women’s letters, sometimes adding a dramatic, almost audible performative aspect to their interpretation. In letter VIII.2, Maria writes to Thomas, expounding her desirable wifely attributes, ‘Name me anye man that hath a wyfe of that rare temper, **No in good fayth** thys age wyll not helpe you to an equall, I meane for a wyfe, **alas** I Sitt att home & lett thy doggs eate parte *with* me, & weare Clothes that haue worne owte ther prentyshipe a yeere & half Sithence’. In this quote the initial ‘No’ and the ‘alas’ are easily categorized as discourse markers. The ‘in good fayth’ might also be described as such despite its being a complete phrase. Jucker categorizes the early modern *faith* as a discourse marker, a shortened version of *in faith*.⁶² Maria’s addition of ‘good’, however, more accurately represents what was the full lexical content of the original phrase.⁶³ There is also an instance in letter VIII.4, where Maria – out of concern for his health in London – is trying to convince Thomas to take a preventative she has learned for the plague: ‘good Sweet be not *withowt* Sume thinge to take in an instaint, **in good fayth** I assure you this hath binn tryed by manye’. As in the

⁶² Jucker, ‘Discourse Markers’, pp. 224-7.

⁶³ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘faith, *n.*’, III, 12: ‘In asseverative phrases: a. *in (good) faith*: in truth, really, “sooth to say”’.

case with the discourse marker *well, in good faith* adds elocutionary force to subjects that Maria was clearly very emotional about. These sorts of quasi-oaths are more frequent in her letters to Thomas, but there are several instances in her letters to Joan as well. As in letter VIII.18, when in the midst of protesting the sincerity of her daughterly affection for Joan she adds ‘and **god who knowes the harte**; beste knowes that my desyer in that respecte ys as greate as euer’. Although the length and semantic content of this phrase make it difficult to categorize as a discourse marker, it does serve to emphasize a particular section of the text. That this phrase was in fact an idiomatic part of epistolary discourse is clear from other period examples, such as a letter from a Mr. Parr to Lady Anne Bacon, in 1613:

I give your La. many thanks, and then I protest before **God, who knoweth harts**, that I never aymed at any such thing, neyther have been carried to this so much as in hope of any preferment.⁶⁴

More than anything, the pragmatic significance of these phrases – i.e. under the broader heading of pragmatic markers (as opposed to the more specified definition for discourse markers given above) – is to draw attention to what it is that is being said and how either woman feels about it: emphasizing a particularly relevant chunk of information or expression and its truthfulness (using God as a witness to one’s inner intentions).⁶⁵ Whether or not Maria would have used shorter versions in her speech is impossible to tell, however, the fact that abbreviated forms such as *faith* (and perhaps also *god knows*) were in common spoken use, make the association between her epistolary language and spoken protestations undeniable.

Joan’s letters also contain a number of these expressions, the clearest of which is her curse (matched with the conjunctive *for*) in letter V.97/98, where she complains of the difficulty she is having with their servant who has helped her with the family account books: ‘prouide one that is wiser then eyther my selfe or basset for to write **for by criste** I haue lost by his simplisite more then is for my ease’. Whereas Maria’s expressions coincide with punctuation marks, in this example from Joan’s letter the organizational aspect of her oath is exaggerated by the fact that the two phrases which it serves to connect lack any sort of punctuation.

Lastly, Joan and Maria both use the phrase *for my own part* as a way of conjoining information given – usually to do with their addressee and a relationship to a third party – with either a statement or request to do with themselves. It occurs four times in Joan’s

⁶⁴ *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*, Compiled by J. Keränen, et al. (Helsinki, 1998), Distributed through *Oxford Text Archive*, <<http://ota.ahds.ac.uk>> Accessed July 14, 2009.

⁶⁵ This way of expressing oneself, with ‘God witnessing the heart’, is treated in more detail in chapters 6 and 7, where it will be contextualized as an extension to the rhetoric of sincerity.

letters and three times in Maria's. In an early letter to John, V.13 (1576), after explaining a prospective meeting between him and her 'brother' designed to ameliorate relations between John and her father, she writes that 'by him you shall vnderstand my fathers mynde **and I for my part** wolld be verye glad you wolld seke anye waye to a pase his angar'. Here Joan is using the phrase to set up an indirect request with the conditional *would*. Years later, in the response to Lucy Audley (VII.237), Joan writes regarding allegations that someone of her household has been telling lies about Lucy, stating 'but Madame I knowe not whom itt should be, you meane of you nearest in bloud that should ronge you to me by mis reportes **for my parte** itt is longe sence, I haue had any spech or conferance with any of yo[ur] kinred'. Maria uses this expression in letter VIII.1 to Thomas, expressing her anger at his not allowing her to appoint servants to the estate, sarcastically requesting, ' / **& for my owne parte** I wyshe you should send some one hether, to discharge this bussines heer, that you better truste'. Maria also uses the expression in her final (sarcastic) letter to Joan, however, here she drops the 'owne'. The fact that this phrase is used by both women and in letters to different recipients suggests it was not narrowly bound stylistically in their repertoires. And it was certainly not new: Elizabeth Stonor was using this connective phrase as a cohesive method to structuring her letters a hundred years earlier, writing to William Stonor in 1476 of his 'brother', 'at your comynge to London he will thanke you I dowt not as reason is; **and I, as ffor my parte**, tannke you ffor my venyson'.⁶⁶

Present Participles

A particularly salient feature of early English letters reflected in the letters of Joan and Maria is the way in which present participles frequently serve the dual function of performing speech acts, while also serving as pragmatic markers. In general, present participles – although text types other than letters afford more examples – were a particularly common feature of the opening formulae in early English letters.⁶⁷ Davis has suggested that their use in early English letters comes from Anglo-Norman precedents, which often use participles in their epistolary prose.⁶⁸ For example, one comes towards the end of a medieval letter written in England, from Lady Despenser to Thomas, Archbishop

⁶⁶ *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*.

⁶⁷ T. Kohnen, 'Text Types as Catalysts for Language Change', in *Towards a History of English as a History of Genres*, ed. H. Diller and M. Gorlach (Heidelberg, 2001), pp. 203-24; Nevalainen, 'Continental Conventions', p. 216.

⁶⁸ N. Davis, 'Style and Stereotype in Early English Letters', *Leeds Studies in English* 1 (1967), pp. 7-17 (p. 8).

of Canterbury: ‘**em priant** a tout puissant qui’il vous eit tousdiz en sa tresseintisme garde’ (*praying* to God to care for the letter’s recipient).⁶⁹

Although there has been comparatively little research done on the history of present participles in the development of English,⁷⁰ in present-day English at least participles are typically much more common in writing than in speech.⁷¹ Robinson has described the use of participles as part of the early modern prose writer’s habit, derived from Latin (and to a lesser extent Greek) prose, of making lengthy sections of subordinate clauses, adding to what he judges to be the sixteenth-century phenomenon of ‘the real English monster sentence [. . .] caused by the unsuccessful grafting of Latin syntax on to English’.⁷² My own preliminary survey of Shakespeare’s dramatic texts has found that despite the fact that other forms of many of the (predominantly performative) verbs used in present participle constructions in Joan’s letters appear ubiquitously throughout the plays, there are very few performative present participle constructions in Shakespeare’s dramatic texts, with the exception of one example I have found in *All’s Well That Ends Well*, where Helena addresses the King:

My duty then shall pay me for my pains:
I will no more enforce mine office on you.
Humbly **entreating** from your royal thoughts
A modest one, to bear me back again.⁷³

One hypothesis is that the use of present participles in speech would exaggerate the performative nature of a speech act, as they were less common in speech and therefore possibly marked as highly formal – which would of course be appropriate for the lowborn Helena when addressing the King. Perhaps Shakespeare’s audience would have recognized this deferential language when expressed in oral speech; perhaps even as something more usually restricted to the written mode. From these initial observations it would appear that present participle constructions were predominantly formal (as in present-day English), and would have added performative emphasis in the opening of new clauses in epistolary communication.

Present participles are a regular component of Joan’s and (to a lesser extent) Maria’s letters. The practice is exemplified in letter XL.6 by Joan, one of the last letters written to her husband, in April of 1603:

⁶⁹ *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions From All Souls MS. 182*, ed. M. D. Legge (Oxford, 1941), letter no. 291, p. 353.

⁷⁰ A recent exception is T. Swan, ‘Present Participles in the History of English and Norwegian’, *Neuphilologische Mitteilungen* 104:2 (2003), pp. 179-95.

⁷¹ Biber, *Variation*, p.233.

⁷² Robinson, *The Establishment*, pp. 111-12.

⁷³ W. Shakespeare, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, Act 2, Scene 1, from *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, MIT Online Edition (1993), <<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

Good mr Thynn lett me intreate you to here from you so spedely as you may **protestinge** that I do think the tyme exsedeinge longe sences I harde from you **hopinge** that now you will efeict that which your frendes haue longe desired **ashuringe** my selfe if you be willinge you may youse as good meanes as mr foxs and others do which are much your infereirs and therefore if euer now or neuer yett I refer it to your best wisdom **desiringe** you in all loue to send som prouishen vnto bath to my good sister andespeshall [sic] frend mestres broughton

Textually, this letter is predominantly structured around the present participles which mark transitions. Whether or not we consider these transitions as clausal or sentential is a difficult (and perhaps even a linguistically anachronistic) question. In Wall's edition, from the beginning of the letter to 'now or neuer' is rendered as one 'monster' sentence, with commas preceding each present participle to make them separate clauses.⁷⁴ However, not all of the present participles here are necessarily dependent on previous or following information and in this way could also be conceived as marking complete thoughts, or independent sentential units. And while this repetition of participles is not the norm, their use does occur at other points in Joan's holograph letters. There are nine examples of present participles in the final letter to Thomas alone, with a sizeable cluster at the end: '**prayeng** you to beare with my scriblinge Leter **beinge** not well at this tyme **beinge** very well satesfied by your leter'. An example of how it is used in the second person comes at the beginning: 'if you will haue the hole som. all to gether for thre weakes or a month longer if you please. **geuinge** her what she and you shall agree apon at your and her nexst meteinge **geuinge** her atornes good secureite for the hole thosen pondes'.

One verb found as a present participle which Joan incorporates into opening and closing formulae as well as the body text is *desiring*. In the opening of letter V.97/8, it forms part of the common health formula found at the beginning of letters: 'Good mr Thynne I am glad to here of your good helth **desiring** the continuances of the same to my only comfort:'. Then mid-text in V.122/3, writing in staccato-style punctuation, and again with reference to John's health ': hounbely **desiringe**: you, aboue, all thinges, to haue respectt, vnto your helth:'. Finally, in the closing of her letter V.116: 'and euen so **desiringe** rather to see you here. then to here from you I ende in haste with my kinde saluteis vnto your good selfe'.

Maria's use is more limited and, tellingly, many of the present participles found in her letters occur in the closing formulae, which, as described in the next section, were the most conservative part of her letters. These examples are from the closings of two letters written to Thomas:

⁷⁴ A. Wall (ed.), *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611* (Devizes, 1983), letter 45, p. 31.

I can Saye no more **being** in exceeding hast⁷⁵

I wyll now end, **wyshinge** thy life hapynes & Contentment maye never end,
tyll thy loue to me hath end⁷⁶

Present participles also occur in the body text of Maria's letters, but again, with more of a phrasal or clausal emphasis than an overall sentential marking function, as in VIII.18, to Joan:

so much am I discouraged to finde that no intreatyes of myne Can prevayle
to the obtayninge of ytt, that I am determined henceforth, to Cease
troublinge you, **beleeuinge** that my Letters doo butt vrge the memmorye of
one, who ys nothinge pleasinge vnto you, butt yett, **not dispayeringe** in
godes goodnes, I wyll betake me to my prayers to hym

Other instances of what might seem like present participles in Maria's letters – such as *excepting*, *respecting* or *considering* – are recognizable as prepositions we would use today due to the tendency for present participles to become prepositions in processes of grammaticalization.⁷⁷

Openings and Closings

Due to the relatively conservative nature of opening and closing formulae in early modern women's letters – i.e. the continued adherence to more conventional models as opposed to the loosening of such conventions in the body text – it is worth considering them on their own with regard to textual structure. Even in the most familiar of relationships, making a clear beginning and end to a letter was an important aspect to the overall organization: 'Within their message proper, writers were no doubt able to make use of their imaginations more freely than within the confines of the highly formulaic expressions with which letters were to begin and end.'⁷⁸

In the openings to Joan's letters, the subject matter is the clearest aspect of continuity. In almost all of her letters, regardless of recipient, she begins by referencing previous epistolary exchanges between her and her addressee, giving a strong sense of intertextuality and of individual letters as forming part of a much larger corpus. This aspect of Joan's writing did not change over time and she begins her first letter, to John in 1575, and her last, to Thomas in 1611, by mentioning earlier letters sent to her by either

⁷⁵ VIII.4 (1607).

⁷⁶ VIII.8/9 (1610).

⁷⁷ B. Kortmann and E. König, 'Categorical Reanalysis : The Case of Deverbal Prepositions', *Linguistics* 30 (1992), pp. 671-97.

⁷⁸ Tanskanen, "'Best patterns'", p. 184; see also, Daybell, 'Scripting a Female Voice', p. 17-18; Nevalainen, 'Continental Conventions', p. 209; C. L. Winkelmann, 'A Case Study of Women's Literacy in the Early Seventeenth Century: The Oxiden Family Letters', *Women and Language* 19:2 (1996), pp. 14-20.

man. In the former (V.4) she offers thanks, while in the latter, (VIII.37), she remarks that ‘your Leter was expeicited Long be fore I hard from you’. In some cases, it was actually the lack of what was an expected letter that prompted Joan to write. In letter V.112, she intimates her desire for a letter from John by opening with ‘Let me be comforted in hereing from you and of your safe ariuall where I now thinke you are’. In this case, Joan transforms her concern into a plea to do with care for John’s safety – not his lack of respect for his duties towards her. This was not always the way, and in letter V.10, the very first surviving letter to John following their marriage, she complains, ‘Ima not in pute it vnto you for not writting vnto me, for ether the mesenger are vere slake in bringe or you slothufull for not writting tome’, or later in V.95, ‘I was in good hope to a harde from you but you haue in som sorte deseaued my expeictacion and there fore hereafter I will not loke for it’. For Joan, as for many of her contemporaries, writing letters was not only hoped for, it was expected. What is less common about Joan’s letters is their occasional blatant disregard for John’s negative face, or his sense of freedom and propriety as the head of household. In this way, the offence John committed by not writing is great enough that Joan sometimes transgresses the custom of negative politeness so central to the social relations of early modern English culture.⁷⁹

Although not in her letters to John, Joan also refers to her own writing in cases of delay, once in letter VII.237 to Lucy Audley, and then again in a scribal letter to her son. In the letter to Lucy, she excuses herself by beginning ‘thinke not much that I did not precently answer your letar’, proceeding to give reasons why her response was delayed. Then in letter VIII.26, she explains to Thomas ‘The cause of my slacknes in not writtinge to you since I recd yor laste *lre* by ffisher’.

Intertextual references to other letters is also a repeated characteristic of Maria’s openings. But, as in many other aspects of Maria’s letters, she manages to maintain her own unique voice, even while reiterating conventional practice. For example, in letter VIII.6 to Thomas she makes a note of his last letter to her by beginning with a description of her reaction to it: ‘I haue not, nor wyll not forgett how you made my modest bloud flush vp into my bashfull Cheeks att yr last letter’. Or, in letter VIII.8/9 where she opens with self-referential sarcasm: ‘I know thow wylte Saye (receivinge 2 letters in a daye from me) that I haue tryed the vertue of Aspen Leaues vnder my tounge, *wch* makes me prattle’. In her petitionary letters to Joan, Maria frequently begins by referencing the act of writing a

⁷⁹ The period has been characterized as one which emphasized negative politeness in social intercourse by L. Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge, 1999), especially pp. 74 and 93.

letter more generally, creating emphasis for all the work she has put into trying to gain Joan's favor: 'manye intreatinge lynes', 'many Letters of myne' and 'thess Lynes Sent'.

Clearly, letter-writing for either woman was a process that needed to be contextualized as a particular type of activity with highly sensitive social expectations attached to it. The sociopragmatic function that reference to other letters serves in the opening of a letter lies in the way it places its specific meaning within a larger correspondence and recapitulates the attitudes and duties of both its writer and recipient.⁸⁰

Unlike her openings, Joan's closings change over time, and according to her recipient. In her premarital letters, which are in almost all respects different from her other letters, there is a complete lack of any conventional closing formulae. Instead she employs the pseudo-poetic references to the distance between her and her suitor, along with the fire of the 'hartes of faithfull frendes'. Interestingly, however, as soon as Joan begins signing her letters with the Thynne name, there appears some very conventional terminology.

In her earlier letters to John, Joan consistently marks the beginning of her closings by the conjunction *thus*. The first instance, which occurs in the closing of letter V.10, her third surviving letter, written in 1576: '**this** with my hrte commendaciens'. The last instance of her writing *thus* comes in letter V.34, written in 1580, where she closes '**thus** with my commendacions to you and my sestess bes [i.e. 'sister Bess'] I leue you to god'. There are 10 letters between these two letters (including them) and only three of them end without the use of *thus*. The closings to the five letters following letter V.34, written between 1590 and 1595, begin with *and so*. Then, starting with letter V.88, written in 1598, *even* is added to the previous to form *and even so*, which continues in her usage, alongside *and so* and occasionally just *so* all the way to her second-to-last letter. In her last letter (the only holograph letter written to her son) she writes 'and this [i.e. 'thus']', the first use of *thus* since her letters of the 1570's.

Following these markers, there is almost always a final epistolary speech act verb. In her earlier letters, Joan commonly *commends* herself to John or others in his company (most often relatives), usually qualifying it with *hearty* or *heartily*. *Hearty commendations* are a very common aspect of period letters and the phrase can be found in many of the example letters from Angel Day's *The English Secretary*. We see this in the first instance given above – '**this** with my **hrte commendaciens**' – which was the simplest way of giving it. Occasionally, however, other material is added between the marker and the commendation, like in letter V.12 of 1576: '**Thus** longing to heare from you and your

⁸⁰ For a more in-depth discussion of these social expectations and duties see G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Delaware, 2005), pp. 56-9.

business. I wishe you in crease of health. my **harty commendacions** not for gotten'. In this way, additional speech acts are placed within the closing while the discourse marker *thus* and the conventional *commendations* are used to bind all the information together into a coherent ending for the letter. Also in the earlier letters, Joan incorporates some type of performative blessing towards God, either in the form of *leaving* or *committing*: 'I **leue** you to god', '**leueng** you to his kepeng', 'I **commit** you to god', etc. Then, beginning in letter V.73, from 1595, Joan no longer includes these blessings but instead – when she does include something to do with God – usually *prays* that he send John home as fast as possible. And instead of leaving John to God, after this date (1595) she uses the verb *leave* to refer to her own actions in finishing the letter: 'and so **praing** god to sende you well to com hether I **take my leaue** from cause castell'. Joan continues to take her *leave* at the end of her letters until letter V.88 of 1598 where she ceases to *leave* and begins to *end*. Furthermore, this change correlates with her switching to beginning her closings with *and even so*. Joan writes 'I end' in all thirteen letters to John following this one and only begins to use the verb *rest* in her final letter to her husband. *Resting* continues into her letter to Lucy and all her letters to her son (for both the holograph and scribal examples). In further conjunction with her switching to *and even so* matched with *end*, Joan adds her *salutes* to the closing of letters to John beginning with letter V.95 of 1600, which ends 'and **euen so** with **my kinde saluteis** vnto your good selfe I **ende** in haste from cause castell'. These *kind salutes* continue regularly in the letters following V.95, appearing in eight of the fourteen remaining to John. In four of the letters that do not offer *salutes*, Joan instead wishes John her 'beste', or 'derest Loue'. In her final letter to John, Joan uses both adjectives, offering him her 'beste and derest Loue'. Although this part of the closing is omitted from all of the scribal letters sent to her son, the only holograph example to Thomas ends by 'remembringe **my beste Loue** vnto you'.

Because there are significantly fewer of Maria's letters (twelve compared to Joan's forty) and they span less than a decade of time, it is impossible to compare them to the extent that has been done with Joan's letters. However, we may observe how Maria's closings share a number of similarities with those in Joan's letters. Out of her twelve letters, six of them end with the *and so* or *even so* that Joan used in her later letters: in three out of five of the letters to her husband and in three out of seven of the letters to her mother-in-law. Maria also *salutes* Thomas in one of her letters and adds *salutations* to two of the letters to Joan. In addition, in a matter of eight years, Maria uses all of the verbs to do with exiting that it seems to have taken Joan a lifetime to get through. Maria *leaves* Joan to 'the protection' of God in three of her letters (in a fourth letter [VIII.10] she writes the fairly analogous 'he that made you save you'), while also simultaneously taking her

own *leave* in two of these. She also uses *end* in one letter to Thomas and another to Joan, and *rest* in two letters, both to Joan. To be sure, Maria's closings in her letters to Joan are more purely formulaic than those to her husband, however, all the letters to Thomas contain at least one conventional closing feature. Petitionary letter VIII.16 to Joan is unique from the rest in that it ends simply with 'as best becomes Yr most Loueing and obedyent daughter' – cleverly linking her protestations of daughterly devotion in the body of the letter to her signature. Several other of Maria's letters do this as well, moving fluidly from the prose in petitioning to her signature, as in letter VIII.12, in which she ends 'I rest now and euer [indented manuscript space] Yr very loueing and obedyent daughter'. When Maria does include the place and date of composition, she does so separately from the body of the letter itself. Joan, on the other hand, commonly writes the place and date of composition directly after her closing as part of the body text itself and before her signature, making her usual 'your ever lovinge wife' seem slightly detached from the rest of the text in that it is separated by the place and date that precede it.

Both of the Thynne women's letters support the observation made elsewhere – perhaps somewhat still observable in present-day letters – that openings and (especially) closings of letters maintained convention even in familiar correspondence of the early modern period: aspects such as intertextual references to previous communication (or, in some cases, the lack thereof), prayers to God, and *commendations*. In addition, at least in Joan's letters, there are observable changes in how she organizes her closings which correlate with changes in speech act verbs (e.g. the change from *commendations* to *salutes*). The way in which small changes in Joan's letters take place together over time suggests that although the formulation of the opening and closing of letters was not fixed, the tendency was to maintain a particular formula over a period of time. Maria's letters, however, show no sign of this: here formulations vary from letter to letter over a much shorter period of time.

The way in which openings and closings reiterate conventional expectations to do with speech act verbs (a point that is returned to in the following chapter's section on representative performatives such as *remember*), while also repeating pragmatic markers (e.g. Joan's *and so* as part of her closing formula) in signalling the beginning and end of a letter makes them an important organizational element to the letter as a whole. Letters were a particular type of text, requiring a clearly demarcated beginning and end – 'Thus linguistic form, when practiced in repeatable ways, gives rise to conventional interpretations [i.e. pragmatic functions]'.⁸¹

⁸¹ S. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2002), p. 10.

Conclusion

Up until now, considerations of the organization of epistolary prose have for the most part been limited to discussions of abstract rhetorical formulae. The purpose of this chapter has been to suggest an alternative, systematic method of approaching the ruling of the letters written by Joan and Maria Thynne, structured around discussions of several types of forms that served both textual and interpersonal functions in creating coherency and elocutionary force. Beginning with the study of punctuation marks, it became clear that these cannot be accounted for within a single template. Joan's employment of punctuation in particular suggests a wide range of functions that goes beyond the limits of even a quasi-standardized practice. In some letters, Joan exhibits a fairly clear ability to organize her text into clausal and sentential units, not that far from the way in which one might punctuate a text today. But there are other instances when punctuation is not used in an immediately recognizable way, where it is reserved in order to emphasize speech acts central to the letter's purpose, or to list a number of episodes or events reported in a letter. It was also suggested that the staccato style seen in letter V.122/3 (observed elsewhere in the letters of Elizabeth Cary [Wolfe 2001]) may actually have been used as a way of signalling emotional content – something that would have been pragmatically useful in the absence of physical voice, gesture and the exclamation mark. In Maria's letters, punctuation is much more regular and played a comprehensible role in organizing the content of her thoughts and expression, with very clear evidence for grammatical ordering. In addition, the way in which Maria's – significantly a younger woman with courtly experience – system of punctuation is similar to that of Joan's scribes may reflect the way in which standards of English were greatly influenced by legal language and the fact that punctuation was increasingly being used in a grammatical context. Furthermore, the way in which punctuation also corresponds with the use of other pragmatic markers, such as discourse markers, conjunctions and (in Joan's letters) speech act verbs, suggests that the role and development of punctuation is closely related to these features within the letter-writing genre.

Discourse markers in writing have strong parallels with the spoken language and it is likely that their inclusion in the widening corpus of familiar letters in the early modern period came from this connection (although in the case of *I pray you* it seems that the written mode was slightly more conservative than the spoken language, which used shortened, weakened versions such as *prithe*⁸²). The text-structuring potential of these

⁸² Jucker, 'Discourse Markers', pp. 224-6.

features is seen in letters from Joan, such as V.80 discussed in this chapter, which exhibit how a discourse marker (e.g. *alas*) might be used to mark a subject boundary on some occasions, but then a colon will be used to mark a shift following, for example, a directive speech act. Conjunctions are particularly significant in Joan's letters due to her infrequent punctuating of clausal structure; whereas they tend to overlap with punctuation in her scribes' and Maria's writing. Idiomatic expressions and oaths mark sections of text as laden with emotive content, thus fulfilling elocutionary, interpersonal functions. Present participles are also useful text-structuring features in several of Joan's letters where they simultaneously perform a speech act and open new sections of text (without the use of punctuation). Finally, opening and closing formulae were, in accordance with previous observations made elsewhere, shown to have been conventionally formulaic. Openings oftentimes contained intertextual references which would have served to place the letter within a larger correspondence. Closings were signalled by discourse markers such as *thus* or *and so* and contain conventional gestures in speech acts (e.g. to *leave* the addressee to God, or take one's *leave*). Both openings and closings may be conceived of as a way of delimiting the text as a whole in that their larger pragmatic purpose is to begin and end the letter in a conventional, recognizable way.

Why the linguistic consideration of punctuation and textual organization has been so sparse may have something to do with the fact that it is often left to palaeographers, whose interests are different from those of the historical linguist. Furthermore, as we have seen in Joan's letters in particular, styles of punctuation can be markedly inconsistent, which may lead one to believe that they do not warrant the type of close analysis performed in this chapter. What the findings of this extremely focused, but necessarily only preliminary, study have suggested is that punctuation and pragmatic marking, described more loosely from a cognitive-pragmatic perspective, could prove very useful to historical linguists and rhetoricians interested in how early modern texts were organized textually and communicated with elocutionary force. Unlike many other methods of linguistic categorization, cognitive linguistics considers the multi-functionality of different forms broadly as means of creating structure in language, with much fuzzier boundaries between categories.⁸³ From this perspective, it becomes possible to account for the cross-over functions of the text-organizing forms discussed in this chapter: for example, not only do present participles contain lexico-semantic content and elocutionary force, they may also serve as meaningful text-organizing elements in early modern epistolary texts (particularly in the absence of punctuation). By considering how pragmatic markers

⁸³ For a useful introduction to the theoretical basis of categorization in cognitive linguistics, see J. R. Taylor, *Linguistic Categorization* (Oxford and New York, 2003).

worked in conjunction with, or in the absence of punctuation, the structure of early modern prose – including non-literary examples by women – may come to be better understood on its own terms, rather than as an indecipherable pre-standard, or, in Fleming's words, the 'unruled other'.

CHAPTER 4

The Sociopragmatic Significance of Performative Speech Act Verbs

The notion of the performative was first suggested by J. L. Austin in his landmark lecture series, later published as *How to Do Things With Words*, where he put forward the thesis that ‘the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action’.¹ Performative sentences are distinguished from constative utterances in that they do not merely describe things which may be proved true or false and are not ‘just saying something’; they constitute, at least in part, the actual ‘doing’ of a socially recognized act. Some of the most salient instances of performative speech act verbs, which also happen to provide Austin with many of his first examples, are those which are highly conventionalized aspects of social institutions, for example, a priest saying ‘I **pronounce** you man and wife’ to complete a marriage ceremony, or the frequently mentioned example of the Queen of England breaking a bottle of champagne over the bow of a newly constructed cruise ship and saying ‘I **name** this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*’. In these examples, the verb form itself is part of the ritualized utterance, but many other types of less rigidly structured speech acts may also be accomplished without the use of performative verbs. A promise, for example, may be enacted with or without the use of a performative verb, such as *promise*, *swear* or *vow*:²

- a) I won’t tell anyone, I **promise**.
- b) Of course I won’t tell anybody, don’t worry about that.

Both of these statements have the potential – explicit in *a* and implicit in *b*³ – to be interpreted as a promise by an addressee, however, it is ambiguous in the latter, which may, depending on how big a secret it is, lead one to ask, ‘Do you **promise**?’ Whether or not we categorize *b* as performative is up for debate, but regardless, in the current study, I will be focusing solely on explicit examples (where a verb form is used), believing as Leech does that:

The performative, far from being something which underlies every single utterance, is something highly unusual in itself: it occurs, understandably enough, when a speaker needs to define his speech act as belonging to a particular category.⁴

¹ J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things With Words*, Second Edition, ed. J. O. Urmson and M. Sbisà (Oxford, 1975), p. 6.

² To avoid confusion between verbal *forms* and social *functions*: when referring to a speech act verb itself, I have placed it in italics; when referring to the more abstract, categorical sense of a speech act, it is in normal script.

³ Austin distinguishes these as explicit performatives (example *a*) and primary utterances (example *b*) (1975: 69).

⁴ G. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London and New York, 1983), p. 181.

Performatives are a common feature of the correspondence of the Thynne women (much more common than in present-day familiar letters, much less emails), and this chapter explores their possible sociopragmatic significances.

Studying why speakers categorize their speech acts through the use of performatives is important to understanding how people use language, interact with one another and understand and construct social activities. Wierzbicka articulates this point well in her more general treatment of English speech act verbs:

The set of English speech act verbs reflects a certain interpretation of the world of human action and interaction. To live in an English speaking society and to have access to its culture one has to understand this interpretation, reflected in the English lexicon [. . . and] the categories for which English does provide names are evidently seen by the speakers of English as particularly important. They shape their perception of human attitudes and human relations. They reflect their perceptions and organize them. It is crucially important to understand what these “names” mean.⁵

Of particular interest to this study is the idea of speech act verbs as reflecting a culture/speaker’s interpretation of the world and how communication is understood to operate. Although she is here referring to present-day English verbs, Wierzbicka’s statement is equally, perhaps even more relevant to earlier periods in the language’s history. This has been reiterated more recently by Taavitsainen and Jucker in their diachronic study of speech act verbs of aggression in English, from an ethnographic perspective:

[Speech act verbs] provide an interesting ethnographic view of how a speech community perceives specific speech acts and which ones are important enough to be labelled with a speech act verb which the speakers use to talk about the speech act and – in some cases – even perform the speech act in question.⁶

Particularly for the historical pragmatician, for whom intuitive native-speaker knowledge is less dependable, it is important to have reference to lexico-semantic accounts of meaning (i.e. dictionaries) in order to specify historical pragmatic significance. The central problem that Wierzbicka finds in lexico-semantic accounts of meaning, however, is that speech act verbs tend to be defined by other speech act verbs which when considered pragmatically are in fact not analogous. She refers to this as the ‘circularity’ of traditional dictionary definitions and to remedy it she adds what is essentially a pragmatic dimension

⁵ A. Wierzbicka, *English Speech Act Verbs: A Semantic Dictionary* (Sydney, 1987), p. 10.

⁶ I. Taavitsainen and A. Jucker, ‘Speech Act Verbs and Speech Acts in the History of English’, in *Methods in Historical Pragmatics*, ed. S. M. Fitzmaurice and I. Taavitsainen (Berlin and New York, 2007), pp. 107-38 (p. 108).

to the ‘discussion’ section of each individual verb.⁷ Unfortunately, Wierzbicka’s semantic dictionary is not historical and for the most part does not contain many of the verbs (or at least their early modern senses) that occur in the Thynne women’s letters. Therefore, despite the frequency of circular definitions, I will be using the historical facilities of the OED as lexico-semantic support to contextualize pragmatic significances.

Wierzbicka also warns against the use of subtypes, or ‘hyponyms’ as a means of categorization; however, this chapter will be using the four main subcategories described by Elizabeth Closs Traugott as ‘useful in an account of the history of English SAVs’: representatives (what Searle refers to as assertives), directives, commissives and expressives.⁸ A strict typology for performative speech acts is difficult to create due to the fuzziness between certain categories and the fact that the correlation between act and verb is variable: i.e. speech acts as functional categories do not correspond directly to the verb forms which are used in their performance.⁹ Therefore, although the range of specificity offered by the four headings suggested by Traugott is general enough to not pose too great a threat to what are necessarily indefinite lines of categorization, the categorical indistinctness of some verbs (particularly those with representative functions) will be considered throughout the following discussion.

Beyond the discursive conceptions of the performative, there have also been some attempts at defining grammatical criteria. In general, performative instances of speech act verbs have been typified as being used in the first person simple present indicative active, and ‘under normal circumstances, saying “I (hereby) V [simple pres., ind., act.] (. . .)” is an act of V-ing’.¹⁰ However, second and third person, as well as passive realizations are also possible in present-day English, as in ‘You are hereby *summoned* to court’, ‘Swimmers are *advised* to beware of sharks’, or ‘Permission is *granted*’. For the most part, mainly due to the data provided by the letters, I will be considering only verbs used in the first person;

⁷ Wierzbicka, *English Speech Act Verbs*, pp. 4-7.

⁸ E. C. Traugott, ‘English Speech Act Verbs: A Historical Perspective’, in *New Vistas in Grammar: Invariance and Variation*, ed. L. R. Waugh and S. Rudy (Amsterdam, 1991), pp. 387-406 (p. 388). There is also a fifth category in Searle’s typology not addressed by Traugott, which is that of declaratives – a ‘special’ category which describes institutionalized performative utterances (such as the Queen *naming* a ship example given above): ‘It is the defining characteristic of this class that the successful performance of one of its members brings about the correspondence between the propositional content and reality’ (Searle 1979: 16-17). This distinction is reiterated and expanded by Leech within the context of performative verbs, who writes that while all performatives name the act which they are accomplishing in a ‘metalinguistic’ way, declaratives are ‘conventional rather than communicative acts: the linguistic parts of rituals’ – even going so far as to call them ‘social acts’ rather than speech acts (Leech 1983: 206). If this were a study of legal documents or letters from the Queen (for example), declaratives might have played some part, but as it is declaratives do not figure in the epistolary speech acts of Joan and Maria’s familiar correspondence.

⁹ A. H. Jucker and I. Taavitsainen, ‘Diachronic Speech Act Analysis: Insults From Flyting to Flaming’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1:1 (2000), pp. 67-95 (p. 70); S. M. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2002), p. 57.

¹⁰ J. Verschueren, *On Speech Act Verbs* (Amsterdam, 1980), pp. 7-8.

however, the (now archaic) use of present and (to a lesser extent) past participles will also be included as performative utterances in some cases. Additionally, in several instances I will consider descriptive, non-performative references to particular speech act verbs. For example, a descriptive use of the present-day performative *order* would be ‘The security guard *ordered* me to respect his authority’, where the verb does not perform the order, but describes a speech act that has already happened (wherein the guard may or may not have used a performative). As will be shown later on, considering descriptive occurrences of speech act verbs is useful in determining possible senses and functions of the performative occurrences, particularly when performative instances of a specific verb are rare in the letters.

Within each of the four speech act categories, I will discuss the distribution of performative occurrences of speech act verbs in the letters of Joan and Maria Thynne, with reference to the socio-familial context in which they appear. In some cases, I will compare the letters of the Thynne women with other types of period texts, such as dramatic dialogue from the plays of William Shakespeare and model letters included in Angel Day’s letter-writing manual *The English Secretary*. By working in this way, it will be possible to make meaningful connections between the linguistic and social dimensions of a number of performative verbs, which in turn will provide information about early modern (epistolary) language and culture, as well as the lives of the Thynne women central to this thesis.

Directive Performatives

As Thomas Kohnen remarks, due to their potentially face-threatening nature ‘the history of directive speech acts promises to be a particularly interesting task’.¹¹ In general, directive speech acts are performed with the intent of getting an addressee to do something for, or on the behalf of the speaker/writer. In relation to this, the face-threatening element is highly dependent upon which particular type of directive act is taking place, which depends on recognizing the hierarchy of social relations between addressor and addressee, the urgency of the request, the material and/or social value of what it is that is being requested, and so on. According to such a system, for example, a social inferior is not in a position to *command* their superiors. In early modern England, when using directives in letters to one’s social superiors, a writer must take into account that according to the norms of negative politeness, a superior has a right to not be imposed upon to do the bidding of those of inferior status – and even the expectation of a response in epistolary

¹¹ T. Kohnen, ‘Towards a History of English Directives’, in *Text Types and Corpora. Studies in Honour of Udo Fries*, ed. A. Fischer, G. Tottie and H. M. Lehmann (Tübingen, 2000), pp. 165-75 (p. 165).

correspondence encroaches on this privilege of freedom to some extent, making the epistolary act itself a potential face-threatening, or ‘trouble-making’ act (see also ‘The Social Risks of Writing’ in Chapter 6).¹² Therefore, directive speech acts directed upward in early modern England would most appropriately have taken the form of petitioning, which conventionally took into account the concerns for preserving an addressee’s sense of negative face through supplicatory types of language. On the other hand, letters exchanged between equals oftentimes adopted a rhetoric of mutual ‘pleasuring’;¹³ and letters directed downwards, to one’s social inferiors, had the option of engaging with positive politeness and familiarity (e.g. the use of familiar names) or, when the situation called for it, explicit on-record directive verbs such as *command* and *order*.

Performing directive speech acts in order to obtain material ends and social favor was a central motivation to composing many early modern letters, and letters from the Thynne women are no exception to this.¹⁴ Although their letters are not representative of a range of correspondents along the social spectrum of class hierarchy, the fact that performative directives are so common in the letters, used at various levels of urgency and in different emotional contexts, provides suggestive evidence for analysis and comparison.

Pray is possibly the most common of all performatives to be found in early modern correspondence (perhaps in drama as well) – it certainly is within the circles of the Thynne women. Entering English by way of French influence, this verb was in use throughout English texts by the fourteenth century.¹⁵ Although we think of it today in religious contexts, as in making prayers to God, it seems that at the time of its entry into English the verb had several senses, filling different sociopragmatic functions. As far as letters are concerned, the assimilation from French vernacular predecessors to early English letters is clear. For example, from the Stonor collection, Sir Nicholas Sarnesfeld writes to Edmund de Stonor in French in 1377, *praying* him to help in the case of imprisonment of a Richard Alberbury: ‘Et **vous pry** cherment que vous ly fases le ben qe vous poes pur lamour de moy et de mon syr Richard’ (‘And [I] pray you to do all in your power for the love of me and Sir Richard’); then, in 1462, John Frende writes to Thomas Stonor to ask for his support in a case of localized threats and slander: ‘**I pray yov** that ye see a meane that I may be in ese: for it is worse than ever hit was’.¹⁶ The verb continued to be a common

¹² L. Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 50 and 102.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 80–4.

¹⁴ Furthermore, the ubiquitous nature of the system of patronage and the way in which people oftentimes petitioned on the behalf of others made performing directive speech acts for someone else (to be favored in some way) a common component of period letters.

¹⁵ OED, Draft Revision December 2008, ‘pray, v.’.

¹⁶ Christine Carpenter (ed.), *Kingsford’s Stonor Letters and Papers 1290–1483* (Cambridge, 1996), letters 23 and 64, pp. 17 and 56–7 (respectively). The verb *prier* is still used performatively in present-day French to

aspect of letter-writing into the early modern period, when it also became common in other speech-based texts, such as court records and drama. However, in these texts, which aim at reproducing the spoken language, the semantic content and sociopragmatic function are complicated by its shortening into the discourse markers *pray* and *prithee*, which although serving clear pragmatic purposes, lose their propositional content.¹⁷ These shortened versions carried an interrogative function, and they appear frequently in court records where the defendant is being questioned (oftentimes in a condescending way). *Prithee* in particular, in that it is a compound incorporating the verb *pray* and the familiar second person pronoun *thou*, was probably used as a less/non-deferential version of *I pray you*. But regardless of these changes, use of the full form of *I pray you* remains the most common form found in the corpus of Shakespeare's plays and no instances of the shortened versions *pray* or *prithee* appear in the letters of Joan or Maria.¹⁸

Including present participle forms, the performative realization of *pray* occurs in Joan's letters a total of sixty-six times. She uses it as a way of performing directive speech acts towards people fifty-three times and towards God thirteen times. The earliest example comes from the first surviving letter from her as a married woman, in which she is expressing her surprise and dislike of John's not writing to her as soon as she would have expected, and then makes reference to the land disputes over her dowry of Caus Castle: '**I pra you** send me word thou the mater stanse be twene my loarde stafered and you'.¹⁹ Then, in a letter written several decades later (also to John), we see the verb repeated three times, almost consecutively, in a relatively small space of text:

I haue sent this bearer geffre rabon who is willing to com vnto you and will do you any saruis he may as he teles me **I pray you** youse him well and I hope he will breake the baic of Lingam **I pray you** see the subside mony pade if mr stafford com vnto you **I pray you** youse him frendely²⁰

This use of the verb, when directed towards people (usually John) in Joan's letters reflects the now archaic sense under 'phrases' in the OED listing for *pray*: 'I pray you (also thee, ye): (used to add urgency, solicitation, or deference to a question or request) "I beg of you"; "please"'.²¹

Pray served another function as well for which the OED is of help in distinguishing the semantic differences between those instances directed at (or through) God and those

give particular emphasis to a request, as in 'Je vous **prie** de m'excuser' ('Please excuse me'; literally 'I **pray** you to excuse me'); not unlike, but more common, and perhaps less fixed than the English phrase 'I **beg** your pardon'.

¹⁷ A. H. Jucker, 'Discourse Markers in Early Modern English', in *Alternative Histories of English*, ed. R. Watts and P. Trudgill (London and New York, 2002), pp. 210-30 (pp. 224-6).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 224.

¹⁹ V.10 (1576).

²⁰ V.102 (1600).

²¹ OED, Draft Revision March 2009, 'pray, v.', P1, b.

directly to John. In contrast to the more familiar, phrasal-seeming definition given above, other senses of *pray* in the OED are ‘to ask earnestly, beseech (God, a person, etc.) *to* do something, or *that* something may be done’, or ‘to ask earnestly, beseech (God, a person, etc.) *for* (or *of*) something desired; to offer a prayer to (God or a god) *for* the well-being, salvation, etc., of someone’.²² A couple of examples from the thirteen instances of *pray* directed towards God in Joan’s letters include:

I want nothinge I geue god thanks at this tyme but youre companye ye
whiche I **praye to god** to send me shortly²³

the stabell shall not be medelled with tyll your cominge which I **pray god**
may be shortely²⁴

In the first example, Joan offers two speech acts towards God: *giving* thanks and *praying* for John’s speedy return. Despite the fact that, literally speaking, the *praying* is directed at God, this instance could be interpreted as a method of exaggerating the force with which Joan was constantly putting pressure on John to return home as fast as he could. *Giving* thanks to God and *praying* for things, not in private or at church, but in a letter, is an epistolary convention found in the earliest of English letters from the medieval period onwards. Wood has described the socio-religious context of references to God in the fifteenth-century Paston letters (such as ‘God send yow good spede’, ‘God knowyth’ and ‘for Goddes sake’) as based in a society heavily impacted by the Black Death and aware of the ‘precarious’ nature of life; yet nonetheless, ‘many references to God appear to be rote phrases [similar to present-day “Bless you” when someone sneezes]’.²⁵ The directive speech acts’ relation to personal Christian devotion in the Thynne letters is – given the continuing virulence of plague in the sixteenth century – susceptible to a similar characterization. However, if we do consider the request as directed at John – perhaps indirectly through or in conjunction with God as the supreme authority of all things – this suggests an interesting way of accomplishing an indirect request, also realized in the second extract given above.

Just as today, there were multiple ways of committing directive speech acts in early modern English, and the main division had to do with the measure of directness: i.e. directly or indirectly. A distinction from present-day English can be seen between ‘Could you please help me move tomorrow?’, a direct request, and ‘I wonder if I could find anyone free on a Monday afternoon to help me move tomorrow?’, an indirect request –

²² OED, Draft Revision March 2009, ‘pray, v.’, 2, b. and c.

²³ V.15 (1570’s).

²⁴ V.103 (1601).

²⁵ J. L. Wood, ‘Structures and Expectations: A Systematic Analysis of Margaret Paston’s Formulaic and Expressive Language’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10:2 (2009), pp. 197-214 (p. 202-3).

either being uttered in the presence of a friend, with the intention of getting them to help in a move. In this way, direct requests literally ask someone to do something, whereas indirect requests appeal to the suggestion of what is actually meant (i.e. that the speaker wants the hearer to offer their help, or at least tell them that they are busy Monday afternoon). In this example, indirectness is meant to respect negative face by creating an option of interpretation for the addressee – although the conventionalized nature of indirectness in present-day Anglo-American culture renders this gesture largely artificial, as it is difficult to imagine any instance where one would not respond to the indirect request with an understanding of the speaker's actual meaning. The possible indirectness of Joan's *praying* to God about her husband's actions in her letters to him works on a similar level; however, she makes the significant addition of God as a sort of witness to her desire and potentially an extra motivating factor for John. Similar ambiguity lies towards the end of letter V.118, in 1602: 'all your to dafteres are paste the worst [referring to a recent smallpox infection] I prase god vnto whome I will dayly **pray** for your helth and good succes'. Although the future tense technically makes the last example a non-performative instance of the verb, it suggests the same questions to do with indirectness and the way in which Joan directs her expression literally to God but with an illocutionary force directed at John: here as an expressive speech act, communicating her care for John's health and hopes for their mutual financial prosperity. In this way, it might be said that the use of the verb *pray* in Joan's letters could serve two sociopragmatic purposes at once, in that it reiterates personal and familial ties with religious devotion and godliness, while also expressing her own desires and affections for John's company and good health.

Maria uses *pray* in her letters to Thomas a total of five times and once in her final, sarcastic letter to Joan. In letter VIII.6, she informs Thomas of a pair of servants her mother has advised them to take into their service: 'when thow goest next to Clarkenwell **I praye thee** vew them' (use with the familiar second person pronoun *thee* also occurs in letter VIII.8/9 [1610?]). The verb occurs twice at the end of letter VIII.1 (sometime between 1604-6), which, perhaps due to Maria's genuine anger (as opposed to her flirtatious style employed elsewhere), employs the more formal *y*-forms of the second person pronoun:

Yf you intend not to see me before *yr* goeing to lundon, then **I praye you**
Spare *yr* man wylliams that hee maye knowe how to dispatch sume bussines
I haue in london, **I praye** take Sume present order for a bed to be heer for
the mayds, for thers is to be Caryed *wth* owte fayle this weeke

In her letter to Joan, VIII.10, Maria uses this verb in the process of bluntly letting her mother-in-law know that she will no longer be petitioning her favor: 'therfore Maddam

yf yr intent be to yeeld hym no dew respecte, **I praye** know my desyer ys in that as in other woorse fortunes, to be a partner *with* hym in yr displeasure'. Maria's use of the verb here is a good example of the categorical fuzziness of a speech act verb's relationship to a speech act category, and how individual verbs may be used to accomplish different sorts of speech acts. *Praying* someone to *know* something you are about to tell them is not the same kind of directive speech act as *praying* someone to actually take action on your behalf. Instead, it is a matter of rhetorical politeness, used to qualify sensitive information, which reflects the OED's phrasal definition given earlier (in current English one might use *please*, as in the rather cliché-sounding sentence 'please know that I never meant to hurt you'). Of course, the politeness in Maria's use to Joan here is more ironic than sincere, and fits with other instances of sarcasm in the same letter.²⁶ Significantly, Maria does not use this verb at all in her petitionary letters to Joan but instead employs forms which were – I will argue – higher along the spectrum of early modern English directive performatives, such as *beseech*.

The OED lists *beseech* as 'to supplicate, entreat, implore', and lists it as a synonym in one of the senses of *pray* given above.²⁷ However, the verb seems to have been a stronger, more emotive way of performing a directive speech act than *pray*. It occurs most commonly in moments when a speaker/writer is particularly desperate to get their addressee to do something for them. An example from Angel Day provides a good instance of the socio-familial drama which often surrounded the verb, where a son writes to his displeased father:

of his prostrate and meekest submission, then groueling vppon the lowest ground, and humbling my highest imaginations to the deepest bottome, wherein your implacable displeasures haue hitherto beene couered, as meekely and with as penitent speches, as any griued and passionate mind can vtter. **I doe beseeche you sir**, that at the last, you will receiue (not into your accustomed fauour) but to your common and ordinary liking, the most disgraced of all youre Children'.²⁸

The stylistic distinction between the desperation of *beseeking* and the more familiar *praying* is observable from the language of Shakespearean characters. In *Henry IV*, the verb *pray* is frequently followed by the familiar pronoun *thee*, used between those of equal rank, from a superior to an inferior, or (as in Joan's letters) directed towards God. *Beseech*, on the other hand, is almost always used when one of the characters is addressing the King. Prince Henry uses it in the first part of the play when he begs,

²⁶ For more on this see Chapter 7.

²⁷ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'beseech, v.', 3, a.

²⁸ A. Day, *The English Secretorie* (London, 1586), p. 175, from *Early English Books Online*, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

I do beseech your majesty may salve
The long-grown wounds of my intemperance:
If not, the end of life cancels all bands;
And I will die a hundred thousand deaths²⁹

From these examples it would appear that the use of *beseech* was for dramatic, formal and emotionally charged contexts of supplication.³⁰

Occurrences of *beseech* in Maria's petitions to Joan are very similar to the instances we find in both Day and Shakespeare. *Beseech* appears in letter VIII.14 as Maria is pleading with her mother-in-law to show her favor, even though there is clearly much more at stake for Maria, and little motivation for Joan to accept her entreaties in consideration of past offences: 'what a vnequall Satysfaction ys heer promysed, Iustlye maye you take exceptions to ytt, for I confess that requyttall maye neuer compare *with* desearte, butt deere moother, **I beseeche you** Impute the insufficiency therof'. Then, in letter VIII.20 she adds Thomas as a factor to her petitioning, again using *beseech*: 'as longe as I haue any hope to better yr conseyte of me, giue me Leau**e I beseech you** *with* owt offence, to craue your fauore and good oppinnion, not onlye for my selfe, butt also for mr thinne'. As I discuss in Chapter 7, Maria was clearly very fluent in the period's language of supplication and her letters to Joan take on these characteristics masterfully. That Maria spent time in attendance of Queen Elizabeth I would have made her an excellent judge of epistolary stylistics, including the appropriate verbs to be used in this highly sensitive context.

Although instances are relatively rare otherwise throughout most of Joan's letters, *beseech* appears once in letter V.73 and three times in letter V.84, both written to John in 1595. That these letters were written in the midst of the Thynne family's emotional turmoil over discovering the clandestine marriage between Thomas and Maria makes Joan's usually much cooler and more controlled language become more transparent to her feelings, expressing 'the beternes of my greffes' (V.84, 1595). In the wake of this familial upset, Joan became an intermediary between John and Thomas, who were for a period not on talking (or writing) terms. John seems to have been overwhelmed by the stress of the situation – perhaps further compounded by suits of business he was dealing with in London

²⁹ W. Shakespeare, *Henry IV*, Act 3, Scene 2, from *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, MIT Online Edition (1993), <<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

³⁰ To some small credit to the show's writer, Michal Hirst, the power of the verb *beseech* in early modern English was recently recognized in the period melodrama for television *The Tudors*. One instance occurs in a scene where Anne Boleyn (acted by Natalie Dormer) is making her final attempt at dissuading Henry VIII (Jonathan Rhys Meyers) from separating with her. In an act of final desperation, after trying more familiar ways of courting back his favor, she resorts to yelling after him, hoping to stop him in his tracks after he has already turned his back on her: 'I loved you, I loved you and I love you still. Please after all we have been to each other, after everything we were, please. One more chance, one more. Henry!! Your Majesty!! Your Majesty **I beseech you!!!**' (Season 2, Episode 9: 25 May 2008). Despite the fact that this is modern televised melodrama and much else of the show's representation of period speech is unabashedly unhistorical, this representation of the verb does accurately capture the desperation it could be used to convey in the period.

– and Joan’s grave concern for his health is clear: in V.73, she writes ‘my good hosban **I beseich you** not to care for any thinge to horte your selfe but to make much of your selfe for my good and your childrens comfort’. Then, in letter V.84, she begins by showing her concern for the family as a whole: ‘my Good hosban **I beseich you** Lett not the desobedense of one be the ouerthore of your other children and my good in hose helth and Lyfe consistes my Ioye and comforte’. Later on in the same letter, she reports on Thomas’ repentance and his intention to do as his father wills, writing ‘**I beseich you** to excepte of his [Thomas’] ouble desire’. The only other appearance of *beseich* in Joan’s letters is in an instance addressed to God, also to do with John’s health.

Much more common than *beseich*, but less frequent than the ubiquitous *pray*, the verb *desire* occurs in what are possibly performative instances seventeen times in Joan’s letters, mostly in those to John, with two occurrences in the letters to Thomas. The OED lists two senses particularly relevant for Joan’s use, the first of which is ‘to have a strong wish for; to long for, covet, crave’, and then the second [for which usages *a* and *b* are listed as archaic], ‘to express a wish to (a person); to request, pray, entreat. **a.** with *simple object*: to make a request to (*obs.*); **b.** to d[esire] a person a thing, or *of* a thing (*obs.*); **c.** to d[esire] a person *to do* something (the most freq. construction); **d.** to d[esire] a person *that*, or *of* a person *that...*’.³¹ The first sense can be neither directive nor performative, while the second can be either. Interpretative difficulty arises here: considering we no longer use *desire* in the performative directive sense, and that the context within Joan’s letters does not always make the sense clear, it is especially difficult for the present-day reader to definitively distinguish between performative and non-performative uses in early modern English. Any of the following examples could logically be interpreted as either a performative directive, or alternatively as something more like the non-performative sense from the first definition above, with which we are familiar today:

in the beternes of my greffes **I desire you** to haue care of your selfe as the heid and wellspringe of my good³²

commend me I pray you to my sister kneueit and to my sister brotten **desiringe** you to frende her what you may³³

I desire youe to send me word before the nexte Assizes at the Poole, what your determynacon is touchinge the same/ if possible youe cane, also **I desire youe** to lett some of your owne fatt Beeves for provicon be sente hither so sone as youe maye³⁴

³¹ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘desire, v.’, 1 and 6 (respectively).

³² V.84 (1595).

³³ V.112 (1602).

³⁴ V.99 (1600).

As with *pray*, Joan also uses this verb in correlation with references to God, in the hopes of seeing her husband soon, as in V.112 of 1602, where she closes ‘**desiringe** the allmyghite to send vs both a mery meteinge’. But here again, given the lack of contextual specificity, there is no way of knowing from this single instance whether Joan is in fact using the verb performatively or not; and indeed, it is almost impossible to prove that there was a performative sense at all if we only consider first person occurrences. However, that there was a performative understanding to do with asking is clear when we look at letter V.65, where Joan gives John information to relay on to her sister in London, mostly to do with her concern for a midwife for herself (apparently the only suitable one to Joan’s mind in Wiltshire had just recently died). Afraid that her sister may be upset with her for not writing to her herself, she instructs her husband: ‘tell her that I hope shee will not deni to comdone to me and so I pra you tell her from me **desire her** not to thinke ane vncines in me for not writenge to her so often as I would’. The active, directive sense is clear from this descriptive use of the verb, which makes it likely that Joan’s own first person usage was also directive and therefore, by extension, performative. It is also likely that period understandings of the performative sense were simultaneously linked with an understanding of the non-performative sense, which the OED’s definition reflects: ‘to express a wish to (a person)’. This additional connotation, however subtle, surely would have distinguished the sociopragmatic significance of *desire* when compared to other directive performatives in that it relates a particular aspect of the speaker’s attitude towards the request to do with *wishing*, *longing* and *craving*. Maria’s uses of the verb seem to be making interesting use of this interplay of senses. For example:

I coulde not be so greate an enimye to my owne hapynes, as to wante yr fauor, for wante of **desyeringe** ytt.³⁵

all that **I desyer**, ys butt to be blest *wth* yr better Conseyte³⁶

most ernistlye **I haue desyered** yr fauor, *wth* promyse to performe any kindnes that mighte deserve ytt, and god who knowes the harte; beste knowes that **my desyer** in that respecte ys as greate as euer³⁷

In all three of these examples, the polysemantics that arise from the sense of *desiring* (as in wanting something very much) and the more strictly early modern sense of asking are combined to powerful effect. And while only the occurrence in letter VIII.16 could be called performative, the other examples support the hypothesis that further instances are also performative in that they strongly suggest directive speech acts.

³⁵ VIII.12 (1601).

³⁶ VIII.16 (1602).

³⁷ VIII.18 (1602).

Unlike the directives considered so far, performative occurrences of *entreat* in the Thynne letters always appear in conjunction with auxiliary verbs. In scribal letter V.88, of 1598, Joan *entreats* John to send materials for making clothes, adding an additional *let me* to her speech act: ‘good mr Thynne **lett me intreat you** so sonne as may be send so muche of the like cloth as the children last had’. This type of usage of the verb *let* has been described by Kohnen as creating an ‘artificial situation of approval’:

This can be explained again as a strategy of politeness. Instead of performing the speech act directly, one may ask permission for performing it. In terms of Brown and Levinson (1987), the speaker pays respect to the negative face of the hearer by not imposing on him.³⁸

Therefore, *let* was used to communicate negative politeness by vesting the power – albeit rhetorical – to choose in the addressee (who may or may not let a request be granted). Nor was this a matter of the scribe formalizing the rhetorical politeness of Joan’s language, for it appears several other times in her holograph letters to John: in V.97/8, 1600, ‘wherefore good mr Thynne **lett me intreate you** not to conseue other wise of me then by leaue I will desarie’; then in V.112, 1602, ‘**Lett me in treat you** to end the sute be twne richard Linghame and mr bemond’, and V.114, 1602, ‘sute mr Thynne **Lett me in treat** aspede retourne in to these parties’. Interestingly, *let me* always accompanies Joan’s use of the performative directive *entreat*.³⁹ Maria’s only use (besides one instance stated in the negative), is sarcastic, found in the first line of her final letter to Joan and also includes *let me*:

Good La: owt of my care to yr health **lett me intreate you** to temper yr Chollor, esspecialye Consyderinge you Cannot Comphorte yr Selfe wth hope that mr Thynne wyll greeve much att ytt:⁴⁰

From Shakespeare, a variation of this verbal collocation occurs in *Antony and Cleopatra* when Caesar, addressing Cleopatra says ‘Good queen, **let us entreat you**’, where the alternative pronoun system, typically reserved for the use of monarchs, is employed (i.e. ‘we/us/our/etc.’).⁴¹ And although it does not contain the *let me*-

³⁸ T. Kohnen, “‘Let mee bee so bold to request you to tell me’: Constructions With *Let Me* and the History of English Directives”, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 5:1 (2004), pp. 159-173 (p. 166).

³⁹ Further instances of *let me* account for the verb itself as a non-performative, more indirect way of committing a directive speech act to paper, as in V.112 where Joan writes, ‘**Lett me** be comforted in hereing from you’. It also occurs in conjunction with the performative *pray* in letter V.19: ‘**I pray yow let me vnderstand** yor mynd’, or in a directive-like example from letter V.14 of 1576, where Joan writes some advice to her husband on how to behave with her father, who was apparently upset with John and his performance of his filial duties, stating, ‘thearefore good mr thenne **let me parswade you** to take all meanes possible to please and content him’. In this way, the *let me*-phrase was a versatile feature for performing directive speech acts: it could be used to hedge the main verb (creating the situation of ‘artificial approval’), act as the main verb itself, or follow the main verb.

⁴⁰ VIII.10 (1605?).

⁴¹ W. Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*, from *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Act 5, Scene 2, MIT Online Edition (1993), <<http://shakespeare.mit.edu/>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

construction, Angel Day's example of 'An Epsitle Petitorie, wherein is craued trauaile and councell to be assistant vpon vrgent occasion', incorporates the performative *entreat*, extensively qualified by other protestations to do with preserving the addressee's negative face: 'As one greatly emboldened by the forwardnes of your wonted courtesie and liking, euer bent towards me. I haue dared (Sir) once againe vpon presumption of the like, hereby to **entreat you**'.⁴² Examples from the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler* (1998) also commonly have politeness hedges such as the modal *would* or references to the writer's 'boldness' in *entreating*.

In his diachronic study of directives, Kohnen suggests that 'during the early modern period the unqualified expression of speaker volition is no longer felt to be an appropriate means of making requests', and therefore the use of hedged performatives rose in the period.⁴³ In the Thynne women's letters the verb *entreat* seems to have been particularly susceptible to this phenomenon. Whether or not the frequent hedging of *entreat* in particular had anything to do with its semantic content is difficult to tell, with little help coming from the OED, which lists it rather generically, in the problematic fashion of using other performative speech act verbs as synonyms: 'to make an earnest prayer or request to; to beseech, implore'; 'to ask earnestly for (a thing)'.⁴⁴ Perhaps there was some degree of forcefulness and immediacy which *entreat* would normally communicate to an addressee – which would explain the negatively polite implications of it being hedged with *let me* and also further indicate a pragmatic hierarchy of performative directives when compared to verbs like *pray* and *beseech*.⁴⁵

Thus, the evidence provided by the Thynne women's letters suggests that the performative directives used in letters to their husbands were not merely interchangeable, analogous forms – despite the circularity of definitions in the OED, which frequently use one directive to define another. *Pray* is by a far margin the most common of these verbs and we might say it was relatively generic; however, the fact that *beseech* is preferred in times of particular desperation indicates *pray* was not adequate for all occasions and that, in addition to performing a directive speech act, the latter verb was more expressive of the speaker's attitude towards the speech act itself. This is also true of *desire* and *entreat*. *Desire* seems to have engaged, sociopragmatically, somewhere between the senses listed in the OED, making its performative status somewhat tenable in that *desiring* something in

⁴² Day, *The English Secreterie*, p. 177.

⁴³ Kohnen, 'Towards a History', p. 170.

⁴⁴ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'entreat, v.', II, 8 and 9.

⁴⁵ Although Kohnen (2000c) describes the hedging of directives as a trend for the period generally, perhaps there was some diffusion involved in the process, with *entreat* being one of the first to receive such treatment, which later spread to other verbal forms? Obviously, a much wider corpus survey than is possible in the current study would be needed to assess whether or not this was the case.

the present-day sense is non-performative, while in the early modern directive sense it would be. Also, the way in which *entreat* frequently called for some sort of qualification – whether it be in the language of ‘artificial approval’ (i.e. *let me*), polite supplication or the modal *would* – suggests the particularity of its use, which may have been seen as somehow particularly face-threatening for an addressee, compared with other directives.

Furthermore, although it does not happen in the surviving letters of Joan and Maria, meaningful distinctions between directives are also suggested in the way in which they were employed by other period letter-writers, sometimes with several verbs appearing within one speech act. An early example of this comes from a ‘letter’ from Richard, Duke of York to the citizens of Shrewsbury in 1452, where he writes in characteristically medieval fashion, using present participles: ‘**praying** and **exhorting** you, to fortify, enforce, and assist me, and to come to me with all diligence, wheresoever I shall be’.⁴⁶ Del Lungo Camiciotti has observed collocations of different types of performatives in Middle English wills, describing them as repetitions which strengthen the ‘illocutionary force of the speech act’.⁴⁷ However, in letters, the strengthening of force may come from more than mere repetition. For, in the letter from the Duke of York, the addition of *exhorting* adds additional meaning to the Duke’s expression in that it suggests a type of command, beyond *praying*, referencing the imperative duty of the citizens to which the letter is addressed. Another interesting example is found in a letter from Elizabeth I to Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots, in the winter of 1567, in which Elizabeth is strongly suggesting that Mary disassociate herself from those implicated in her husband, Lord Darnley’s murder. To emphasize the pressure on Mary to do so, she uses three different performative speech act verbs, one right after the other: ‘I **exhort** you, I **counsel** you, and I **beseech** you to take this thing so much to heart that you will not fear to touch even him whom you have nearest to you if the thing touches him [referring specifically to James Hepburn, whom Mary later married – apparently *not* taking Elizabeth’s advice “to heart”]’.⁴⁸ Although these verbs are all associated with directive speech acts, the range they hold is significant enough that each one seems to represent a different perspective from which to try and persuade Mary. The *exhorting* would be particularly strong and, as in the letter from the Duke of York to the citizens over a hundred years earlier, probably had an element of reminding Mary of her station as subservient to Elizabeth (a position Mary staunchly refuted her entire life, insisting on her own sovereignty as a queen, even during her years of imprisonment in

⁴⁶ *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*, Compiled by J. Keränen, et al. (Helsinki, 1998), Distributed through *Oxford Text Archive*, <<http://ota.ahds.ac.uk>> Accessed July 14, 2009.

⁴⁷ G. Del Lungo Camiciotti, ‘Performative Aspects of Late Medieval English Wills’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 3:2 (2002), pp. 205-27 (p. 215).

⁴⁸ L. S. Marcus, J. Meuller and M. B. Rose (eds.), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago and London, 2000), p. 116.

England), almost reprimanding her to behave properly. The OED defines it as ‘to admonish earnestly; to urge by stimulating words to conduct regarded as laudable’⁴⁹ – a definition which clearly has emphasis on the judgement of the speaker, which necessarily puts them in some position of power and authority. The next, to *counsel*, ‘to give or offer counsel or advice; to advise’,⁵⁰ seems to be fairly neutral, could have passed between familiars and would have perhaps been seen as a sort of queen-to-queen, sisterly advice. Finally, *beseeching*, as we have seen, would have been the most desperate-sounding, as this sort of language explicitly expressed Elizabeth’s supplication. The fact that this verb was frequently used by inferiors to their superiors would have sacrificed some power over to Mary and revealed Elizabeth’s high level of emotional involvement with the situation (as was certainly the case when Elizabeth had any news of Mary).

That there is such a range of performative directives in the letters of Joan and Maria indicates the sociopragmatic function of the letters and how one of their central objectives was to try and get their husbands to do, buy, or tell things for, or to them. Generally, this fits with the culture in that early modern English society was based largely on networks of patronage wherein letters served as ways of *praying*, *beseeching* and *desiring* things of ‘patrons’, ‘friends’ (itself a complicated term in early modern sociability, further discussed in Chapter 6), relatives and the monarch when unable to do so in person. This was a constant and necessary part of an individual’s performance in order to maintain privilege and livelihood, particularly among the upper echelons of society. The number of these verbs also contrasts with present-day Anglo-American and British culture, where explicit performative directive speech acts, particularly those which have the potential to threaten face (i.e. all of those considered in this section) play less the quotidian role in social intercourse than they did in earlier periods.⁵¹ In instances where one might use a directive performatively in present-day English, the result is something highly formalized, and most likely hedged, as in ‘I *would ask* you to send me the paperwork as soon as possible’; or emotive, as in ‘I *am asking* you to please stop’. We are much more likely, even in cases of formality, to simply use *please* with the imperative: ‘*Please send* me the paperwork’, or ‘*Please stop*’; or indirectly using ‘could’, as in ‘*Could you send* me the paperwork as soon as possible?’

Kohnen, comparing Old English to modern usage, has suggested that the far greater frequency of explicit performatives in Old English may have to do with the more oral

⁴⁹ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘exhort, v.’, 1.

⁵⁰ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘counsel, v.’, 1.

⁵¹ T. Kohnen, ‘Explicit Performatives in Old English’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1:2 (2000), pp. 301-21 (p. 317); T. Kohnen, ‘Corpora and Speech Acts: The Study of Performatives’, in *Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory*, ed. C. Mair and M. Hundt (Amsterdam and Atlanta, 2000), pp. 177-86.

nature of Anglo-Saxon society when compared to our own.⁵² And while early modern epistolary culture is a long way from Old English, the connection with orality may also be applicable to Joan and Maria's period. This suggestion is particularly resonant if one considers the connections often made between the letter genre and spoken language, not only in current theory, but in the period itself which often characterized letters as an 'absent voice' of the writer or the 'familiar speech of the absent'.⁵³

Commissive Performatives

Commissive speech acts are those whereby one obligates oneself to do something. Common present-day commissive performatives include *promise*, *swear* and *vow*. The social context of these verbs is oftentimes connected to instances where someone's speech is instrumental in getting at an important truth. This is true in court settings when giving sworn testimony, as in 'I *swear* to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth so help me God'. And in marriage ceremonies, sometimes a commissive speech act verb is incorporated into the exchanging of *promises* ('to have and to hold, etc.'). In this way, commissives frequently serve an important function in maintaining social institutions through the explicit marking of speech acts.

The element of 'getting at an important truth' is reflected in Maria's petitions to Joan, where it was important (for Maria) to be interpreted as being sincere, with her inner thoughts in accordance with her outward written expression. To this end, Maria *vows* herself to Joan as the loving, obedient and 'respectyue' daughter she wishes to be accepted as. *Vow* occurs performatively, in present participle form in letter VIII.20, written in December of 1602:

becawse I haue binne the only occation of hys [Thomas'] faultynes, I cannot butt bestowe all my intreatyes in hys behalfe, **vowinge** yf ytt please god to grante any contynewance to my Lyfe, ytt shall be wholye Imployde to giue you Iuste cawse to saye (what for **the performance of my dewty towards you**, and the large measure of my loue towards hym) that you haue a respectyue daughter

Tellingly, Maria references the connection the letter's verbs share with a 'performance of my dewty'. The 'performance' here refers to the now somewhat archaic (or at least highly formulaic) sense of 'carrying out, discharge, or fulfilment of a command, duty, promise,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ C. Shrank, "'These few scribbled rules': Representing Scribal Intimacy in Early Modern Print", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67:2 (2004), pp. 295-314 (p. 298); K. G. Hornbeak, *The Complete Letter-Writer in English 1568-1800* (Northampton, Massachusetts, 1934), p. 20.

purpose, responsibility, etc'.⁵⁴ In later petitions, Maria reminds Joan of her *vowing* on several occasions, as in letter VIII.22, which begins 'To you my Dearlye Loued moother are thess Lynes Sent, from her that **hath vowed** to make her Selfe as worthy, as her best Service can make her, of so kinde a moother as yr Selfe'.

Maria's letters also offer several instances of the commissive verb to *promise*, which appears in two letters to Joan:

I haue desyered yr fauor, *wth* **promyse to performe** any kindnes that mighte deserve ytt⁵⁵

ytt maye be that you wyll saye; what a vnequall Satysfaction ys heer **promysed**, Iustlye maye you take exceptions to ytt⁵⁶

Here again, the verbs do not grammatically fit into the first person simple present indicative active category for performative utterance; yet the way in which they are reiterated (as a noun and in the present tense passive voice) undoubtedly re-enacts the performative power of the word's sociopragmatic associations with Maria's duties as a daughter. In the letters to Thomas, the verb is delivered with a significantly different illocutionary force – used playfully after the quote from VIII.6 given above, where Maria is *praying* Thomas to view a pair of servants recommended by her mother, and then goes on to add: '**I wyll promise** not to be Ielous thoughe one of them is a Shee'. Slightly further along the serious-ironic spectrum, a sarcastic instance of *promising* comes in letter VIII.2 to Thomas when, after teasing her husband with a joke about letting the dogs defecate in his bed, Maria writes, '**I wyll promyse** to be inferyor to none of my deuerll neighbors in playeing the good huswyfe, thoughe thay styre tyll thay stinke'.⁵⁷ Fraser describes how with this type of use of the future tense with a performative to an addressee can assume that the speaker intends to carry out the act.⁵⁸ And while this does seem to be happening in the example given earlier in the section on directives, from Joan's letter V.118, in which she writes to John '**I will daily pray** for your helth and good succes', this does not seem to be true of Maria's usage. Instead, given the obvious irony that accompanies the hedged performative instances of *promise*, the way in which Maria marks her insincere commissives by using the future tense distances her from the speech act itself and in this way disrupts the conditions needed to complete its full performance. A similar example of this can also be seen in Joan's letter V.95:

⁵⁴ OED, Draft Revision December 2008, 'performance, *n.*', 3.

⁵⁵ VIII.18 (1602).

⁵⁶ VIII.14 (1602).

⁵⁷ Period jests around excrement and Maria's use of sarcasm are considered in more detail in Chapter 7.

⁵⁸ B. Fraser, 'Hedged Performatives', in *Syntax and Semantics, Volume 3: Speech Acts*, ed. P. Cole and J. L. Morgan (London, 1975), pp. 187-210 (pp. 205-7).

I was in good hope to a harde from you but you haue in som sorte deseaued my expeictacion and there fore hereafter I will not loke for it but how so euer it is **I will wish** you as much good as your selfe can ether desire or desaruē:

Here Joan is clearly upset at her husband for not having written to her as she expected. To express this she subverts what is a usually sincerely worded concern for John's health and success by ironically *wishing* (an expressive, discussed below), which is hedged with the future tense and exaggerated by her addition of how much John should 'desaruē'. What this use of the future tense does to Joan and Maria's performative language is to make it more indirect and therefore non-committal, further emphasizing their non-literal intent.

Unlike the letters of Maria, there are no explicit performative instances in Joan's letters of the type of commissive speech act verbs we might use today. She does, however, use them descriptively to report on others. In letter V.82, Joan writes to her husband about commissives she has apparently elicited from Thomas soon after the Thynnes discovered the secret match orchestrated by Maria's family:

I haue apon my soneis **submission** and apon his **promeis** and **oth** afore my cosen higen geuen him my bleseinge condeshenoally that he will be ruled by you and me from henseforth which I haue good hope he will

Here Joan has effectively made her son recommit to, or swear allegiance to her and his father after breaking the bonds of filial duty in marrying Maria in secret. There are other instances besides the nominal ones here where Joan writes of other people *promising*. For example, the issue of Thomas' allegiances comes up not long afterwards in letter V.84, where Joan is discussing the passing of letters between her son and members of Maria's family, saying of one in particular that it was nothing but a 'Leter of ordenari commendaions to Iohn maruen of diuers thingeis which he bouthe for hm at that tyme which the boye **apon his oth sueterth** it to be no thinge else'. Joan also uses the verb to reprimand Thomas in later letters, as in VIII.36 of 1611, in which she writes, 'I marvaile much that yow wold not **perform yor promise** in cominge to me'. The semantic content of these uses is very close to the verb today: the sociopragmatic significance is, however, more specific to period notions of filial duty in an authoritarian system where the epistolary act was a crucial way of performing this duty, binding yourself to an addressee socially by way of *promising* and *vowing*.

Representative Performatives

Representative speech acts are those which are made in order to ‘assert the speaker’s belief in the truth (or falsehood) of what is said’.⁵⁹ Performative examples from current English expression include *admit*, *insist*, and *claim*. Instances of what appear to be most like representatives in the Thynne women’s letters are *assure*, *confess* and *protest*: and although I have included these verbs in this category, they are the most difficult to place and all have fuzzy functional boundaries when considered within the typology of speech acts.

Assure is used performatively five times in Maria’s correspondence. Apart from *pray*, it is one of the few performatives that she uses on more than one occasion to Thomas without any clear ironic intent. In letter VIII.4, which expresses Maria’s concern for the plague and describes several folk remedies she has heard of, she writes, ‘good Sweet be not *wth* owt Sume thinge to take in an instaint, in good fayth **I assure you** this hath binn tried by manye’. Then, in a section of letter VIII.6, on business matters, she writes of the lack of income, ‘**I assure thee** ther ys no one peny to be received that I know of tyll Christmas’. In either of these examples, there can be no ambiguity over whether or not Maria is sincerely *assuring*; even for her, who was quite happy to subvert gender and familial expectations through sarcastic language elsewhere, Thomas’ health and their financial security were serious concerns, not to be confused by using non-literal language. The verb is also used in earnest in a petition to Joan, letter VIII.20, in which Maria opens with assurances that her frequent protestations are made in good faith: ‘My good moother, **I assure you** ytt is not any desyer I haue to offend you *wth* my Importunatie, *wch* maketh me so often trouble you *wth* the testymonis of my greeued minde’. This latter instance is also uttered sincerely; however, ironic intent is clear in VIII.8/9, to Thomas:

I know thow wylte Saye (receivinge 2 letters in a daye from me) that I haue tryed the vertue of Aspen Leaues vnder my tounge, *wch* makes me prattle So much, butt Consyder that all is bussines, for of my owne naturall disposission, **I assure thee** ther ys not a more Sillent wooman Liueing then my Selfe

In this example, Maria is playing off the fact that, interpreted literally, the verb would serve to emphasize her own belief that she was in fact the ‘Sillent wooman’ prescribed by period conduct literature, which is of course the opposite of its true meaning here. Maria’s actual intent is to mock the idealized model for hushed women. In this way, the sociopragmatic significance of *assure* in the letters from Maria can be related to its

⁵⁹ Traugott, ‘English Speech Act Verbs’, p. 388.

reference to belief (on the part of the speaker/writer): given that Maria very often wanted to juxtapose the literal sense of what she wrote against her actual belief in what she was saying, it is not surprising that we find her using this representative performative sarcastically.

Apart from Joan signing ‘your **assured** lovinge wyfe’ several times, *assure* also appears elsewhere in her letters to John, oftentimes as a reflexive verb (e.g.. *assure myself/yourself*), as in letter V.84, in 1595, when she is writing to him of her surveillance of letters coming in and out of Caus Castle, for fear that Maria’s family may try and contact Thomas in secret: ‘the boye suereth I shall know if any mesech [i.e. ‘message’] be brote to him but **ashur your selfe** I will wach him my selfe’. Or in letter V.73, in 1602, when Joan refers to how she has *assured* herself of Thomas’ reformed behaviour:

I haue delte with my sonn toching the contentes of your former leter how hath of his one minde writen to you what he will do and byde by apou his oth to me which **I ashure my selfe** he will now parform vnfanedly to vs both

The first of these examples is difficult to describe as performative; and whether or not the self-reflexive example from V.73 might be classed as performative is an interesting philosophical question (e.g. what are the felicity conditions for successfully carrying out a self-reflexive performative?). More definitively performative instances occur elsewhere in Joan’s correspondence, as in:

dolls fitts haue Lefte her which I am not aletell glad of but for my one **I ashure you** it was not wors this many dayes⁶⁰

the contentes of your to Leteres shall be parformed as nere as I may for my one parte **ashuringe: you** that I will make what spare I can⁶¹

The OED sense which most clearly fits these uses – from both women – is ‘to make (a person) sure or certain (*of* a fact, or *that* it is)’.⁶² This way of using the verb continues in present-day English, however, in early modern English there was also the senses ‘to guarantee: **a.** (a thing *to* a person); to promise as a thing that may be depended on’ and ‘to give a guarantee, promise, pledge oneself’.⁶³ For these latter senses one would probably use *promise* in present-day English, and the fact that this sense may also be read in the examples from Maria and Joan may lead one to think that it could also be considered as a commissive performative, like Maria’s use of *promise* discussed in the earlier section. Therefore, even though the assurances here do not necessarily bind the women to future

⁶⁰ V.116 (1602).

⁶¹ V.122/3 (1603).

⁶² OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘assure, v.’, 9.

⁶³ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘assure, v.’, 7, a. and c.

actions, but could merely be emphasizing their belief in what they were writing (i.e. as a representative), the sense of *promising* is not completely separable and the relation between typological speech act categories and speech act verbs is not absolute.

Confess is also used by both Thynne women and carries with it relatively recognizable and period-specific sociopragmatic significance. According to the OED, and as with several other performatives described in this chapter, *confess* had both religious and secular senses from its earliest inception in the English language. As with present-day English use, there was confession at church, or the confession of one's sins, and a secular sense, 'to declare or disclose (something which one has kept or allowed to remain secret as being prejudicial or inconvenient to oneself); to acknowledge, own, or admit (a crime, charge, fault, weakness, or the like)'.⁶⁴ Joan and Maria's use of *confess* is strictly in the secular sense and, more specifically, was used as 'introducing a statement made in the form of a disclosure of private feeling or opinion'.⁶⁵ Particularly in instances where the subject is emotionally sensitive, this verb is used as a way of humbly, perhaps even with an element of shamefulness, introducing how one felt about a particular circumstance.

In letter V.84, of 1595, Joan tells John how she thinks that she is perhaps being punished by God (referring to the clandestine marriage between Thomas and Maria) for the disproportionate love she gave to Thomas, her admitted favorite, when compared to her other children: '**confeissinge** my falte in Louinge him to well aboue the reste for which I fere I haue offended all mite god'. Later in the same letter, she relates to John how she has spoken with her 'cosen higen' about her distress over her son's clandestine marriage: 'I was forsed by grefe to **confeis** or I else I thinke my harte woulde haue broken *with* sori for here was nor is none that shall kno my mynde'. Given the strong need to manage one's self-presentation among the aristocracy throughout Renaissance Europe, expressing emotions, feelings and opinions was a very delicate matter in early modern England and the way in which they are framed here reiterates the awkward position their social expression could put people in, even in familiar letters.⁶⁶ Letters were often used and described by contemporaries as places in which otherwise unacceptable displays of emotion might be 'textualized'; yet, nonetheless, period conduct literature and rules of decorum advocated self-restraint and shame particularly for women and the lower

⁶⁴ OED Second Edition 1989, "confess v." I, 1.

⁶⁵ OED Second Edition 1989, "confess v." I, 1, e.

⁶⁶ N. Elias, 'Synopsis: Towards a Theory of Civilizing Processes', in *The Civilizing Process*, Revised Edition, Volume 2:4 (Oxford and Massachusetts, 2000), pp. 365-447; R. Chartier (ed.), *A History of Private Life: Volume III, Passions of the Renaissance* (Cambridge and London, 1989), pp. 163-164.

classes.⁶⁷ Maria seems to have been relying on these understandings of sociability when she cuttingly directs Joan to ‘temper yr Chollor’ in letter VIII.10 (discussed more fully in Chapter 7). And although the verb is not performative in the last instance from Joan given above, the fact that she felt she needed to explain why she had expressed such emotions to her cousin reiterates the hypothesis that the verb was a sociopragmatic marker used as a way of hedging emotional content. Likewise, in the letter to Lucy Audley, Joan makes it known how she feels about her and Lucy’s relationship, but not without some reservation: ‘but this **I confes**, I haue mor reason to respect your honor then your frenshipe towardes me yett’.⁶⁸ This use also occurs in Maria’s letters and in VIII.20 she writes to Joan of her desire for reconciliation: ‘**I must confess** yr fauor woulde giue a greate increase to my happynes’. Here the verb seems particularly deferential due to the nature of her petition, as if the very act of desiring Joan’s favor could be offensive. This sense of *confess* continues somewhat in current English use (e.g. in conjunction with *doubt* in the relatively fixed expression ‘**I confess** to having my doubts about it’), but it would have had a more resonant social significance in Joan and Maria’s period given the nature of expressing emotions in early modern England.

Other period examples from Day’s model letters correlate with Joan and Maria’s use. In a consolatory exchange to do with a grieved man who has just buried his wife, *confess* introduces emotional content in the original letter and the response: first, ‘I haue **I must confesse** very seldome knowne you for anie thinge to mourne’, and then in the response, ‘I haue receiued your louing letters, wherein carefully, discreetly, and effectually you haue endeouored to minister sundry comfortes, to my pestered and diseased minde, in all which **I confesse** you haue dealt with me as appertayneth vnto a faithfull, courteous and moste regarded brother’.⁶⁹ In these examples, as well as those from the Thynne women, *confess* not only emphasizes the emotional poignancy of the content it occurs with, but simultaneously references the larger culture of emotional reservation associated with period social expectations.

Although I have categorized *confess* as a representative speech act, the fact that it also expresses ‘certain feelings that the speaker has or thinks the hearer expects toward the state of affairs expressed in the proposition’ makes it a clear example of the fuzziness between the subcategories of speech acts: somewhere between a representative (like *admit*) and an expressive like those described in the next section. In current English use it is much

⁶⁷ G. Schneider, ‘Chapter 3: Affecting Correspondences’, in *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Delaware, 2005), pp. 109-42 and 134 (respectively).

⁶⁸ VII.237 (1602).

⁶⁹ Day, *The English Segetorie*, p. 222.

more clearly representative in that it usually has to do with *confessing* that something is true, whether in a legal or religious context. However, in early modern England, the verb served expressive functions as well: to preserve the letter-writer's sense of positive face in their recognition of the fact that the exposition of emotions, feelings and personal opinions had the potential of upsetting social order, or going against standards of period etiquette. The performative *protest* is also subject to this type of categorical indistinctness.

Protest, as it appears in the letters of Joan, seems set between a representative and expressive, and perhaps even commissive, function. This verb occurs eight times in Joan's letters, six of which appear in the first person. At the time, *protest* had a significantly larger semantic field than it does in current English and the OED offers several relevant meanings to Joan's letters, most of which are now rare or archaic (archaic senses represented by 'daggers'):

- †2. *intr.* To vow; to promise or undertake solemnly. Also occas. *trans.*
- 3. a. *trans.* To declare or state formally or emphatically (something about which a doubt is stated or implied); to assert, avow, affirm. Freq. with clause as object or † with object complement (*obs.*).
- b. *intr.* To make a formal or emphatic declaration or statement. Now *rare* or merged in sense 6a.
- c. *intr.* **I protest**: used as an asseveration. Cf. DECLARE v. 6b. Now *rare*.
- †5. *trans.* To assert publicly, make known; to proclaim, declare.
- 6. a. *intr.* Originally: to make a formal (often written) declaration *against* a proposal, decision, etc.; to complain, remonstrate. Now usually: to express disapproval or dissent; to object to something. Also in extended use.⁷⁰

Again, the circularity of dictionary definitions is clear in that many of the senses here use other speech act verbs in order to define *protest*. Today, this verb is used rarely, if ever, as a performative – and if it is, it is usually limited to the sense in '6. a.'. Performative usages from Joan's letters, on the other hand, seem to correlate with a variety of senses. The clearest example of a possibly representative sense appears in letter V.97/8, written to John in 1600, in which Joan is trying to convince her husband that she is doing her best in keeping household accounts, then wishing him well:

prainge god you may neuer doo worse then I haue wished you wch **I proteste before god** was neuer worse then to my one sole

This correlation with God, of *protesting* before God, is common in other early modern letters as well, as in a letter from Robert Dudley to Sir Francis Walsingham (then Secretary of State) in 1586, emphasizing his love and duty towards the Queen:

But now that her majesties good favor is promised me, and is the onely worldlie thinge I begge of God, I doe greatlie quiet myself, and **doe protest**,

⁷⁰ OED, Draft Revision March 2009, 'protest, v.'

even before the majestie of the eternall judge, that I haue sought nothinge in this service of mine, but, first, the glory of God, and, next, the safty and service of her majestie,⁷¹

The truth which is *protested* in these examples refers to the inner disposition of the writers themselves as opposed to the superficial, potentially untrue – merely flattering or conventional – expression of words. In such a context, reference to God would have been the highest form of representing the truth, in that he served as the ‘eternall judge’ of all things. In this way, *protesting* served a similar function to *confessing* as a performative method of offering one’s feelings to an addressee – at least on a rhetorical level – towards a sensitive subject. The difference is, however, significant in that *confessing* communicated social modesty or hesitation at offering what might otherwise have been concealed whereas *protesting* expresses the opposite, emphasizing the desire one has to lay bare their intentions, for which God provided a powerful witness.

Another common performative realization of *protest* is in sense ‘3.a.’ above, ‘as an asseveration’. Such usage occurs in a letter written in 1619, from Mary Countess of Bath to Jane Lady Cornwallis to do with the former’s disappointment over a group of familiars not breaking a lock of hers (apparently out of courtesy) despite some urgency to do so:

knowing mee as thaye ded, thaye myght have broken up the loke. I was, **I protest**, hartyly ayngry thaye ded not;⁷²

Two of Joan’s examples correlate with this type of use. Once in letter V.118 to John, in 1602, over the receipt of what sounds to have been spoiled cheeses: ‘how so euer the carver deseaued you **I protest** the ware such as I can not tell how’. And then again in letter V.122/3, in 1603, in which she is apologizing for having opened a letter not addressed to her due to the fact that it came to her attention under such suspicious circumstances:

I pray you take it not yell that I opened your letter **I proteste** the feare of the sodden. to here, that ther was ameshenger, com from LongLeatte, at that tyme of nite, after my furst sleepe, did so amase, me and the hast that he made to haue them, sent after you, was the cause that I opened standishis, leter: fearing all hat not byn well there:

In these examples, *protest*, in that it expresses the writer’s feelings more than referencing a questionable truth, seems to be functioning as an expressive performative. Considering the context – of Joan’s disappointment and surprise at having received the bad cheeses or a letter in the middle of the night – the ‘I protest’ sounds as if it could be an exclamatory, idiomatic expression, perhaps even reflecting elements of the spoken language. Realized

⁷¹ *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*.

⁷² *Ibid.*

this way, the phrase *I protest* may be analogous to the more recent, albeit rare, expressions *I say*, *I swear* or *I do declare* (this last example mostly associated with the American ‘southern belle’ and made famous by Vivien Leigh’s character Scarlett O’Hara in the film *Gone with the Wind* [1940]), which are frequently used as exclamatory expressions on their own or to emphasize the information that accompanies them.

Additionally, in letter V.116, of 1602, there may be hints of a commissive function, when Joan writes to John, as usual, of her desire to see him:

god send you your helth and aspede cominge in to these parteis or else
where: so euer you are **I proteste** I will com vnto you where so euer it be

Considering the fact that in this same letter she writes of her continued poor health, it is doubtful that Joan was seriously considering coming to John. Nonetheless, the way in which the verb is meant to communicate a commitment to a future action (albeit an unrealistic one) indicates an emphatic type of promise. Perhaps it was the high potential for confusion between the representative, expressive and commissive functions that led to these senses becoming almost completely archaic in more current English usage.

Expressive Performatives

Expressive speech acts are those ‘which express, sometimes perfunctorily, certain feelings that the speaker has or thinks the hearer expects toward the state of affairs expressed in the proposition’.⁷³ The ‘perfunctorily’ is particularly relevant here as expressive performative verbs in early modern English are for the most part used to signify the social duties of correspondents through conventionalized expressions of social bondage.

Love and duty were things to be *remembered* in letters, particularly in those sent to one’s superiors. Expressive performatives typically occur within the opening or closing of a letter and it is here that examples from both Day’s instruction and real-life correspondence can be found (the following appearing in the opening to letters): ‘My humble dutie **remembred** vnto your good L.’ (Day’s fictional example), or ‘My bounden dutie and thankfulness **remembred** to your good Lordship’ (actual letter from the Dean of Durham to the Bishop of Durham).⁷⁴ It should be noted that both of these use the performative past participle, something that is oftentimes the case with *remembering* one’s duty in letters, and is reflected in the Thynne correspondences.

⁷³ Traugott, ‘English Speech Act Verbs’, p. 388.

⁷⁴ S-K. Tanskanen, “‘Best patterns for your imitation’: Early Modern Letter-Writing Instruction and Real Correspondence”, in *Discourse Perspectives in English*, ed. R. Hiltunen and J. Skaffari (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2003), pp. 167-95 (pp.179-80).

In several of her early letters, Joan refers to the duty she owes John and her parents (with whom John was staying at the time). She begins letter V.12 by writing ‘My harty commendacons **remembred**’ and adds to her closing ‘my harty commendacions **not for gotten** to my parets’ and in V.10 ‘this [i.e. thus] with my hrte commendaciens to my father and mother your selfe **not forgotten**’. In a much later letter, V.122/3 of 1603, Joan similarly writes ‘I would desire you att your goinge to mr hornors to **remember my kind saluteis** vnto him and to that good Lady his wife’. The earlier examples retain the more conventional *hearty commendations*, whereas the later instance uses what had become Joan’s new way of closing with *salutes* (as was pointed out in the previous chapter). Joan also writes for her daughters and – usually at the end of a letter or in a postscript – their remembrances to their father or brother, depending on which she was writing to. The first occurrence comes in letter V.73 to John in 1595, where Joan writes for their daughter Dorothy, ‘doll **remembreth her dutie** vnto you and the are all well’. In two of the letters to Thomas, Joan writes of his sisters and their love *remembered* to him, where the remembrances clearly supported what was an attempt to get Thomas to provide his female siblings with proper dowries after their father’s death. But then in her last letter as well – a holograph to Thomas – Joan finishes by ‘**remembringe** my beste Loue vnto you’.

Maria does not employ the performative verb *remember* in her letters; however, there is an interesting occurrence of a variant of the *remember*-lexeme in letter VIII.20, a petition to Joan (also cited above with reference to *vow*):

yf ytt please god to grante any contynewance to my Lyfe, ytt shall be
 whole Imployde to giue you Iuste cawse to saye (what **for the**
performance of my dewty towards you, and the large measure of my loue
 towards hym) that you haue a respectyue daughter, and he a loueinge wyfe,
 with thys resollution, and **the remembrance of my very kindest**
Sallutations to you my deere mother

As with *vow*, the concurrence of the *remember* trope and what Maria herself refers to as a ‘performance’ is telling in that it explicitly demonstrates the way in which she perceived the performance of the ‘respectyue daughter’ as analogous with *remembering* her duty to Joan in letters. Maria’s resort to the more formal-sounding *remembering* in this letter to Joan is no doubt a result of an attempt to sound as supplicatory as possible – as higher formality oftentimes equated to greater deference.

More commonly, however, Maria ends her letters by using the performative expressives *wishing* or *saluting*. In letter VIII.8/9 to Thomas she closes with, ‘I wyll now end, **wyshinge** thy life hapynes & Contentment maye never end, tyll thy loue to me hath end’, and then in VIII.6, ‘**I Sallute** thy best beloued Selfe *with* the returne of thyne owne wyshe in thy last letter’. These also appear in some of the petitionary letters to her mother-

in-law, as in letter VIII.18: ‘and so *with* my best **well wyshing**es, and **Loueinge Salluttations**, I end my Laste fare well, **wyshinge** you maye Longe fare well’. Joan also employs an expressive performative in order to express her concern for her correspondent’s health, in letter V.97/8 of 1600, in which she opens with the use of the present participle of *desire*, quite clearly exhibiting an expressive instance of this performative: ‘Good mr Thynne I am glad to here of your good helth **desiring** the continuances of the same to my only comfort’. Again, the multi-functionality of performatives between speech act categories is reflected by Joan and Maria’s use, as the verbs *wishing* or *desiring* – here employed as expressives – could also be used as directives. In conjunction with what was observed in the previous chapter, these verbs appear mostly in the closings, functioning not only as socially significant performatives but also as pragmatic markers, gestures that signalled the end of a letter.

More generally, the sociopragmatic significance attached to *remembering*, or *not forgetting* one’s love and duty correlates with the social functions of letter-writing itself. The OED lists an archaic sense specific to this function: ‘To mention (one’s affection, respect, etc.) by way of message *to* another’.⁷⁵ In this context, to forget one’s place was to forget one’s obligations to others; therefore, remembering to write regular letters to those in one’s social network was an essential aspect of performing one’s social station and maintaining the ties so crucial to the early modern English institutions of family, friendship and patronage. In this way, expressive performatives found in the openings and closings of Joan and Maria’s letters were analogous with the act of writing letters: remembering one’s duty was in fact to write a letter. Following, to *remember* was to be in another’s service and to be *bound* (another speech act verb common to period letters) to them for their acceptance of your gesture they would presumably give in return. The act of remembering was of course somewhat close to offering *commendations*, however, using the verb performatively makes the act’s significance more transparent; as described by Leech:

The metalinguistic character of performatives is in fact the key to their nature: because they impose a label on themselves, they not only make clear their own (illocutionary) force, but also categorize it.⁷⁶

Therefore, by explicitly including the verb *remember*, the writer cites his or her knowledge of the system of values which is reiterated through the practice of writing letters as an expression of duty. In this way, conventionalized expressive performatives found in the Thynne letters reference some of the most important communicative functions of these

⁷⁵ OED, Second Edition 1989, ‘remember, v.¹’, 8, b.

⁷⁶ Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, p. 182.

texts – functions which were to be included regardless of whatever other speech acts went into a letter.

That the use of the verb *remember* had become slightly more formal, perhaps even somewhat archaic, by the early seventeenth century is suggested by many of Joan's later letters in addition to Maria's fairly consistent use of different expressive forms. Furthermore, it would seem that these performative speech acts were mostly a social reflex, a rote aspect of letter-writing activity, which is reflected in the fact that they are commonly a part of the more conventional opening and closing formulae. Joan makes this point explicit in letter V.84 (cited above), in which she writes dismissively of a letter sent from Thomas to James Marvin, summarily deeming it to be nothing of extraordinary interest, only a 'Leter of ordenari **commendaions**'.

Conclusion

The large amount of sociopragmatic significance that is communicated by performative speech act verbs is one of the most salient features of Joan and Maria's letters and is probably characteristic of the early modern letter genre taken more generally. Considered as they have been in this chapter, performatives may be seen as indicators of period social conventions and the way in which relationships were reiterated (or, as is sometimes the case with Maria, challenged) by taking the correct actions and using the words, or 'names' – and especially verbs – needed to convey those actions in writing.

That the cultural, and therefore historical context of performatives varies is an observation supported by this study:⁷⁷ although many of the performatives discussed in this chapter have familiar present-day senses – reflected in the OED definitions – their sociopragmatic content is only accessible through consideration of early modern English culture and, even more specifically, the socio-familial context of utterance in the Thynne letters and their communicative goals.

One of the major goals for letter-writers and recipients in the period would have been to maintain the culture of patronage, for in giving out favors one made others bound to them, whether this implied similar favors returned in the future (between equals) or through some variety of service (as was the case with a master or the monarch). Furthermore, the patronage system between the upper classes was restricted only to those who could participate: the language was highly stylized and performable only through particular mediums of exchange, the letter being one of the most important. In this way,

⁷⁷ For a discussion of the cultural variability of the performative see Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics*, p. 216.

epistolary speech acts were encoded into a verbal etiquette which reiterated upper class social expectations, paying mind to politeness and also constantly reminding the reader and recipient to what sort of social world they belonged to. This world, based primarily on social networks of patronage, was to a larger extent structured around asking for things in a variety of ways and to this end had a number of different verbs to express the occasion of performing directive speech acts. And despite the circularity of dictionary definitions between verbs such as *pray*, *beseech* and *entreat*, this study has shown how directives were employed differently when they are considered in actual use. Furthermore, commissives such as *promise* and *vow* could be used as ways of supporting the important ‘performance’ of one’s duties towards others in letters. Commissives appear explicitly in Maria’s petitions to Joan to forward her ‘sincere’ entreaties, and also sarcastically via the use of the future tense in letters to Thomas. Then, in the discussion on representatives, it was shown how although familiar letters have elsewhere been described as ‘emotional pressure valves’,⁷⁸ the unbridled expression of emotion remained sensitive even in writing, and the value of controlling emotion is reflected in the verb *confess*. Finally, not forgetting one’s duty was so much a social function of epistolary culture that the inclusion of expressive performatives such as *remembering* became a conventionalized aspect of creating a letter.

The sociopragmatic significance of the performatives outlined here resonates with the idea of ‘activity types’ formulated by Levinson, who asks ‘in what ways do the structural properties of an activity constrain (especially the functions of) the verbal contributions that can be made towards it?’⁷⁹ With regard to early states of English, this question has been used to discuss the early modern social activities which surrounded witchcraft, showing how performative speech acts were instrumental in ‘constructing witches and spells’ (e.g. via condemnations in public).⁸⁰ In a more textually specified environment, previous studies of the performative aspects of late medieval and early modern English wills have demonstrated the ways in which performatives such as *bequeath* and *will* were indispensable ‘verbal contributions’ to the creation of the will as a

⁷⁸ Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*, p. 133.

⁷⁹ S. C. Levinson, ‘Activity Types and Language’, in *Talk at Work*, ed. P. Drew and J. Heritage (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 66-100 (p. 71). The occurrence of performatives may also have implications for the characterization of the text typology of letters. Bergs writes that, ‘The first and most obvious difference in letter forms and functions lies in the speech act types that can be found. Quite simply, descriptive texts contain more representative speech acts, expressive texts more expressive speech acts, and appellative texts more directives’ (2004: 210). Although the category ‘performative’ cannot function as an alternative to the text types listed (by Bergs), it may be conceived of as a useful descriptive category of its own, which may then be further qualified by reference to the more specific categories of speech acts.

⁸⁰ J. Culpeper and E. Semino, ‘Constructing Witches and Spells: Speech Acts and Activity Types in Early Modern England’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1:1 (2000), pp. 97-116.

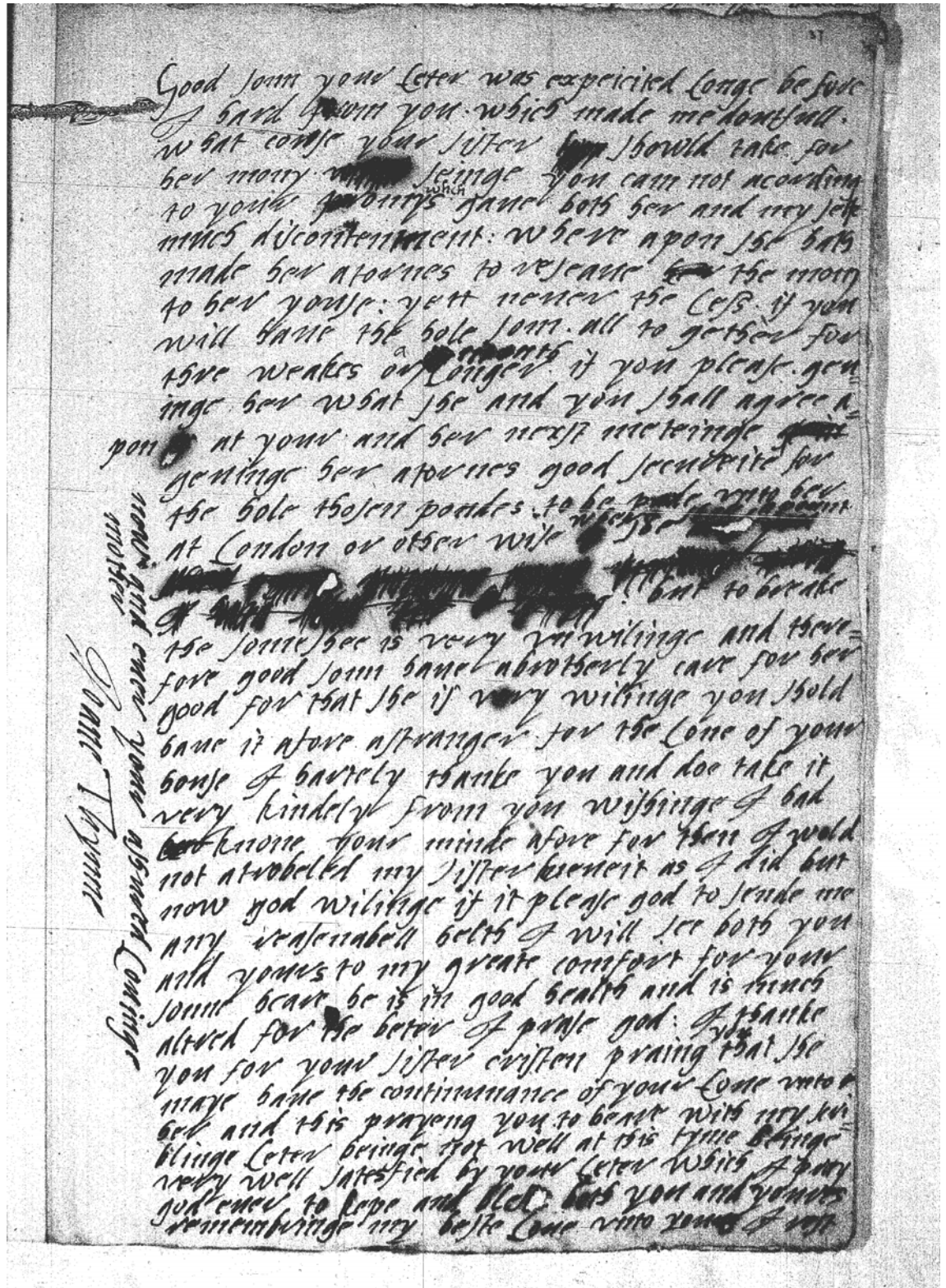
particular type of text.⁸¹ Analogously, the findings of this chapter suggest that the activity of writing a letter was socially specified enough that the genre afforded its own unique way of performing speech acts and using speech act verbs, supporting Wood's frame analysis of the Paston letters in which she states that 'letter writing is a constrained activity' built around expected lexical items.⁸² In particular, the use of performative expressives such as *remembering*, *commending*, and *wishing* seem to have had special significance in structuring the act of letter-writing, occurring mostly in the more conservative opening and closing formulae (with *wish* continuing in today's writing practices, most notably in the phrase *best wishes*). Likewise, as was described in the previous chapter, the present participle form of performative speech act verbs – continued from their use in medieval English letters – was also a structure common to letters but rare in Shakespearean dialogue. In these ways, letters were a particular type of performative space which called for an engagement with a specified group of verbs and verbal forms. By using these performatives to explicitly mark epistolary speech acts as belonging to a particular category of activity, the Thynne women communicate specific gestures to their addressees while simultaneously exhibiting their pragmatic knowledge of identifiable socio-textual conventions and expectations.

⁸¹ Del Lungo Camiciotti, 'Performative Aspects'; U. Bach, 'Wills and Will-Making in 16th and 17th Century England: Some Pragmatic Aspects', in *Historical Pragmatics*, ed. A. Jucker (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 125-44 (pp. 129-30). Bach makes the interesting point that these verbs, at least in the context of wills as textual documents, are not explicit performatives in that the completion of their performance (i.e. the actual passing over of money or goods) is delayed – hence the idea of the 'postponing performative'. He also discusses the verb *will* as simply expressing a wish or desire. This is reflected in Joan's first person usage of *would*, as in letter V.97/8: 'william francis maketh greate mone ["moan"] and is in greate nede I **would** you would ageuen him som thinge but he shall be deis charged presently'.

⁸² Wood, 'Structures and Expectations', p. 194.

CHAPTER 5

'yr Scribe Can proove no nessecarye Consiquence for you': The Social and Linguistic Implications of the Holograph/Scribal Distinction in Joan Thynne's Letters¹



¹ This chapter forms the basis of a chapter (by the same name) in P. Hardman and A. Lawrence-Mathers (eds.), *Women, Scribes and the Domestication of Print Culture* (Suffolk, 2009, forthcoming). I would like to thank both the editors and the reader for their comments.

VIII.37 (Wall 68). Joan to Thomas Thynne. October or November, 1611. Address scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4.

Address leaf:

[address:]

To the Right wor
shipfull my Loving
Sonne Sir
thomas thin Long
Let gve this
with speed

Body text:

Good sonn your Leter was expexcited Longe be fore I hard from you. which made me doutfull. what couse your sister showld take for her mony seinge you cam not acording to your promys which gaue both her and my selfe much discontentment: where apon she hath made her atornes to reseauue ~~her~~ the mony to her youse: yett neuer the less. if you will haue the hole som. all to gether for thre weakes or a month Longer. if you please. geuinge her what she and you shall agree apon at your and her nexst meteinge geuinge her atornes good secureite for the hole thosen pondes. to be pade vnto her at London or other wise where she shall apount: but to breake the some shee is very vnwilinge and there fore good sonn haue abrotherly care for her good for that she is very wilinge you shold haue it afore astranger. for the Lone of your house I hartely thanke you and doe take it very kindly from you wishinge I had knone your minde afore for then I wold not atrobeled my sister kneueit as I did but now god wilinge if it please god to sende me any reasenabell helth I will see both you and yours to my greate comfort for your sonne heare he is in good health and is much altred for the beter I prase god: I thanke you for your sister cristen praing you that she may haue the continuance of your Loue vnto her and this prayeng you to beare with my scriblinge Leter beinge not well at this tyme beinge very well satesfied by your Leter which I pray god euer to kepe and bless both you and youres remembringe my beste Loue vnto you I rest now and euer

your ashured Louinge mother
Ioane Thynne

Taken alone, this, the last surviving letter sent from Joan Thynne to her son Thomas in 1611, affords little out of the ordinary from what we know about letter-writing practice in the early seventeenth century. The subject matter is familiar and discussion of a dowry, health and living are by no means exceptional topics to have passed between a mother and son. The value placed on writing one's own letters to loved ones is reflected here, and Joan's apology for 'scriblinge' was in fact a common feminine trope.² The bold, easily read italic script in which it is written is as we would expect of a lady, and while the spellings are not the farthest afield as far as early modern letter-writers go, they are peculiar enough to present-day readers to reinforce the generally held assumption that

² J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 100-2.

women at this time were idiosyncratic spellers.³ But to conclude that because this letter seems so common within the wider context of historical generalization it must have been ordinary between Joan and Thomas would in fact misplace most of its potential significance.

In order to understand the communicative significance of this final letter to Thomas, it is necessary to consider it in relation to the larger corpus of Joan's correspondence. The epistolary record left by Joan spans more than thirty-five years of letter-writing (1575-1611) in a variety of different scripts – many of which are clearly Joan's own, others by scribes, and a few examples that are more difficult to place. As stated in the introduction, it is clear that the record is not complete in the sense that it contains only a fraction of what must have been a much larger epistolary output, however, the forty letters from Joan that have survived, alongside letters to and from other members of the Thynne family and their circle, provide ample evidence to contextualize Joan's letter-writing activity to her son.

Among the letters written from Joan, six are to Thomas.⁴ The majority of Joan's other letters are holograph (most of which are to her husband, John); however, the letter transcribed above is the only surviving holograph letter to Thomas, where the five preceding were all scribal. This chapter will show that this was a deliberate and meaningful choice, with social, textual and linguistic implications.

Like many studies of letters, Wall's edition (1983) provides an excellent social history but fails to take scribal factors into account and gives no indication as to the hands and scripts involved in particular examples. Furthermore, historical corpus linguists at Helsinki have allowed for the distinction between holograph and scribal letters in the electronically searchable *Corpus of Early English Correspondence* (CEEC), but this facility is limited by the fact that inclusion of letter collections into the corpus is taken from pre-existing editions that often lack the palaeographical detail to make the function useful – as is the case with the Thynne letters taken from Wall's edition. This does, of course, pose significant problems for the research interests of sociolinguists and pragmatics alike:

[...] the inclusion of letters where assistance has been used, leads to another problem: inauthentic data. It is often impossible to know whether the sender of a letter dictated his or her letter to the amanuensis or whether

³ V. Salmon, 'Chapter Two: Orthography and Punctuation', in *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Volume III: 1476-1776*, ed. R. Lass (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 13-55 (p. 43).

⁴ VIII.26 (1607), 28 (1608), 30 (1608), 34 (1611), 36 (1611) and 37 (1611).

only general instructions were given. Especially in the latter case the linguistic choices were not made by the sender but by the amanuensis.⁵

Investigating the implications of this problem requires close, case-specific analyses of the type that have yet to be accomplished for the early modern period.

Joan's letters provide an excellent example for the study of the scribal/holograph distinction in a specific context. Therefore, building upon previous observations made by social historians, the first aim of this chapter will be to contextualize Joan's writing within the Thynnes' familial circumstances in order to better understand why she would have employed scribes, considering the fact that it was by this point in English history a discursive act that had socio-cultural meaning and pragmatic consequences – Joan being fully capable, even in the habit of writing letters herself. Next, the way in which graphic, textual and linguistic variation corresponds with Joan's use of scribes will be illustrated by way of examining handwriting, space, orthography, punctuation and lexico-grammatical items found in the letters. In this way, formal aspects of Joan's letters are described as dependent upon the discursive environments in which the letters were created, i.e. under whose hand they were written. The conclusion discusses what theoretical and methodological implications might be drawn from these findings.

The Social Significance of the Holograph/Scribal Distinction in the History of English Letter-Writing

For late medieval England, the archival record of women laying their own hand to a letter is extremely limited.⁶ This, as Malcolm Richardson notes, is the 'inescapable fact' of studying women's letters at this point in English history: they were 'rhetorically framed and most often physically written by men and are almost wholly in the traditions of male discourse'.⁷ But writing letters was not simply limited by gender: it was a specialized profession, occupied by only a small number of men with the experience necessary to be able to properly organize information on the page. In theory, being trained to do scribal work, including the writing of letters and many other legally sensitive documents, meant learning an intricate method of encoding written information in a way that could be

⁵ T. Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Constraints on Politeness: The Pragmatics of Address Formulae in Early English Correspondence', in *Historical Pragmatics*, ed. A. H. Jucker (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 541-601 (p. 553).

⁶ V. M. O'Mara, 'Female Scribal Ability in Late Medieval England: The Evidence?', *Leeds Studies in English* 27 (1996), pp. 87-130; J. K. Tarvers, 'In a Woman's Hand? The Question of Medieval Women's Holograph Letters', *Post-Script* 13 (1996), pp. 89-100.

⁷ M. Richardson, 'Women, Commerce, and Writing in Late Medieval England', *Disputatio* 1 (1996), pp. 123-45 (p. 123).

reproduced orally upon delivery.⁸ Particularly in the early period of Middle English letters, which followed the beginning of the fifteenth century (when Henry V began issuing his own documents in English, thereby opening up the option for the English population at large), it would have taken skill to put vernacular English into writing when previous forms of written communication were conducted exclusively in French or Latin. Furthermore, the physical task of writing was difficult work and unavoidably messy, which would have made it a task to avoid for members of the upper and aspirant middle classes who could afford to get someone else to do it for them. Using a secretary then, apart from being necessary for those unable to write for themselves, was also a status symbol for members of *nouveau riche* society, who wished to emulate noble customs in any way they could.⁹

It is unlikely that many women would have been encouraged, or even motivated, to learn to write letters themselves under these conditions; not only was it unnecessary, it was inappropriate. In conjunction with this was the fact that the intellectual faculty of authoring a letter was not yet dependent upon the actual writing; the art was in dictation (hence *ars dictaminis*, literally ‘art of dictation’, to denote the medieval method of writing letters).¹⁰ Although contemporaries may have been surprised by a woman finding the time and will to write herself, the elements of authenticity and intimacy which we attach to the act today would have been much less pronounced, if at all. Thus, the fact that many correspondents were not in the practice of writing their own letters limited the sociopragmatic scope of writing letters in one’s own hand: people did not do it, so it had little room to acquire general social significance as a meaningful act.¹¹

Given the fact that surviving holograph letters from women are practically non-existent in late medieval English collections, it is highly significant that Daybell has identified over 1,800 holograph letters for the period 1540-1603; the percentage of women writing their own letters rising from 50 percent in the 1540’s to 79 percent by the end of

⁸ M. Camargo, ‘Where’s the Brief?: The *Ars Dictaminis* and Reading/Writing Between the Lines’, *Disputatio* 1 (1996), pp. 1-17 (pp. 3-5).

⁹ Tarvers, ‘In a Woman’s Hand?’, p. 93.

¹⁰ In an unusual exception to this, Ann Crabb (2007) has found a well documented case of a woman of the Italian Renaissance priding herself, and being recognized by others for her ability to dictate well worded letters, whereas her seemingly self-taught ability to actually *write* letters was not seen as especially praiseworthy, but more of an incidental hobby. The way in which Margherita Datini’s ability to pen letters on her own seems more relevant to readers of her letters today than for their original recipients has to do with the different sociopragmatic contexts for scribal activity.

¹¹ *Privacy* was another concern, but letter-writers were often savvy about such matters and either left sensitive information to trusted messengers or promised to impart more to their recipient at their next meeting. Direct *intimacy* is also something that was undeniably an attraction for learning to write oneself. This seems evident in a rare holograph post-script in what is an otherwise scribal letter from Margery Paston to John Paston III in which she writes, ‘Ser, I prey you if ye tary longe at London *that* it wil plese [you] to sende for me, for I thynke longe sen I lay in *your* armes’ (Davis 2004: Part I, letter 417). This intimate gesture may also undermine the messenger as a potential reader upon delivery, which goes to show how the Paston archive complicates neat generalizations about period writing in regard to both form and function.

the period; with the proportion of women for whom no holograph example remains falling from 28 percent in the 1540's to an estimated 17 percent in the period 1600-1609.¹² In conjunction with these rising figures, the ability for a woman to write herself was increasingly recognized as important in the sixteenth century, taking on a multitude of new sociopragmatic dimensions – as described by Daybell:

Possession of the ability to write a letter was viewed more and more as a 'functional' skill, useful to women acting as mothers, wives and mistresses of the household, corresponding on behalf of family interests; and over the same period letter-writing became a more personal activity, increasingly disconnected from scribes and secretaries.¹³

The functional element would have been a particularly desirable attribute for the prospective wives of merchants and members of the gentry operating in the culture of patronage, and it is hard to imagine that any man would have seen writing-literacy in a woman to be anything but a positive attribute in that it would facilitate the necessary management of family estates and business. After all, sixteenth-century aristocratic marriages were in many ways an institution built upon an enterprise of business and with both partners able to write letters, business flowed much more easily and with more control. Blurring traditionally gendered accounts of the public versus private spheres, women were important 'intermediaries' in the management of estates, the petitioning of would-be patrons and within the inner circles of life at the Elizabethan and Jacobean court.¹⁴ Regarding the personal aspects, it is interesting to note how Agnes Paston's 'absence of a good secretary' in the late medieval period becomes the 'cannot let this messenger goe without a letter' trope found throughout early modern correspondence: writing letters had become so much a part of everyday communication that merely having a messenger available was enough to trigger reflexes of 'social duty and personal affiliation'.¹⁵ Letter V.120 from Joan to her husband in 1602 attests to this: 'Good mr Thynne all though I wrot this daye yet most I not Let any fitt messenger pas with out akinde salute'. In this way, the practical, social and rhetorical necessities of being able to have a letter written whenever the need might arise would have played a significant part in women learning to write for themselves. In turn, the use of a scribe, once much more typical of all sorts of English correspondence, began to develop new meaning in familiar letters.

¹² Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, pp. 71 and 95.

¹³ J. Daybell, 'Interpreting Letters and Reading Script: Evidence For Female Education and Literacy in Tudor England', *History of Education* 34:6 (2005), pp.695-715 (p. 715).

¹⁴ C. Bowden, 'Women as Intermediaries: An Example of the Use of Literacy in the Late Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries', *History of Education* 22:3 (1993), pp. 215-23.

¹⁵ G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Delaware, 2005), pp. 60-61.

The Social Functions of Using a Scribe for the Thynne Women

Evidence of Joan's consciousness of the social significance of scribal acts is indicated by several familial references made in letters to John. The earliest example comes in letter V. 14, from 1576, in which she explicitly instructs John to not use an intermediary – presumably a scribe – in dealing with her father early in their marriage, during a period when Rowland was upset with John's behavior:

as he Is very well content to haue your companye and to forget all so woldd
he haue you to fullfell his mynd In puting awaye of rowe your man as I
woldd weshe you so to do and to wryte to him a letter sume what a
aknowlag your fallts allthough theyr be none and fullfelling these my
requestes I shall thenke my sellfe bownd vnto you

Joan recommends John do this in order 'to make you humble your self and know your dewtie towards him as It Is the part of a naturall sune to do to his father'. It would appear that 'rowe your man' was John's scribe and that Joan is asking that he take the time to compose a letter to her father with the sociopragmatic significance writing oneself brought to the text as a gesture of filial duty.¹⁶

The next potential reference comes in letter V.16 (written sometime in 1576/77), where Joan opens, 'Mr thenne I haue resaued youre letter at the lakes hyndes'. The fact that she took note of this and reiterated it to John would have had an intertextual purpose, identifying a recent letter sent to her to which she was responding. However, it is unclear as to whether or not Joan is here referring to the use of a scribe or simply a messenger, or perhaps a scribal hand with which she was unfamiliar. The first possibility, referencing a messenger, would negate the scribal significance. But if John's letter was in fact scribal, and it was his use of a scribe to which Joan is here referring, this comment suggests that scribally composed letters were not the usual way of conducting correspondence between the (then) young married couple. If it was the fact that the 'lakes hyndes', i.e. the scribal handwriting, was simply unfamiliar to Joan, this provides evidence of the significance which might develop even within a single author's repertoire of scribes.

In letter V.18, written around the same time as V.16, in March of 1577, Joan makes it clear that scribal letters from John meant something very different to her than the receipt of one in his own hand, this time using a scribe herself to reply:

¹⁶ The only other reference to a servant by this name comes thirty years later in a letter from Lord Audley (Maria's father) to Thomas Thynne in 1606 (VIII.24), in which "Roe" is mentioned as a letter bearer and servant of the Thynne's. It is possible that this was the same man in John Thynne's service in 1577. It could also be a following generation – i.e. a son or grandson – who were continuing service in the Thynne household.

I do not a lyttle marvell that I heare from yow but not by yor owne *wch*
surely geveth me occasion to thynke that yow are not in good health.
wherfore *Sr* to put away such doubtess I hartely desire yow that yow wold
take so much paynes as to wryte to my yor self *wch* shall not a lyttle
engladden me. wheras now I stand in great doubte

The ‘not by yor owne’ could again be referring to a messenger, or a scribe with whom Joan was unfamiliar; however, it seems much more likely that Joan is referencing the fact that a writer may use a scribe when they are too ill to write for themselves. This is confirmed when she asks him explicitly to ‘take so much paynes’ [i.e. take the time] to write to her himself. Furthermore, it is highly plausible that along with her apparent concern for John’s health, Joan would have had reason to be somewhat suspicious of this gesture in terms of what it meant in their relationship. Although composing and receiving letters – particularly those from women – via the hand of a scribe would have been rote practice for couples in late medieval and even early sixteenth-century England, by the latter half of the century, the gentry would have placed high interpersonal value on letters written under the writer’s own hand. Particularly women who could write themselves, as Joan could, would have associated holograph letters with special significance, where ‘the act of personally writing a letter imbued it with emotional significance absent from correspondence dictated to a third party’.¹⁷ So, while the concern for a family member’s health was of course a very real worry in the early modern period, the use of the trope here could serve just as well as a euphemistic way of conveying Joan’s dislike of John using a scribe to write for him and her own use of a scribe in reply could have carried its own unspoken meaning. In this way, she would have expressed herself without offending the strictures of conduct for the submissive wife. As historian Alison Wall points out: ‘From her earliest letters, Joan shows hints of a stronger, more forceful character than male writers [of conduct books] considered proper in a woman’; therefore, ‘letters to her husband combined a submissive style with a firm assertion of her rights as a wife’.¹⁸ One of these rights seems to have been the intimacy afforded by John’s writing letters to her in his own hand.

Indications of sociopragmatic significance also lie in Joan’s own use of a scribe to write for her in response to her husband. Up to the point where Joan makes mention of John sending her scribal letters, all the surviving letters from her to him are in her own hand. It is only in her reply to John’s scribal letters (in V.18, quoted above) that we first have a clear example of her employing an accomplished scribe to write for her. All eight letters preceding this one were written in a thick and scrawling script of mixed forms,

¹⁷ Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers* (2006), p.112.

¹⁸ A. Wall, ‘Elizabethan Precept and Feminine Practice: The Thynne Family of Longleat’, *History* 75 (1990), pp. 23-38 (pp. 30-1).

which markedly contrasts with the professional secretary script of letter V.18. It could very well be that Joan had employed scribes to write on her behalf in earlier letters to John and this is simply the first *surviving* scribal letter from Joan – merely coincidental. However, it is also possible that Joan’s use of a scribe here is a telling reaction, used in response to John’s own scribal gestures. At this point in her life, Joan was still quite young, not yet twenty years old, and it is highly plausible that she was reacting insecurely and with her own lack of understanding on how the relationship between her and John was to be scripted in letters.

The emotion that receiving a scribal letter could produce in a recipient becomes more explicit in Maria’s correspondence. On one occasion she recognizes a scribal hand, by a well known servant and Marvin retainer named Exall.¹⁹ In letter VIII.2 (written sometime after 1604) she reacts to this, asking Thomas that if he doesn’t have time to write to her himself, she would prefer that the letters were not in his name:

yf yr leasure wyll not Serve good Sweet Cawse exall to wryghte in hys
owne Name butt this & this [sic] ys my mrs pleasure & ytt Shall Serve the
turne for I knowe yr troble in matters of more waighte ther ys greate & I
leek not hys wryghtinge in yr Name for ytt ys as though thow worde angrye

Although Joan was never as blunt with John regarding his use of scribes, similar thoughts may very well have been going through her mind: was John’s use of a scribe indicative of something other than ill-health? Was it an emotionally charged signal? Should she follow suit?

Several years later, in 1579, the topic comes up again in another letter to John, written in a well formed secretary hand, where Joan apologizes, ‘I did endure my Iourny verie well but I was verie werie at night, wherfore I hope you will parden me because I did not wryght my selfe’.²⁰ This further emphasizes the social significance the Thynnes placed on corresponding with each other in their own hands and, crucially, the need to explain instances where this was not the case due to perceptions of the emotional distance a scribe created.

Accounting for the perceptions of emotional distance that came along with using a scribe is important in understanding the pragmatic significance of Joan’s scribal letters to her son later in life. For by the time the letters to Thomas begin, his apparent defection to his wife’s family had precipitated the estrangement between mother and son that lasted almost to the end of Joan’s life. Of interest to the current analysis, this had a clear effect on the conducting of necessary business between the two, and particularly to do with

¹⁹ A. Wall (ed.), *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611* (Devizes, 1983), p. xxviii.

²⁰ V.23 (1579).

Joan's expectation that after his father's death (in 1604) Thomas would provide a dowry for his sister Dorothy. All but one of the six letters sent to Thomas was written expressly for this purpose (the one exception had to do with the family's legal holding of lands). The emotional strain that surrounded these exchanges is reflected in a mediatory letter from Dorothy to her brother in 1606 that begins:

Good Brother, Albeit there wanteth (as it seemeth) that inuiolable loue betweene my Mother and you, which I wishe were not: yet I hope your loue towards me (your euer louinge sister) shalbe still continued as I hartely pray²¹

Such circumstances were undoubtedly compounded by earlier events and a precedent in epistolary contact between Thomas and Joan would have been set in which Joan had letters composed by scribes due to a mixture of circumstantial and emotional influences. With reference to the former, an intemperately subversive response from Maria in 1605 strongly suggests that Joan was using scribes with the intention of legitimizing her claims, to however little effect:

I wyll not *withowt* leaue tell you that yf you gave anye fee to a Cownceller to indighte yr letter, ytt was bestowed to lyttle purpose, for ther Should haue binn Consyderation that mr Thynne lookes in to waste & Spoyle on yr Ioynter, as to a tennante for terme of lyfe, & So yr Scribe Can prooue no nessecarye Consiquence for you to wryghte disgracefullye or Contemptuouslye in bussines wch Concerns you not²²

Here it becomes clear that Maria recognizes the fact that Joan employs a scribe for special purposes and that this is meant to add force to her demands on her son. The verbs are telling: 'indighte' here would have meant 'to put into words, compose; to give a literary or rhetorical form to (words, an address)', however, assuming the word here could also be 'indict', there was another sense current in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'to declare authoritatively, announce, proclaim' – a nuance which the verb continues to carry with it in present-day English. 'Prooue' also takes Joan's scribe, as opposed to herself, as the agent of action.²³ But instead of submissively recognizing Joan's use of a scribe as giving authority to her letter-writing, Maria defiantly objects to her mother-in-law's demands, saying she writes 'disgracefullye or contemptuouslye' and that despite her efforts, Thomas has no intention of abiding by her wishes. Responses such as this could not have done much to ameliorate relations between Joan and Thomas, and despite Maria's chiding, Joan continued to use scribes in all surviving correspondences that follow (with the exception of the last).

²¹ VIII.25 (1606).

²² VIII.10 (1605?).

²³ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'indite v.', 4; 'indict, v²', 1.

Estrangement between family members was not at all uncommon in the period and this purposeful use of a third party, particularly in matters of legal sensitivity, is reflected in the larger corpus of women's letters from the period.²⁴ And while it might seem particularly sad that a mother and son's relationship could be strained to such formality, research into other aristocratic families shows that it was not exceptional. Barbara Harris has described how upon the death of their husband, widows oftentimes had to remain delicate when dealing with eldest sons who frequently were reluctant to accept the responsibility of providing for them and their siblings.²⁵ This very clearly would have made communication awkward and personally trying, and in this way, emotional and legal motivations for using a scribe could have worked together, wherein the 'language of economic advantage and favor [. . .] may well have masked a great deal of emotion'.²⁶

The difficulty a writer might have in keeping a letter professional-sounding in the face of familial upset is made explicit in a letter written by Lady Elizabeth Willoughby to her husband, in 1586, with whom she had been feuding for some time. It would seem that Lady Willoughby had trouble censoring her emotions when writing, which had implications for the respect and sympathy she was given by those with some legal power to help her. In order to make her letters more appropriate, she had them edited, and a postscript written by one such editor warns, 'Madame as I have altred this letter yow may wth good warrant send it to Sr F[rancis Willoughby], but in any wise, remember the condicions how they stand wth yow that yow be not overtaken wth them'.²⁷ Similarly, the emotional buffering a scribe could afford by displacing Joan's involvement in the letter-writing process was probably welcome to her alongside the fact that the subject matter – to do with court proceedings, dowries, prospective marriages and land titles – warranted a scribal interface according to early modern convention. Given these circumstances, why would Joan have written a letter herself in 1611?

The last letter (transcribed above), which is also the latest remaining letter from Joan in the Thynne Papers, was probably written from London, where Joan was to die the following spring. She was already quite ill at this point and it seems that the physical aspect of writing a letter by herself was difficult; but it is highly unlikely that she would have written to her son in the absence of available help. Given her presence in London, it

²⁴ J. Daybell, 'Female Literacy and the Social Conventions of Women's Letter-Writing in England, 1540-1603', in *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700*, ed. J. Daybell (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 59-76.

²⁵ B. Harris, 'Property, Power, and Personal Relations: Elite Mothers and Sons in Yorkist and Early Tudor England', *Signs* 15 (1990), pp. 606-32.

²⁶ B. Harris, 'Marriage Sixteenth-Century Style: Elizabeth Stafford and the Third Duke of Norfolk', *Journal of Social History* 15:3 (1982), pp. 371-82 (pp. 371-2).

²⁷ A. T. Friedman, 'Portrait of a Marriage: The Willoughby Letters of 1585-1586', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11:3 (1986), pp. 542-55 (p. 555).

seems only logical that she would have had access to more aid than she had at her previous residency of Caus Castle – and surely access to human resources was one of the reasons she had moved to London in the first place. The fact that she did have scribal assistance available is evidenced by the fact that the letter's address was written by a scribe, in a script (secretary) and with spellings (e.g. <thin> vs. Joan's consistent use of <Thynne>) unlike any of Joan's own. The timing here seems significant considering that most people would have used illness as an excuse to have a letter penned by a scribe. As we have already seen, Joan herself used weariness as justification for sending a scribal letter to her husband in March of 1579 (V.23), so surely being deathly ill would have warranted enlisting some help in the penning of a letter. From such evidence, it is clear that Joan was making an extra effort to write the letter herself: a gesture that would have communicated a significantly different disposition from preceding scribal ones.

Motivations for Joan's extra effort in penning letter VIII.37 would have come from several coinciding forces. For one, mother and son relations were significantly altered by Maria's death in childbirth that same year. Joan's mentioning Thomas' son (who survived) even in the more formally worded scribal letters written after Maria's death (in August and September of 1611, VIII.34 and VIII.36 [respectively]) show that he was with her at Caus Castle and was perhaps warming her sentiments and creating incentives for reuniting as a family. Likewise, Joan's own illness, so near to Maria's death, may have hastened reconciliation between mother and son, as both became increasingly conscious of her mortality. Thomas did after all loan his house in London for his mother to stay in: a 'kindely' gesture that seems to have come as a surprise to Joan, who 'wold not atrobeled my sister kneueit as I did' had she at all expected that Thomas would have made her such an offer. It is unlikely that this offer would have been conceivable if Maria were still alive and it was probably one of the few times Joan had visited one of Thomas' estates since the death of his father. Furthermore, it appears that Thomas had written a letter to his mother that affected her in such a way as to elicit a response in her own hand; for, after thanking him for the accommodation, she expresses her 'beinge very well satesfied by your leter'. This might suggest that Thomas too had been using scribes in epistolary communication and had only recently written one under his own hand. It is also possible that he was more comfortable in composing formalized letters himself and had simply written in a more intimate and affectionate way in the letter which Joan refers to. Either way, it is evident that he somehow inscribed the letter with a pragmatic device to Joan's liking.

Given the cultural and familial context of using scribes, what then might be seen in the actual formal characteristics of the letters themselves? The following sections explore

the ways in which the social dimension of the holograph/scribal distinction corresponded with graphic and textual features.

Distinctions in Handwriting

As more and more correspondents were expected to write in their own hand in the early modern period, handwriting became a powerful way of communicating an interest in a letter's recipient on the part of the sender. Letters continued to serve the practical functions of relating news and conducting business they had in the medieval period but also took on a more nuanced way of giving-and-receiving, through personal contact with the actual mechanics of someone else's hand and what they did with letter-forms. In this way, it may be said that handwriting became a visible voice, inscribed in the particular scripts and flourishes that characterized a writer to others. This was a sentiment promulgated by humanist writers such as Erasmus and was carried into lay correspondence more generally: 'In a culture where writing is acknowledged as a symbol of an absent voice, handwriting is made to command a higher degree of presence'.²⁸ So strong in fact was the sociopragmatic significance attached to writing letters oneself that even in sixteenth-century print culture authors imitated manuscript letters in their dedicatory epistles in ways that explicitly highlighted holograph as opposed to scribal characteristics. Sometimes these authors even went so far as to include reference to 'scribbled rules' and used specialized fonts to mock handwritten, holograph-seeming signatures in order to recreate the effect of a personally handwritten/signed document, wherein the 'self-reproach highlights the principle of forgivable inadequacy used to establish the bond between recipient and donor'.²⁹ The potential intimacy that exposing one's hand could express in actual letters – particularly on the part of a woman – is very clearly demonstrated in a letter from Katherine Howard to her brother-in-law, the 2nd Earl of Hertford, in which she writes 'as eyll a Writter as I am I Would not show my baed hande to any but to you Which I knowe Will taket in good part Wher et mouch Wors'.³⁰ Katherine's expectation that the earl will take her holograph gesture 'in good part' references its sociopragmatic significance.

Also, in a system of epistolary networks, where large numbers of letters passed through different people's possession, hands became closely associated with their writers and probably served as a way of immediately identifying letters at a glance. Writing of highly charged familial gossip to Thomas Thynne in 1602, Samuel Bowdler expresses

²⁸ C. Shrank, "'These few scribbled rules': Representing Scribal Intimacy in Early Modern Print", *Huntington Library Quarterly* 67:2 (2004), pp. 295-314 (p. 298).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 303-4.

³⁰ Longleat Library MS Seymour Papers V.182 (undated).

anxiety at being discovered by members of their circle who are not meant to read what he has written: ‘My raggett hand is knowne so farre and neare, that you may doe mee the favour in burninge my letters when they be once read, lest they come to the veuwe of some that should not see them’.³¹ That the content of Samuel’s letter reproduces things he heard Joan say about Thomas (and her initial refusal of his letters) puts his relationship with Thomas as a friend at odds with his duty to Thomas’ father and mother as his superiors, with his identifiable style of handwriting flagging the letter as potentially interesting to either party.

By the time of the first surviving letter to Thomas in 1607, Joan had been writing with the same blocky italic script in her holograph letters for several decades. Although her earliest script of the 1570’s was a scrawling mixture of secretary and italic features, she had by the 1590’s – after some obvious experimentation – begun to write exclusively in the italic (Script 4 in the transcriptions) we find in her final letter to Thomas. This last development seems to have been one of economy: it was an italic that was highly legible, feminine, but also lacking in superfluous flourishes that would have taken away from Joan’s valuable time as the center of a large household, from which her husband, although a serving Justice of the Peace, was frequently absent. And while she did sign them herself, all the scribal letters to Thomas are in extremely neat and accomplished secretary scripts, clearly written by professionals. These five letters, one written in 1607, two in 1608 and two in 1611 appear to be in four different hands, with the two in 1611 apparently penned by the same person.³² For an example of the scribal hand that wrote the last two of these see Image 2 in Appendix 2, which is a facsimile of letter VIII.34. These were not quick, angular workaday secretary scripts but straight, bold, well rounded and with clear and deliberate pen lifts: Dawson and Kennedy-Skipton have described a very similar example from Richard Broughton in 1597 as ‘firm, confident, and controlled, represents the secretary almost at its best’.³³ This distinction reflects the handwriting practices of the time in that in the last quarter of the sixteenth century italic was fashioned as particularly feminine,³⁴ so Joan learnt and used it in her holograph correspondence; and although many men were still using secretary scripts at the beginning of the seventeenth century, they were seldom so carefully written in familiar letters as they are here by Joan’s scribes.³⁵ In

³¹ VIII.139/40 (1602).

³² VIII.26 (1607); VIII.28 and 30 (1608); VIII.34 and 36 (1611).

³³ G. E. Dawson and L. Kennedy-Skipton, *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650: A Guide to the Reading of Documents and Manuscripts* (London, 1966), pp. 74-5.

³⁴ J. Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford, 1990), pp. 138-9.

³⁵ A complete survey of the development of Joan’s handwriting and how it coincided with historical developments in handwriting practice is beyond the limits of the current chapter; however, Joan’s record does seem to offer unique examples of how a woman might have altered her scripts to fit the fashions of the last quarter of the sixteenth century.

this way, hands and scripts coincide with one another in a coherent way that makes holograph and scribal letters immediately distinguishable, with implications that extend beyond the interest of palaeographers.

Joan's apology for her handwriting is also significant in that although it was a repeated trope for many writers – and both men and women of the period excuse their writing (whether it was poor or not) – Joan makes no mention of her hand in any of the other holograph letters, even when she was young and still experimenting with different scripts. There is nothing exceptionally illegible about her handwriting here; there are several lines crossed out, but the italic itself is no worse than anything else she had written in past years. Therefore, much like Katherine Howard to the earl of Hertford citing her 'baed hande', it would seem that Joan is referencing this trope as an understood way of expressing a conventionalized feminine humility and social bondage – a purposeful gesture imbued with intimacy and respect for Thomas as her son and the family's patriarch in contrast to the more detached, neutral tone of the scribal letters.

Spatial Organization of the Page

In a similar way to handwriting, the overall appearance of the page and the organization of the text would have made a significant initial impression on the recipient even before reading began. The neatness of a handwritten text would have depended on many of the same factors we would consider valuable today: that it was written with respect to the edge of the page, that the text was written vertically, and without too much of a slant, and that it was legible. Slightly more nuanced was the way in which sections of text were spaced in respect to one another as indicators of social relations between the correspondents. That the spatial organization of the early modern English letter was understood as a method of signifying a correspondent's understanding of the relationship between a writer and addressee is described in period letter-writing manuals and evidenced by actual practice.³⁶ There were essentially two strategies to using space: 1) when writing to a social superior and attempting to appear humble, negative space was employed on the page to separate the body of the letter from the opening, closing and especially the signature, and 2) when writing to someone of a lesser estate, or someone the writer was close to (e.g. a spouse), less negative space was employed between the sections of the letter, and the closing and signature were often found directly following the body text.

The use of space works in conjunction with palaeography, and it is important to look at the two together in order to fully interpret a letter's significance:

³⁶ J. Gibson, 'Significant Space in Manuscript Letters', *The Seventeenth Century* 12:1 (1997), pp. 1-9; Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, pp. 47-50.

For the precise significance of the blanks in any one letter to communicate itself to the reader, it is crucial that the practice in that letter be related to the use of significant space in all known letters in the hand in question. To make sense of significant space, the editor needs to classify scribal hands. [. . .] Patterns will emerge: some hands will be found to be reserved for particular purposes.³⁷

This is precisely what we find in Joan's letters. Scribal letters are often composed for 'particular purposes', and in her letters to Thomas, the strategic use of scribes – along with the scripts and spacing they used – can be matched with the sociopragmatic intent of the letters described in the first section of this chapter.

The spatial differences between Joan's holograph and scribal letters sent to Thomas are immediately clear. The scribal letters are very neatly organized and all laid out in a similar fashion. The main bodies of the letters are distinguishable from the place and date and also the closing, with the signature. Joan very rarely included the year when writing herself, but all the scribal letters refer to it, right down to the day. With the exception of VIII.28 (which is a list of items and fills almost two pages), all the scribal letters occupy only a portion of the page, whereas Joan's holograph to Thomas occupies the entire page, actually continuing into the left-hand margin – something she did frequently in her holograph letters to John as well. Joan did not regularly employ negative space when writing her own letters, which, in conjunction with concerns of maximizing the use of expensive sheets of paper, may be due to the fact that the more negative space one used in a letter, the more negatively polite, and less familiar they became.

The only other place in Joan's letters where it would appear that she may be using negative space to reflect social relations is in some of her very early letters to John. During their courtship, and soon after they were married, Joan places her closing and signature further down the page from the body of the letter. Her practice is far from the dramatic cramming of a signature into the furthest corner of the page to convey one's humility; however, the practice is distinct from her later habit, in which the signature follows directly after the body of the letter. Quite clearly then, spatial organization does coincide with the observations made regarding handwriting in Joan's letters, creating a formalized first impression in the scribal letters to Thomas while the final letter communicates familiarity through less concern to do with negative space.

Orthographies and Punctuation

Although it might seem like a rather inconspicuous or ineffectual part of a letter – particularly in a time of pre-standardized practice – the punctuation, orthography and

³⁷ Gibson, 'Significant Space', p. 5.

abbreviations of a letter would have conveyed personal bits of information about a person's learning, their relationship with the written language, and possibly even their epistolary 'voice'. In addition, as described in Chapter 3, punctuation would have helped lead a reader through the letter and provided pragmatic clues to deciphering meaning. Considering that these were aspects of the written language which were the sole propriety of the one actually writing the letter (whether the correspondent themselves or a scribe), they are highly relevant to the current investigation.

The notion of a retrievable female 'voice' in history is one which has found its way from feminist literary theory, right into the present-day editorial practice of period letter collections.³⁸ In terms specific to those of spelling and punctuation, Sara Jayne Steen describes her editorial approach to the letters of Lady Arbella Stuart:

In general, original punctuation and spelling are important signifiers that should be maintained. In most cases [for the seventeenth century], women's letters are extant in manuscripts either in the woman's own hand or in the hand of the scribe to whom she dictated her words. Nothing offers a better sense of the sound than the original punctuation and spelling [. . .]³⁹

The incorporation of these aspects of the early modern written text into transcription policy certainly adds to Steen's edition; however, perhaps because scribes do not figure heavily in Stuart's correspondence, Steen does not make much of the distinction between holograph and scribal letters. If a letter was dictated to a scribe (although this was certainly not the only method of scribal composition), it is unlikely that the dictation itself would offer much to indicate punctuation. It is also difficult to speculate on how a writer conceived of punctuation: syntactic understandings of punctuation were beginning to emerge in the grammarians and some printed literature, however, the more traditional rhetorical notion that pointing had to do with pauses in speech was also a very plausible working model, especially if we consider that, in the late medieval tradition at least, scribal training entailed that scribes would encode letters with cues which could then be repeated, oftentimes orally, upon reception.⁴⁰ It is, however, difficult to imagine that the process of dictation followed the patterns of natural speech, as the person dictating surely would have slowed things down, repeated and paused to give themselves time to think and the scribe time to write. Furthermore, as practices of the reception and reading of letters changed in the early modern period, scribes writing familiar correspondence may have expected their

³⁸ See especially, E. Harvey, *Ventriloquized Voices: Feminist Theory and English Renaissance Texts* (London, 1992); D. Clarke and E. Clarke (eds.), "'This Double Voice': Gendered Writing in Early Modern England' (Basingstoke, 2000).

³⁹ S. Steen, 'Behind the Arras: English Renaissance Women's Letters', in *News Ways of Looking at Old Texts: Papers of the Renaissance English Text Society, 1985-1991*, ed. W. S. Hill (Binghamton, New York, 1993), pp. 229-38 (p. 232).

⁴⁰ Camargo, 'Where's the Brief?', p. 5.

compositions to be read silently, which very well may have added motivation to punctuate texts more grammatically, as to aid in reading of the text. Discrepancies between holograph and scribal punctuation are reflected in the letters of Joan.

As has been discussed earlier in Chapter 3, Joan's own punctuation varies greatly from no punctuation in some letters to rather heavily punctuated examples. In most of Joan's letters, inconsistency is the norm, as is the case with her final letter to Thomas. Towards the beginning of the letter, use of the full stop may be emphasizing Joan's feeling of doubt:

Good sonn your Leter was expeicited longe be fore I hard from you. which
made me doutfull. what corse your sister showld take for her mony

The punctuation here is not that far from what we would use today: a comma (here a period) is often used before 'which' introducing a subordinate clause. Some might even agree with a comma following 'doutfull'. The important thing seems to be that the effect of Thomas' delay in writing is emphasized. Unsurprisingly, this sort of punctuation for elocutionary effect is not maintained throughout the rest of the letter and it is therefore difficult to be definitive.

In contrast, Joan's scribes are fairly consistent with their punctuation and again, as has been discussed in Chapter 3, in general they employ a larger range of marks than her and come much closer to producing a more official and formalized pointing of the text, like that of the system in Elizabethan legal documents.⁴¹ Joan commonly carries words over the line in her own letters, marked by a double-hyphen; however, her scribes never split words between lines. In places where some space is left by the lack of letters the scribes use the more formal tilde (sometimes using several) to fill the space to the end of the line – which again ties into the differing allocations of textual space in the holograph vs. scribal letters.

Orthography was also highly susceptible to the personal habits of the person doing the actual writing. Many editions of early modern letters briefly describe issues to do with spelling in their editorial practice sections, citing the irregularities of women's 'idiosyncratic' or 'phonetic' spelling,⁴² something which, from the perspective of the historical linguist, is useful in discussing early modern speech and sound change.⁴³ The

⁴¹ These systems of punctuation are described in J. Calle-Martin and A. Miranda-Garcia, 'The Punctuation of Elizabethan Legal Documents: The Case of G.U.L. MS Hunter 3 (S.1.3)', *The Review of English Studies* 59:240 (2007), pp. 356-78.

⁴² For example, in Wall, *Two Elizabethan Women: Correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne 1575-1611*, p. xxxiv.

⁴³ H. C. Wyld, *A History of Modern Colloquial English* (Oxford, 1936), e.g. pp. 113-115; more recently, Wyld's interest in women's letters strictly in terms of phonology has been extended into other areas of language variation in T. Nevalainen, 'Women's Writings as Evidence for Linguistic Continuity and Change

link between women and phonetically spelled words is often attributed to their lack of education, a perception that has been readdressed by Sönmez:

It should be noted that most women's writings were private and therefore not yet or, at least, less susceptible to standardisation forces. There is growing evidence that spellings could quite sensitively reflect the degree of publicness of their texts, with the more private texts showing less standardised spellings. [. . .] It is possible, then, that what has been labelled a difference between men and women's spelling habits is more a difference between text types.⁴⁴

Therefore, it might be useful to look at the social level at which a letter is operating, that is, from whom and to whom and in what sort of social circumstances, in order to better explain the features of an individual's spellings. It is also necessary to look at differing letters – including both holograph and scribal examples where possible – from a single writer to get an accurate picture of what the variation might be like, how it functions and with whom it may be associated.

By the end of the sixteenth century, spelling reform and the 'public censure of the bad speller' were well underway in England; and according to Coote's *English Schoole-Maister* of 1596, 'many gentlewomen' were embarrassed to write to their 'best friends' due to their poor spelling.⁴⁵ Under such circumstances, it is hard to imagine that an individual's personal orthography could have been missed by familiar correspondents. This would have added some weight to the voice inscribed into a holograph letter in that it somehow reflected a writer's own preferences, perhaps even suggesting a regional dialect or specific pronunciations of words reminiscent of the writer's spoken English.

Among the last letters, those to her son, there are several identifiable aspects of spelling that might have made a slight impression on Thomas (as well as the modern historical linguist interested in pronunciation). We come across scribal spellings such as <auchthority>, <marvaile>, <aunswere> (x2), and <ymportaunce> in VIII.36. These spellings would seem to suggest an alternate pronunciation, particularly diphthongs in <au> and <ai>. The first of these vowel combinations is witnessed practically nowhere in all of Joan's holograph letters, except in spellings of Caus Castle, often spelled <cause castell> or words such as *cause* and *because*, which usually appear as they are spelled today. The only one of the four words that appears in Joan's holograph letters with any regularity is *answer*, which appears four times, in four letters, in a period of three years (1600-03): and

in Early Modern English', in *Alternative Histories of English*, ed. R. Watts and P. Trudgill (London, 2002), pp. 191-209.

⁴⁴ Margaret J-M. Sönmez, 'Perceived and Real Differences Between Men's and Women's Spellings of the Early to Mid-Seventeenth Century', in *The History of English in a Social Context: A Contribution to Historical Sociolinguistics*, ed. D. Kastovsky and A. Mettinger (Berlin, 2000), pp. 405-39 (pp. 407-8).

⁴⁵ D. G. Scragg, *A History of English Spelling* (Manchester, 1974), p. 88.

in all four cases it is spelt as <anser>. Another characteristic orthographic feature of the scribal letters not consistent with Joan's holograph spelling is the use of the <ai> in words such as <praie>, <daie> and <maie>. Joan spelled these words mostly as they are today, or with an additional final <e> as in <praye>, <daye> or <may>. Some of Joan's holograph spellings to take notice of from the last letter to Thomas include <hard> for 'heard', <showld>/<shold> for 'should', <thosen pondes> for 'thousand pounds', <expeicited> for 'expected' and <apount> for 'appoint'. For the most part, however, by the time of this letter in 1611, Joan's spellings were not that far from current English, and actually were closer than some scribal spellings.

Finally, abbreviation in scribal letters was also quite different from Joan's own. Joan used abbreviations only very rarely, while her scribes used them regularly. There are no abbreviations used in her holograph letter to Thomas, whereas the scribal letters contain abbreviations which employ superscript letters and macrons, as in *yo^w*, *wth*, *w^{ch}*, *therewth*, *ho^{ble}*, *reċd*, *p[ar]ticular* (where the <p> is elaborated to indicate the missing letters), *wo^{rl}*, *Esq^r*, *aduñize*, and *l̄res* ('letters').⁴⁶ Letter VIII.28 adds to this by incorporating Latin terminology for dates and documents in the past such as 'Termio Pasche Anno. 5o. H. 8. r. 458.' ('Spring term in the fifth year of Henry VIII's reign', referring to a document in the rolls by number 458). These abbreviations do of course indicate a much higher level of professional instruction than Joan would have had,⁴⁷ and even though she would have been exposed to some of them in her correspondence with others (including her husband), she never did incorporate them into her own use. The differences here are significant in that they provide readable clues signaling scribal education and textual formality.

Scribal Practice and Possible Linguistic Implications

In general, the graphological and orthographic features of a manuscript, like those we have considered up to this point, are, except in cases of forgery,⁴⁸ wholly dependent upon the individual actually penning the letter.⁴⁹ Other linguistic aspects of variation between holograph and scribal letters are, however, slightly more difficult to locate and have yet to be studied in any detail, particularly in early modern correspondence.

⁴⁶ I have kept the superscript and macrons here to illustrate my point, which differs from my transcription policy of the letters in Appendix 1.

⁴⁷ Daybell *Women Letter-Writers*, p.95.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 71 and 113.

⁴⁹ N. Davis, 'The Language of the Pastons', in *Middle English Literature: British Academy Gollancz Lectures*, ed. J.A. Burrow (Oxford, 1989), pp. 45-70.

Early modern characterizations of the duties of a scribe when it came to being faithful to their master's own language vary. Angel Day, for instance, indicates that a scribe, or 'Secretorie' is to:

giue heed to obserue the Order, Method and Forme to him from his Lord or master deliuered: forasmuch as in discharge hereof he is vtterly to relinquish any affectation of his owne doings, or leaning herein to any priuat iudgment or fantasie. His pen in this action is not his own, but anothers, and for this cause the matters to him committed, are to depend vpon the humor of his commander, and vpon none others.⁵⁰

In general, of course, servants were meant to obey their masters; however, the potential of a professional secretary, or even an unprofessional scribe having some influence on the language of a letter, beyond the graphic and orthographic, seems highly likely when we consider the multiple methods of composing early modern correspondence. Scribes might work from notes, oral instruction, draft copies originally in the author's hand, or completely on their own without even the presence, instruction or signature of the 'author'.⁵¹ Even assuming an author would want as little scribal intervention as possible (which was certainly not necessarily, or even commonly the case) the choice to dictate in person would not preclude the possible contributions of a scribe. Erasmus wrote in his *De recta pronuntiatione* that 'even if you dictate to a scribe, intimacy will still be missing' and that 'an intermediary may fabricate, omit, distort'.⁵² That Erasmus views the scribe's additions as detrimental may be attributed to the fact that his work was primarily a promotion of humanistic ideals of epistolary correspondence amongst intellectuals. However, scribal intermediation was not always viewed so negatively, and in fact it was often encouraged. Much as one might use a secretary to write business correspondence or a lawyer to write-up legal documents today, particular types of circumstances would have called for a scribe to intervene with their specialized knowledge – a factor I have already suggested to be at work in Joan's writing to Thomas. The sixteenth-century Spanish treatise by Antonio de Torquemada, *Manual de Escribientes* (on performing the secretarial duty of writing letters) makes it quite clear that on occasion a scribe would have been expected to alter their master's language, particularly in correspondence that called for conventions that only the scribe could incorporate into the letter by way of his familiarity with what was proper in the particular circumstances and to a particular recipient. Sánchez-Eppler has expressed the complexity of the situation:

⁵⁰ A. Day, *The English Secretorie* (London, 1595), Part II, p. 132, from *Early English Books Online*, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

⁵¹ See Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, pp. 61-90, for a more detailed discussion of compositional methods in Tudor England; and for the medieval period, Camargo, 'Where's the Brief?', pp. 1-17. And from the same volume, Richardson, 'Women, Commerce, and Writing', pp. 123-45.

⁵² Quoted from Shrank, "'These few scribbled rules'", p. 298.

The intelligence of Torquemada's ideal secretary would, in fact, have to accomplish the exceedingly demanding task of mediating between his master's will and the world's variable reluctance to fall in line with it. His basic function could appear to be circumscribed to the rhetorical practice of choosing the best words to achieve the effect. [Thus,] the secretary finds himself acting as clutch, lubricant, axle and main gear in a multifarious machinery of interpersonal relationships.⁵³

As a consequence of this, the scribal profession was one of some ambiguity in terms of power and duty: the scribe was expected to be subservient to their master's wishes, while at the same time their profession afforded them with some irreducible power vested in their ability to successfully manipulate language to achieve the desired-for communicative goal.

As far as examples from actual practice in England, the Lisle letters written in the first half of the sixteenth century, and their study by Muriel St. Clare Byrne, provide interesting evidence for the scribal element in letter production. In a letter to Lord Lisle from his servant and scribe, John Husee, the lord receives detailed instructions regarding the penning of a specific letter he is to write to the Privy Seal:

It shall therefore be requisite that your lordship write speedily unto my Lord Privy Seal, giving his lordship most hearty thanks for his goodness: likewise, declaring by the same that your lordship is not a little bounden unto the King's Majesty for the said gift, and how that your lordship did never think to get nor obtain the same but only by his lordship's mediation and instance: and further how that your lordship is never minded to put it away nor sell it. And the sooner this letter come the better [. . .]⁵⁴

This example shows that the direction which instruction followed could explicitly come from a scribe telling their master how to compose a letter for themselves. Lisle was clearly dependent upon Husee's advice for being directed in how to script his letters in an appropriate fashion. Nonetheless, Husee's letter pays reverence to Lisle's social station by continual reference to 'your lordship' and makes it clear that he is in his service by signing 'your lordship's own man bounden'. Of course, this is not to say that Lisle was not competent on his own. Assuming that not all the surviving holograph letters by Lisle (of which there are many) were written with explicit instruction, that he was quite capable is suggested by a comparison of his holograph letters with scribal productions, for which St. Clare Byrne finds 'a style and its consistency in both'.⁵⁵ Likewise, while Lady Honor Lisle did not write any of her own letters, a similar consistency in the style can be seen in her scribal letters, regardless of which scribe wrote them.⁵⁶ But as valuable as these

⁵³ B. Sánchez-Eppler, 'The Pen that Wields the Voice that Wills: Secretaries and Letter Writing in Antonio de Torquemada's *Manual de escribientes*', *Neophilologus* 70:4 (1986), pp. 528-38 (p. 530).

⁵⁴ M. St. Clare-Byrne, *The Lisle Letters: Volume 4* (Chicago and London, 1981), letter 1001, p. 378.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229; also, M. St. Clare-Byrne, *The Lisle Letters: Volume 1* (Chicago and London, 1981), p. 32.

observations are in suggesting the potential ramifications of using a scribe, little qualification, linguistic or otherwise, is given beyond vague impressions of ‘style’.

With more precision, historical sociolinguistic considerations of scribal influence in the Paston letters corroborate with what St. Clare Byrne has found for the early sixteenth century. In particular, considerations of morphosyntactic variables seem to suggest that Paston scribes had little influence on language at this level. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg have described how the distribution of the relative pronoun *which* in the Paston women’s letters provides evidence that they were taken down verbatim – as it is known that male scribes, who were often Paston men themselves, used the incoming *which* much more frequently in their own letters, whereas the women’s letters (sometimes written by the very same man) contain more instances of the conservative *the which*.⁵⁷

Morphosyntactic variation is also considered in Alexander Bergs’ social network analysis of the Paston letters. Here, he has convincingly shown that personal pronoun variation between *h-* and *th-* forms (i.e. *hem* and *here* vs. *them* and *their*) does not coincide with the use of a scribe, concluding that ‘scribes may have had some influence on morphosyntactic items, but in general took down faithfully what was dictated to them’.⁵⁸ Most recently, Johanna Wood has shown how aspects of formulaic and expressive language in the letters of Margaret Paston support the conclusion that she was ‘responsible for the wording of her letters’.⁵⁹ Whether or not these findings are dependent upon the compositional practices of strict dictation, and whether other modes of composition, in different sociopragmatic contexts would yield different results is an interesting question. In particular, apart from the consistent ‘style’ found in Lord Lisle’s holograph and scribal letters, previous studies have considered women’s letters only where there are no holograph examples and only various scribal productions to compare. Additionally, these studies do not consider the social or familial contexts within which the letters were produced – particularly instances of legal sensitivity where the use of a scribe may be for particular effect.

In this way, Joan’s letters form a very useful group to explore the possible linguistic implications of using a scribe. For one, there are a number of both holograph and scribal letters that have survived from her. And, crucially, there are both holograph and scribal letters to her husband and her son, which makes it easier to discount the recipient variable that could affect writing styles. There is little evidence for the morphosyntactic variation

⁵⁷ T. Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg, *Historical Sociolinguistics* (London, 2003), pp. 197-8.

⁵⁸ A. Bergs, *Social Networks and Historical Sociolinguistics: Studies in Morphosyntactic Variation in the Paston Letters (1421-1503)* (Berlin and New York, 2005), p. 80.

⁵⁹ J. L. Wood, ‘Structures and Expectations: A Systematic Analysis of Margaret Paston’s Formulaic and Expressive Language’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 10:2 (2009), pp. 187-214.

frequently sought after by sociolinguists between Joan's holograph and scribal letters, but consideration of lexico-grammatical items has produced significant results.

Lexico-Grammatical Variation

The use of compound adverbs and other anaphoric reference terms (e.g. *thereto*, *the said*, etc.) were a much more frequent occurrence in legal statutes than in other types of texts throughout late middle and early modern English, before their near extinction – save the grammaticalized *therefore* – in the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ Using the CEEC database, Matti Kilpio has shown that by the early modern period, what he calls 'participle adjectives' such as *aforsaid* occur 14.6 times per 2000 words in 'official letters' but only .9 times per 2000 words in 'private letters'.⁶¹ Considering the legal nature of Joan's concerns it is perhaps not surprising that we find a number of these legally derived terms used by her scribes when writing about her daughter, Dorothy, and the predicament of her marriage prospects. There are a considerable number of compound adverbs of the *there*-variety alongside some other anaphoric words in all of the scribal letters. The highest proportions are found in VIII.26, with instances of anaphoric terms such as 'herby', 'thereof', 'thereto', 'therein', 'forthwth' and 'whereof', and in VIII.34, which contains 'therewth', 'aforsaid' and three occurrences of 'thereof'. In statutes, the terms were used as reference markers and helped insure that the subject would not be misinterpreted; however, they also seem to have been part of a rote method of composition that professionally trained scribes would have carried over into familiar correspondence.⁶² They therefore add a stylistic formality not found in Joan's holograph correspondence. For example, in VIII.26, of 1607:

[. . .] a match moconed to be had betweene mr Whitney's sonne and yor Sister Dorothe not brought to anie head till now; soe that I could not write to yow what I woulde, but now I haue thought good **hereby** to aduertize yow **thereof**, and that I haue a good likeing **thereto** [. . .]

The information following the full stop refers to the subject matter given before by using three compound adverbs: 'hereby' refers generally to the present moment, at which time things have come to a 'head'; and 'thereof' and 'thereto' – used in succession – both refer to the proposed match between Thomas' sister and Whitney's son, 'a gentleman of a verie

⁶⁰ M. Rissanen, 'Standardisation and the Language of Early Statutes', in *The Development of Standard English 1300-1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts*, ed. L. Wright (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 117-30 (p. 127).

⁶¹ M. Kilpio, 'Participial Adjectives with Anaphoric Reference of the Type *The Said*, *The (A)forementioned* from Old to Early Modern English: The Evidence of the Helsinki Corpus', in *To Explain the Present, Studies in the Changing English Language in Honour of Matti Rissanen*, ed. T. Nevalainen and L. Kahlas-Tarkka (Helsinki, 1997), pp. 77-100 (p.94).

⁶² M. Richardson, 'The Dictamen and Its Influence on Fifteenth-Century English Prose', *Rhetorica* 2 (1984), pp. 207-26 (pp. 218-9).

anncient & worll house'. In letter VIII.34, several years later, upon Dorothy 'accomplishing her full age of .xxj. yeres' (the age at which Thomas was to give her her dowry money, whether she was getting married or not), we come across another collocation of anaphoric words:

yow not yet come hether to me according to yor promise when I might haue signified soe much in person to yow I thought good haueing this fitt oppurtunity to acquainte yow **therewth**; because I wold not any vnkindnesse shold be taken for not giveng yow notice **thereof**; desyring that at the time **aforesaid** the mony may be ready for her to be put forth for her best proffit as I haue already taken a corse to doe

'Therewth', 'thereof' and 'aforesaid' all refer to the same information: 'the day of paiement of yor sister dorothes mony'. Letter VIII.28 to Thomas, being a summary of the legal holding of Caus Castle and its grounds, naturally contains a number of these terms as well. This, the longest of Joan's letters to Thomas, was written by a scribe with a highly professional tone and formatting:

Good Sonne *lettres* are come to myselfe [. . .] **whereof** th'effect is That wee must appeare before their honors the xxth daie of **this present** to shewe our estates & titles howe we hold **the same** lands: And the better to haue **the same** made knowne to their lops

Scribal letter VIII.34 also uses *the same* in this way, on three occasions.

Although less frequent, the use of such anaphoric language is also present in several of the earlier scribal letters to John. In letter V.88, of 1598, Joan writes to John about the dealings to do with a jury between an under sheriff and high sheriff, reported to her from the under sheriff (where it is difficult to tell which she is referring to due to the confusing use of pronouns):

[one] wished [the other] advisedly to deall **therin** & told him that beinge a matter of such importans yt were good to take the advise of mr Iustice who wold be the next day followinge at denbighe & so by reason of many causes to him alleged cased him to yeld **therevnto** & the next day beinge the second present the writ with the names shold be with the Iustice to have his advise for the Retorne **thereof**

Also, scribal letter V.99, in 1600 begins

Good mr Thynne I hartelye praye yow, if that youe haue not allreadye sent the maulte and hoppos *wch* are to come to Caures, that youe would *wth* soe muche expedicon as most convenientlie yow maye, giue order for the presente sendinge awaye of **the same**, for that I haue here greate Wante **thereof**, for that I ame constrained to buy alle and maulte is heare at an excessive rate, and for yor mill, I ame forced to leaue the workemanshippe **thereof** vntill yor Cominge for that Richardson the mason would not vndertake theeffectinge of the stone worke **thereof** vnder xij£

Similarly to the letters written to Thomas, the subject matter (to do with business) and the employment of scribes in these letters coincides with the use of anaphoric language.

Under her own hand, however, Joan did not write like this, even when dealing with business. She tends to use *of it* where the scribal letters prefer to use the compound adverb *thereof* (or other analogous terms, as seen above). Both of these features have been categorized as conservative for the period in comparison with the incoming possessive determiner *its*;⁶³ however, *of it* is not only used in the holograph letters in instances where present-day English would use the possessive *its*, and likewise, *thereof* is not normally used as a replacement of the possessive in the scribal letters. Instead, Joan uses the construction *of it* as we would today and the secretarial letters use a more formal sounding legalism.

In letter V.84, from 1595, discussing the need for secrecy in a court case over some disputed land, Joan writes to her husband, ‘I am shure he is so onest and his Loue to vs both such that he will not for a thosen pounce speake any thinge **of it**’. Also, in letter V.97/8 of 1600, telling John about the costs required ‘for the careg of the mellstone’, she writes, ‘I haue reseaued ahondered and forecore pounce fife sheleinges and fore pences, there is agreate parte **of it** owinge’. There are many more instances of this usage in the holograph letters, but none in scribal examples; as in scribal letter VIII.34, where we find ‘to the end I maie take order for the receiuing **thereof** yf yow will paie it, or send to take yor new bond for **the same** wth the vse **thereof**’. No such anaphoric reference terms occur in Joan’s last letter to Thomas.

The only recurring compound adverb found in the whole of Joan’s holograph letters is *therefore*; and this is used not as an anaphoric subject marker, as were those employed in legal language, but as a conjunction. In the holograph letter to Thomas, in a continued attempt to secure Dorothy’s inheritance money to be used as dowry, Joan discusses the amount, time and place of the proposed transaction, and then expresses her request: ‘and **therefore** good sonn haue abrotherly care for her good’. This grammaticalized usage of *therefore* is one with which we are familiar with today and although we probably would not use it familiarly in everyday speech, it occurs commonly in writing. In the holograph letter to Thomas, the entire first half hinges on the *therefore*-clause that occurs about halfway through the text. The word *therefore* does not occur once in the scribal letters to Thomas, although occurring in the majority of Joan’s holograph letters, regardless of date or recipient. And, as discussed in Chapter 3, it also seems to have been a fairly set way for Joan to organize the overall rhetoric of letters she wrote herself. The fact that this feature

⁶³ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg. *Historical Sociolinguistics*, pp. 62-3.

is also found in letter VII.237 to Lucy Audley suggests that it was a ubiquitous feature of Joan's writing and not something prone to stylistic variation, making its absence in the scribal letters to Thomas all the more significant.

In conjunction with anaphoric language, the speech act verb *advertise* appears in several instances in the scribal letters to Thomas, although it appears nowhere else in Joan's correspondence. The first instance is from the portion of letter VIII.26 quoted at the beginning of this section where Joan writes of the match to Whitney 'I haue thought good hereby to **aduertize** yow thereof'. The verb also comes up in the postscript to the same letter:

Mr Whitney's great Grandfather married the daughter of the Lord Audley from whome this worll gent is descended/ **aduertizing you** further, that I crediblie vnderstand, that all the lands whereof mr Whitney is now seized (Clifford lop onely excepted) was Whitney's lands before the conquest of England;

Following, it appears in scribal letter VIII.28 and VIII.30 (quoted respectively):

This is the case *wch* was sent to me inclosed in their *lres*. The *wch* I haue thought good to **aduertize yow of**.

The *wch* hopeing yow will regard and further as much as in yow lieth now whilst yow are at London where Sr Iohn or his sonne wilbe of whome Sr Rbert Yonge can **aduertize yow**.

The OED definition most applicable to these uses is 'to call the attention of (another); to give him notice, to notify, admonish, warn, or inform, in a formal or impressive manner.'⁶⁴ The last part of this sense suggests pragmatic significance for the word and coincides with the communicative function of these letters as documents meant to make a pseudo-legalistic impression on Thomas, or, as Maria describes the intended effect, of some 'nessecarye Consequence' – more so than a holograph familiar letter.

Finally, throughout her holograph letters Joan also has the tendency to open clauses with the use of a *for*-phrase. There are four of these contained in the holograph letter to Thomas, appearing almost consecutively. One of these is used as a prepositional discourse marker to open new subject matter, as in '**for** the Lone of your house I hartely thanke you'. The other three act as conjunctions to form subordinate clauses: 'haue abrotherly care for her good **for** that she is very wilinge', 'wishinge I had knone your minde afore **for** then I wold not atrobeled my sister kneueit' and 'I will see both you and yours to my greate comfort **for** your sonne heare he is in good health'. Not one instance of such a structure occurs in the scribal letters to Thomas, although – as described in Chapter 3 – it is clear in other holograph letters (to her husband).

⁶⁴ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'advertise, v.', 4, a.

From the evidence supplied by these differences of linguistic variation in the holograph and scribal letters, it would appear that scribal letters were not taken down completely verbatim from dictation, or at least if they were, it was in a language Joan did not engage with when writing herself. Regarding anaphoric legalisms and the use of the verb *advertise*, the findings seem to support what Malcolm Richardson has described regarding late medieval English letters: the legalistic, more ‘public style’ learned by professional scribes is carried over into the work they did even in more familiar circumstances.⁶⁵ This language was – at least in the case of Joan’s letters to her son – not undesirable as it carried with it sociopragmatic significance associated with power and superiority in the tradition of the Royal Chancery and the monarch’s secretariat. The display was not always successful, as is clear from Maria’s disparaging comments quoted above (and in the title of this chapter). Furthermore, the lack of Joan’s characteristic conjunctive elements matched with other graphic clues in the scribal letters to Thomas would have given them an alternate voice and appearance from holograph productions.

Theoretical Implications

Several aspects of this study have confirmed previous characterizations of early modern letter-writing. In particular, the sociopragmatic significance of holograph and scribal composition reflects Joan’s employment of scribes in that she uses them in a legally sensitized context in the letters to Thomas: a common characteristic of women’s writing in Daybell’s extensive survey analysis.⁶⁶ The fact that such a level of formality was reached was due to years of legal disputation and emotional estrangement between a mother and a son. But consideration of the preceding scribal examples is crucial in properly contextualizing Joan’s final holograph letter as a reconciliatory gesture. Otherwise, a holograph letter from a highly literate woman to her son would have been no special occurrence – conventionally, it would have been expected.

The palaeographical distinctions between holograph italic and scribal secretary scripts provide no surprises, but serve as a good example of the fashions of the day and the pragmatic significance different scripts would have taken on in use. In relation to this, Joan’s incorporation of the apology trope in her final letter to Thomas, in which she references the poorness of her hand, may be interpreted as a rhetorical act of feminine submission. But again, these characteristics can only be recognized in consideration of the hands and scripts involved.

⁶⁵ Richardson, ‘The Dictamen’, pp. 218-9.

⁶⁶ Daybell, ‘Female Literacy’, pp. 64-6.

Perhaps the most revelatory findings of this study have been to do with specific aspects of lexico-grammatical language variation. Whereas it has been agreed upon that graphological and orthographic features of a manuscript are wholly dependent upon the individual actually penning the letter, recent consideration of morphosyntactic variables and rhetorical expression in the Paston women's letters and style in the Lisle correspondence seems to suggest that scribes had little influence on language otherwise. In the current study, however, clear differences can be observed between holograph and scribal productions with respect to anaphoric legalisms and the use of *advertise*. Furthermore, the textual and rhetorical organization facilitated by Joan's holograph use of phrases involving grammaticalized *therefore* and *for*-phrases has been shown to be lacking in scribal compositions to Thomas, although they are common in her holograph letters to her husband and maintained in the surviving holograph letter to her son.

It may be argued that what remains in the correspondence between Joan and Thomas is limited in that there were undoubtedly more letters, possibly even holograph examples, which would have made the last surviving letter seem less remarkable than the case made here. However, it is clear from internal evidence, particularly the comment made by Maria to do with Joan's scribal efforts, that there was in fact a larger group of scribal letters composed under precedence of the circumstances, which were clearly being written and interpreted to pragmatic effect. Furthermore, with regard to the language variation, the fact remains that although only one holograph letter to Thomas has been preserved, the text of this letter corresponds with other holograph letters (to John), while exhibiting clear differences from preceding scribal compositions (to both John and Thomas).

These observations, although limited to one small group of letters among the thousands surviving from early modern England, have significant implications for historical sociolinguistics (where textually derived language is paired with its author's gender, age, etc.), as well as historians of rhetoric and epistolary composition. Gender in particular has recently been shown to be one of the most influential sociolinguistic variables in late medieval and early modern English and the fact that a woman's scribe – professional or otherwise – would almost certainly have been a man makes it seem worthwhile to consider how the use of scribes may have influenced the linguistic content of letters, particularly in the case of women authors.⁶⁷ This is especially true in cases of corpus-based research that do not distinguish between holograph and scribal letters, perhaps based on the assumption that such factors played no large part in language

⁶⁷ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Chapter 6: Gender', in *Historical Sociolinguistics*, pp. 110-32; Nevalainen, 'Women's Writings'; Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p. 73.

variation. However, previous studies of this kind upon which such assumptions may be based have been limited to the relatively impressionistic account of Lady Lisle's letters or else the medieval Paston letters: women for whom no clear holograph examples exist.⁶⁸

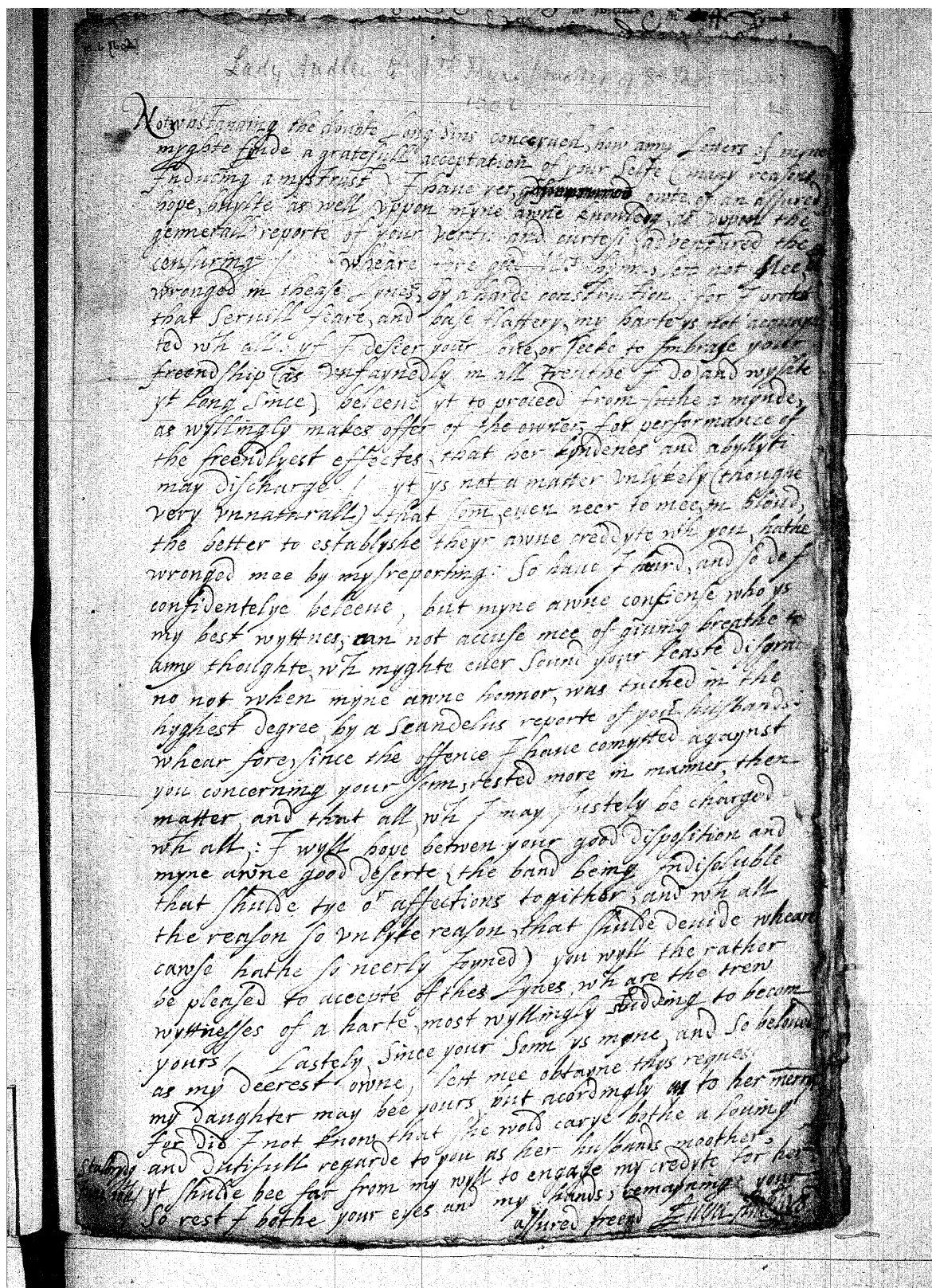
The study of the holograph/scribal distinction becomes much more viable as we reach Joan's period, in which there are many more cases where both holograph and scribal letters exist from individual writers. In Daybell's survey, he estimates that for over one-third of women letter-writers from the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth century there exist both holograph and scribal letters.⁶⁹ But while early modern letters (notably those contained in the CEEC) have been a frequent source of data for sociolinguists and pragmaticians, more detailed, linguistically orientated comparisons of holograph and scribal letters such as has been performed in this chapter are yet to be explored.

If, as Joan's letters to Thomas suggest, scribal composition was a factor in lexico-grammatical variation, as it clearly was with palaeography and orthography, it follows that the variable *holograph/scribal* needs to be recognized in historical linguistic analyses of early modern letters. The fact that scribal influence on morphosyntactic items has not been detected in the Paston letters could have something to do with the degree to which the variables being studied were socially marked (by gender, for example) in the medieval period, whereas the lexico-grammatical items discussed here were prone to a different sort of stylistic variation. It could also be due to the circumstances in which the letters were composed: it is possible that some scribes were allowed more liberty, perhaps even encouraged to formalize in some instances, while other authors required that letters be copied verbatim. Methods of composition also varied: some scribal letters may have been composed in the vocal presence of the author, others from drafts, notes or even vague oral instruction on what to write. The availability of different compositional methods paired with the common lack of reference to such methods in period letters themselves makes doing analyses of this kind complex and case-specific. Therefore, further studies using collections from which both holograph and scribal letters are available are needed to make broader claims on how these preliminary findings relate to the linguistic implications of using a scribe in late medieval and early modern England.

⁶⁸ Norman Davis' conclusion that none of the Paston women's letters are holograph has been convincingly challenged, notably in D. Watt, "In the Absence of a Good Secretary": The Letters, Lives, and Loves of the Paston Women Reconsidered', in *The Paston Women: Selected Letters* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 134-58; see also Tarvers, 'In a Woman's Hand?'.
⁶⁹ Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p. 95.

CHAPTER 6

A Negotiation of Terms: Rhetoric, Politeness and Text in the Letter Exchange Between Joan Thynne and Lucy Audley



VII. 232 (Wall 38). Lucy Audley to Joan Thynne. June, 8 1602.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

The Ladey Audley

[address:]

To the Ryghte worshipfull
my suposed freend Mrs
Thynn at her house
at Cause Castell
thease //

Body text:

Notwithstanding the doubte Long sins conceyued, how anny Letters of myne myghte finde a gratefull acceptation of your Selfe (many reasons Inducing a mystrust) I haue yet, ~~forearmed~~ owte of an assured hope, buylte as well vppon myne owne knowledg, as vppon the gennerrall reporte of your vertu and curtesi, adventured the censuring / wheare fore good Mrs. thynn, lett not Mee, be wronged in thease Lynes, by a harde construction,: for I pretest that seruill feare, and base flattery, my harte ys not acquayn ted *with* all: yf I desier your loue, or seeke to Imbrase your freendship (as vnfaynedly in all treuthe I do) and wyshe yt long since) beleeeue yt to proceed from suche a mynde, as wyllingly makes offer of the owner, for performance of the freendlyest effectes, that her kyndenes and abylyti may discharge / yt ys not a matter vnlykely (thoughe very vnnaturall) that som, euen neer to mee, in bloud, the better to establyshe theyr awne creddyte *with* you, hathe wronged mee by mysreporting: So haue I heard, and so do I confidentelye beleeeue, but myne awne concense who ys my best wyttnes, can not accuse mee of giuing breathe to anny thoughte, *wch* myghte euer sound your leaste disgrace no not when myne awne honnor, was tuched in the hyghest degree, by a scandalus reporte of your, husbands; whear fore, since the offence I haue comytted agaynst you concerning your sonn, rested more in manner, then matter, and that all, *wch* I may Iustely be charged *with* all, : I wyll hope betwen your good disposition and myne awne good deserte (the band being Indisoluble that shulde tye or affections together, and *with* all the reason so vnlyke reason, that shulde deuide wheare cawse hathe so neerly Ioyned) you wyll the rather be pleased to acepte of thes lynes, *wch* are the trew wyttinesses of a harte, most wyllingly studeing to becom yours/ lastely, since your sonn ys myne, and so beloued as my deerest owne, lett me obtayne thys request my Daughter may bee yours, but acordingly as to her merryts for did I not know that she wold carye bothe a louing and Dutifull regarde to you as her husbands moother, yt shulde bee far from my wyll to engage my credyte for her. So I rest I bothe your eyes, and my hands, remayninge,
Stalbrydg
Iune 10th.

your assured freend
LUCY AUDELAY

Madame, thinke not much that I did not more exactly answer your letter for it is no made time that
I have measure of discomfartinge gree. my son was not longer mine but was long since delivered from
me before he had either yeares or experience to judge what was fit in be iustly to canse. I con-
fesse your Daughters be the far above my sonnes degrees or degree but sence you way pleased not
to haue my sonne to be yours, me thinke you shoulde not haue seemed to haue acknowledged me
to be his mother, in respectinge me as was my due, for beleue it Madame I held nothinge more
dearly myn then I did him, I knowe god had given me, and I hoped to my comfort, and if it you
or her any, I must lay the faulte on your Ladyshipe, and take it for a heue crosse in this worlde.
I blush not to acknowledge, that I looked to haue binne sought vnto either at the first or longe
sence at leasde they shoulde blame me not, if I can not att the first conceit my owne patience which
hath binne to much urged by louinge him that once I loued more then my selfe, but Madame I
knowe not whom it shoulde be you meane of your nearest in blood that shoulde venge you to me
by mis reportes for my parte it is longe sence I haue had any spech or conference with any of you
kinred, only m^r Parthenayre Clarke excepted, which I cannot deny but his nearnes to your Lady-
shipe hath made both m^r Thynne and my selfe haue the more suspition of, and if it be you
meane I knowe he is able to answer for him selfe, and soe he shall for me but this I perceiue
in my hearinge he hath ever executed the office of a true frende, and respected all kinmans to-
wards you and yours, in the highest degree, still carryinge an honorable regard to your
honored selfe, your Ladyshipe sayth you neuer gave breath to the thought that might wound
my disgrace, Good Madame I hope you could not I haue only that to be sorrye of, and I pray
god make me thankfull for it, that my greatest enemies could neuer touch my credit and good
full maner, nor I hope neuer shall, Now for m^r Thynnes callinge of your honor in question
I can not denie, but I haue harde yt, but that my selfe was either aliter or demonstrator,
of any such reportes I utterly deny, I am not soe ready to venge inferior persones, much les
an honorable Lady, of your place and reputacion, and soe I am content of me for soe you
shall ever finde me for your Dafter I can not yett account of her, as you may of my sonne,
for that I haue not had the triall of the one, as you haue had of the other, but if he be not
respected of you I can not yett his wronge sence he hath binne hurt for your sake, and yours
the los of the one that he was borne to haue perpetually, but this I confesse I haue more reason
to respect your honor then your frendshipe towards me yett but what may hereafter followe
I knowe not, I haue neuer bin counted soe vniuersall as to receiue true frendshipe, beinge freely a-
forded, nor will I be soe light of beliefe, that on leuer without triall shall haue your holy to
overseye all my intencions, and this in hast serenge to robe your honour of your better
employed time, I rest.

cause cast the this
vnto of August
1600

Your Ladyshipes as trayall shall approve. Joane Thynne

VII.237 (Wall 42). Joan Thynne to Lucy Audley. August 8, 1602. No address. The endorsement on the front is slightly more angular, but nonetheless a very neat example of italic, unlike most of Joan's other italic scripts. The lack of an address, along with the endorsement by Joan indicate that this was a copy of the final version.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

My letter to The Lad: auley

Body text:

Madame, thinke not much that I did not precently answer your letar, for itt is no smale time that I haue indured of discomfartinge grefe, my sone was not longe mine, but rongfully detayned from me before he had ethar yeares or expedience, to Iudge what was fitt in soe wayghty a caus, I confes your Daughters berthe, far aboue my sonnes desertes or degree, but sence you wear pleased not to scorne my sonne to be yours, me thinkes, you shoulde not haue scorned to haue acknowleged me to be his mothar, in respecktinge me as was my due, for beleue itt madam I held nothings mor clearly myn then I did him I knewe god had geuen me, and I hoped to my comfarte, and if it proue otherways, I must lay the faulte one your Ladishype, and take itt for a heuie crose in this worlde, I blush not to acknowledge, that I looked to haue binne sought vnto, ether att the first, or longe sence att leaste, therfore blam me not, if I can not att the first concar my oune pacience, which hathe binne to much vrged, by lousinge him that once I loued mor then my selfe, but Madame I knowe not whom itt should be, you meane of you nearest in bloud that should ronge you to me by mis reportes, for my parte itt is longe sence, I haue had any spech or conferance with any of your kinred, only mr Fardenandoe Clarke exceptet, which I cannot deny, but his nearnes to your Ladyshipe, hath mad both mr Thynne and my selfe hould the mor suspicione of, and if itt be he you meane, I know he is abell to answer for him selfe, and soe he shall for me, but this I protest in my hearinge he hath euer excecuted the office of A true frende, and respetcktfull kinsmane towards you and yours, in the highest degree, still caringe an honorable regarde towards your honared selfe, your Ladishipe sayth you neuer gaue breath to the thought that might sound my disgrace, Good Madam I hoop you could not, I haue only that to be Ioyfull of, and I pray god make me thankfull for itt, that my greatest enimies could neuer tuch my credite indisgracfull manar, nor I hoope neuer shall; Now for mr Thynnes callinge of your honor in question I can not denie but I hau harde ytt, but that my selfe was ether alter or demonstrator, of any such reportes I vttarly deny, I am not soe redy to ronge inferiour parsones, much les an honorable Lady, of your place and reputacione, and so conseue of me, for soe you shall euer finde me, for your Dafter I can not yett account of her, as you may of my sonne, for that I haue not had the triall of the one, as you haue had of the other, but yf he be not respekted of you, I can not pittie his ronge, sence he hath hasarded for your loue, and yours, the los of theres that he was borne to honor parpetually, but this I confes, I haue mor reason to respect your honor, then your frenshipe towards me yett, but what may hereafter follow I know not, I haue neuer bin counted so vnsiuell, as to reieckt true frenship, beinge freely aforded, nor will I be so light of belefe, that on letter without triall, shall haue powr holy to ouersway all my intencions, and this in hast, fereinge to robe your honour of your better employed time, I rest.

cause castlle this

your Ladyshipes as tryall shall aproue.

viiij of August

Ioane: Thynne

1602

The familial context and progress of events to do with the marriage between Joan's son, Thomas, and Lucy's daughter, Maria, have been described in Chapter 2, and the historical record at large can leave little doubt that these women would have been on unfriendly, if not hostile terms at the time they corresponded in the summer of 1602. But despite the invaluable indirect sources (i.e. exchanges between other people and court depositions), it is very likely that these letters were one of the few (and quite probably the only) 'familiar' exchanges that ever took place between Joan and Lucy. Therefore, it is my contention that beyond general observations of the socio-familial climate, and in absence of any other recorded exchanges between these women, these letters offer us a unique perspective on how the relationship was performed by the women themselves. By considering in detail the way in which meaning was constructed in their letters using rhetorical, linguistic and material (i.e. paleographic and organizational) features, this chapter discusses how these strategies interacted and played crucial roles in negotiating relations between Joan and Lucy.

The chapter is organized in accordance with the main topics of investigation. In relation to the larger rhetorical themes, I have selected two salient features. The first of these is to do with the social risks of writing, appearing explicitly only towards the beginning of either letter, but important to understanding the anxiety and expectation that would have surrounded the exchange and influenced politeness strategies. Figuring more prominently, however, is the negotiation that takes place over the terminology of past 'wrongs' and the possibility of 'friendship'; which is covered in the second section on rhetoric. Following these two discussions, which might be seen as the more general discursive context to the exchange, there are separate sections which treat important aspects of address terminology and selected linguistic variables in which strategies of addressee-orientated politeness and self-politeness are used as ways of interpreting particular features of the text. Following the first four sections, a summary and comparison of politeness strategies is made which takes into account all possible contributions given in the previous sections and considers how either woman's politeness strategy relates to her social positioning. Lastly, before concluding remarks, the organization and paleographic features of the letters are taken into account, offering interesting evidence for textual accommodation in Joan's response. The sum of these analyses suggests stylistic coherency in either letter, while also exhibiting the complex nature of interpreting meaning in specific examples of early modern letter exchanges and the necessity of considering texts multi-dimensionally and intertextually.

Mitigating the Social Risks of Writing

As was shown in the section on opening formulae in Chapter 3, it was common for the Thynne women to begin their letters by mentioning past exchanges, oftentimes giving assurance of a previous letter's receipt while also indicating the material that was being responded to. This was (as it remains) an important part of framing a response's discourse around particular items of information, requests and perhaps even offenses given in previous correspondence. Furthermore, letters that were not directly responding to another faced the task of making it clear why they were writing in the first place. Of course, in letters between intimates, this could provide room for expressions of familiarity, such as those found in Maria's letters to Thomas, as in letter VIII.4, which begins, 'My fayer Tomken : I haue nothinge to saye butt how dost thou'. Another example comes from Elizabeth Cavendish who begins with familiarity when writing to John Thynne senior in the mid-sixteenth century: 'Syr all thoughte I haue no mater of ymportance werewtall now to trbyll you. yet wyll I not suffer eny knowen messenger to pas wtowt my latters'.¹ These letters served as tokens of friendship or 'gifts' symbolizing patronage, and although they may claim to have no particular intent or purpose, their sociopragmatic significance would have been valuable to their recipients and, as discussed in Chapter 4, crucial in the maintenance of social relations.² In letters of petition, such leisurely seeming openings were usually replaced with a justification for asking for something (material or otherwise), very often exaggerating the pitiful state of the writer. Thus, where a specific action is desired, the need for an explanation for writing (although very often couched in polite expression) usually becomes explicit fairly early on. For example, in another letter from Elizabeth Cavendish to the same John Thynne, she opens, 'Syr I am now dreuen to craue your helpe I haue defaryed the tyme of my sendynge to you for that I haue welhopyed tyll now of late that I shulde haue hade no ocasyon at thys presente to haue trobelledde you but now so yt ys that ther ys abyll yn the parlamente howse agenste me'.³ A letter's social function and its epistolary precedents were important reference points used to introduce its presence to the recipient.

In the absence of epistolary precedents, and/or a lack of assumed familiar background – or even a civil past of social interactions – beginning a letter exchange would have been (at the very least) extremely awkward. And given circumstances where two people's past was dominated by hostility and mistrust, an initial letter would have been a

¹ IV.246 (undated).

² G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Delaware, 2005), pp. 60-5; J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 159-65.

³ III.9 (1559).

significant social risk in its potential for threatening the face of both writer and recipient. It was under these unfavorable circumstances that Lucy's letter takes up the task of beginning by mentioning the fact that she and Joan had had no previous contact through epistolary communication, due to 'many reasons inducing a mistrust'. Instead of being able to write of good relations or even depend upon the social conventions that would pass between strangers, Lucy is obligated to point out the fact that she has doubted that 'any Letters of mine might find a grateful acceptance of your self'. Of course, an ungrateful recipient could have meant an unresponsive addressee and epistolary silence was a highly significant gesture:

[. . .] epistolary transaction demanded reciprocation – a mutual exchange – a reply to signatory penned, or at least dictated, by the letter's recipient. The nature of replying by letter was fraught with coded social implications: failure to write could issue a slight; epistolary silence could be viewed as a snub; delay or irregularity in writing could be interpreted as a lack of respect.⁴

Addressing the interactional ramifications of such a situation, Goffman points out that 'fear over possible loss of his face often prevents the person from initiating contacts in which important information can be transmitted and important relationships re-established'.⁵ Lucy's anxiety over Joan's responsiveness could therefore be characterized as anxiety to do with the maintenance of her own face wants: if Joan did not reply, or hesitated to do so (which is what she did), it would clearly say something about Joan's opinion of Lucy, her respect for her superior social position and the demand for epistolary reciprocation, thereby threatening both Lucy's positive and negative face. This doubt, coupled with the fact that the two families had been continually at court, pressing suits against one another over the legitimacy of the marriage, would have made a reconciliatory letter from Lucy highly inappropriate until the marriage was legally recognized. Lucy's characterization of her initiating epistolary contact as *adventuring* – 'to take the chance of; to commit to fortune; to undertake a thing of doubtful issue; to try, to chance, to venture upon'⁶ – was not an uncommon way of mitigating the risks entailed in approaching someone by letters under sensitive or emotionally charged circumstances. Similarly, the verb appears in a letter by Henry More to Anne Finch, in which he writes with modesty that he will not dare '**adventuring** to salute you by letters first, yet I am sure I am not so uncivill, as that I should ever dare to fayle the answering of you': a usage that Schneider describes as suggesting 'both politeness and aggressiveness [. . . carrying] sentiments of

⁴ Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p. 160.

⁵ E. Goffman, *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour* (New York, 1967), p. 39.

⁶ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'adventure, v.', 1.

fear, modesty, deference, or shame’.⁷ Using the method of description developed in Chapter 4, we can say that the sociopragmatic significance of this verb has to do with providing rhetorical cover in the early modern culture of emotion and shame (similar to the performative use of *confess*) in that it marks the transgressive nature of the epistolary act of writing, therefore paying homage to the addressee’s negative face. That Lucy thought it worthwhile to risk, *adventure*, Joan censuring her letter at this point was no doubt strongly influenced by the fact that the marriage between Maria and Thomas had recently been recognized as officially legal. The relevancy of this fact becomes evident later on in the letter when Lucy argues for the ‘indissoluble band that should tie our affections together’, where ‘indissoluble’ quite clearly refers to legal irrefutability given the recent court ruling. Nonetheless, the legal recognition of the marriage was precisely what Joan and her faction had been fighting against for nearly a decade and in itself this fact could not have advocated for a greater trust on Joan’s behalf. Lucy’s own face was still at risk, and she needed to provide social incentives, or rhetorical pressuring devices to ensure a response.

Lucy’s first attempt at providing such incentives is realized by way of bestowing laudatory terminology on Joan that compliments her social manners and reputation – i.e. flattery. By drawing attention to the notion of Joan’s reputation as one of ‘virtue and courtesy’, Lucy is creating the sociable background she needed to present her reconciliatory gesture as acceptable and response-worthy. Because she and Joan had no actual past of civilized communication, Lucy refers vaguely to her own ‘knowledg’ and the ‘gennerall reporte’ of Joan’s character, thereby fabricating a culture of civility and respect between her and Joan, despite the fact that the two were clearly not socializing together. To bring up someone’s reputation was of course to venture upon an incredibly sensitive subject. One’s social etiquette, coupled with their reputation, was a highly charged subject for anyone in early modern England, particularly in the case of one’s social superiors (as Lucy and much of her circle were to Joan) from whom an ill-favored report could be disastrous. As Laura Gowing has made clear in her study of words, honor, and reputation: ‘[Words] were crucially linked with reputation; and the concept of reputation held considerable sway both legally and socially’.⁸ Lucy’s comment, therefore, was indicative of not just an isolated community of gossips, but of a much larger sense of Renaissance social ideology. In this way, the off record reference to civility would have exaggerated pressure on Joan to maintain Lucy’s compliments by providing a response.

To receive a letter, particularly from a superior, was to be in their debt and ‘the “letter as debt” theme, then, was employed [by the original correspondent] as a method of

⁷ Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*, p. 135.

⁸ L. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1996), p. 111.

eliciting a response, and by the respondent, as an acknowledgment that he/she owed a return letter – both of which encouraged epistolary reciprocity’.⁹ Viewed from this perspective, the references to Joan’s desirable social attributes are more an appeal to a cultural code of civility, which would have emphasized Joan’s social duty towards Lucy, where failing to recognize this duty would not only fall short of Lucy’s personal expectations (her ‘hope’), but would defy the terms used to describe Joan’s reputation amongst their peers. Therefore, by staying off record and covertly implicating Joan’s reputation, Lucy would have simultaneously provided a strong incentive for a response while also staying clear of blame for impinging on Joan’s negative face wants – by remaining indirect and not baldly going on record with a threat to Joan’s reputation – which would have included the freedom to not have to correspond with Lucy at all, if she so pleased. Lucy’s main purpose, then, is to remind Joan of the unspoken rules of epistolary exchange and the manner of providing a response, despite the ‘many reasons’ Joan might have had to mistrust her. Thus, flattering Joan’s good manners in relation to epistolary etiquette simultaneously compliments positive face while indirectly threatening negative face wants, reflecting what Whigham has observed more generally for Elizabethan suitor’s letters: ‘flattery *must* be visible if it is to manipulate the patron by imputing a virtue that restricts choice. The effect depends on the patron’s acknowledging the flattery, which must, therefore, be visible, however disguised’.¹⁰

Joan was very aware of the social debt a letter incurred and in letter V.122/3 to her husband in March of 1603, she writes ‘Good mr Thynne your kind Leter by nowboryo doth **bynde me etarnally your detor**’. Likewise, the incentives for Joan to respond to Lucy were convincing enough for her to produce a letter in turn, but it is not insignificant that it took her two months to do so. Adhering to the well known conduct of responsiveness, one might expect Joan to open with an apology for taking so long, but she does not. Instead, she trivializes the letter exchange in comparison with the emotional upheaval she had gone through over the clandestine marriage of her son, beginning confidently with the imperative ‘**thinke not** much that I did not precently answer your letar’. So, just as Lucy did in her letter, Joan opens with an explanation of time, but she subverts what would have been expected in polite exchange by making little of the time Lucy might have spent wondering whether or not Joan would disrupt her sense of face by not replying; particularly in comparison with the long years that Joan had spent grieving over the great face-threatening act constituted by the clandestine marriage arranged by Lucy. The lack of any conventional forms of directive request – such as *I pray you* –

⁹ Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity*, p. 62.

¹⁰ F. Whigham, ‘The Rhetoric of Elizabethan Suitor’s Letters’, *PLMA* 96:5 (1981), pp. 864-82 (p. 875).

matches with the rhetorical force of Joan's expression: she is not actually requesting that Lucy not take it badly that it took her some time to respond, but instead she is reiterating her own sentiments as a method of self-defense (sentiments that, although publicly known, had most likely remained unexpressed directly between the two women up to this point).

Nonetheless, Joan very clearly understands the culture of epistolary exchange and is therefore forced to reconcile the fact that she has written late – so as to maintain her civil reputation. However, given the fact that Joan was still upset about the marriage and therefore with Lucy, and that Lucy indirectly implicated her reputation, an open, deferential apology would have issued a threat to Joan's own sense of face. In order to counteract this threat she employs redressive self-politeness strategies: '1. Justify' and '6. Be confident'. The first of these is a 'positive strategy [. . .] most readily seen in situations in which a speaker has committed a social transgression'.¹¹ This can be seen in Joan's following the 'think not' clause with a section of text commencing with the conjunctive *for*, in which Joan appropriates Lucy's term for uncivil behavior, 'wrong', but she takes the emphasis off herself as the one who needs to become amenable to a reconciliation and refocuses on Lucy and the way in which she 'detayned' Thomas at an impressionable age, while 'scorning' respect for Joan by keeping the whole thing secret. It is significant that her justification is stated with such a high estimation of her own opinion, expressing her confidence in assessing the situation, despite the pressures created by Lucy, her social superior.

Rhetorical Expressions of Friendship

Knowing that she was out of favor with Joan, and expecting she would be interpreted as writing simply to forward her and her family's interests, Lucy also used justification and confidence as self-politeness strategies to support her own face wants. Most significantly, she does this by spending a considerable amount of space elaborating on the sincerity of her good intentions, *protesting* that her gesture has nothing to do with 'seruill feare' or 'base flattery'. The speech act verb *protest* was described in Chapter 4, from Joan's letters, as existing somewhat fuzzily between speech act categories. The representative sense seems relevant to Lucy's use in her letter to Joan – i.e. 'to vow; to promise or undertake solemnly'.¹² That the verb was often used in the sense of emphasizing the goodliness of one's intentions, as opposed to an interpretation that they were being insincere, is reflected in the overall tone of her argument, which begins with the directive request 'lett not Mee be wronged'. In this way, she frames herself as having been

¹¹ R. Chen, 'Self-politeness: A Proposal', *Journal of Pragmatics* 33:1 (2001), pp. 87-106 (p. 99).

¹² OED, Draft Revision September 2008, 'protest, v.' 2.

judged unfairly, or as some sort of victim of opinion deserving not only a sympathetic interpretation, but also friendship. The pragmatic significance of this performance was potentially twofold.

In one way, the purpose of these expressions is to communicate to Joan that Lucy is leveling with her, unmediated by what would have been countless others who were placing their own pressures on either of them throughout the period of familial dispute. And more specifically, it might have bifurcated Lucy's expression of friendship from past acts. The argument against an interpretation of the relationship in terms of past events is put forth when Lucy contrasts the sincerity of her offer against what she seems to expect to be a resistant reaction from Joan, or 'harde construction'. The use of the word 'hard' would have suggested a number of negative connotations: from the OED there are period examples which mean 'hardy and bold in fight', 'Inured, hardened, obdurate', 'Difficult to deal with, manage, control, or resist', 'Of a nature or character not easily impressed or moved; obdurate; unfeeling, callous; hard-hearted'.¹³ It is not unlikely that Joan had a reputation for being this type of woman, and given the daily reality of keeping muskets in her bedroom at Caus Castle, combined with the loss of her favorite child, it seems more than probable. A letter from Joan to her husband John, in 1595, gives a rough idea of the hardened sort of opinion Joan did in fact have of Lucy and her kin:

I can not but maruell to here with what fase sor Iames maruen can com to you consiringe what tratres abuses he and. his haue offered vnto you and me. which for my one parte I will neuer thinke well of him nor any of his you ma do as you plesse. for seinge **the woulde not persuade by frenship** the shall neuer make me eyld to my cradel for there good¹⁴

Therefore, although it is difficult to imagine that 'hard' would not have somehow stuck in Joan's mind as a rather unsympathetic characterization of her feelings, it is important to Lucy's presentation that she frame herself as being victimized by other people's, and especially Joan's, conceptions of her. Despite the fact that writing a letter to Joan in the name of friendship may have made Lucy seem presumptuous or false (as she herself expects), her emphasis on her own woes at being misunderstood serves to protect her from being thought of as merely 'seruill' or 'base'.

Furthermore, Lucy's emphasizing that her mind was her own and her words 'the trew wyttinesses of [her] harte' suggests an intimate, internal aspect of her private self that she sees as existing apart from the more scripted, external world of language and society – and crucially, the public controversy between Thynne and Audley factions over the disputed marriage. Although Lucy does not use the word herself, I will be referring to this

¹³ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'hard, *a. (n.)*'.

¹⁴ V.82 (1595).

strategy as the ‘rhetoric of sincerity’. In this way, epistolary protestations could serve to distinguish the acceptability of a request for ‘friendship’ and ‘love’ in the midst of a culture of patronage and self-serving civility in which one was constantly paying lip-service to conventionalized methods of pursuing and maintaining status, and achieving material ends.

This strategy was not unique to Lucy. In fact, anxiety over the discordance between internal thought and external expression was central to period debates on sociability and language. Concerns to do with manners and what was perceived as a culture of flattery, emanating mainly from the court and London urbanites, were not infrequently mentioned in period etiquette books, and actually took on an ethical dimension in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century England. Surveying the literature, with examples such as Guevara’s *Dispraise of the Life of a Courtier* (translated into English in 1548), Anna Bryson comes to the conclusion that ‘the sixteenth-century split between inner reality and external behavior had introduced into the concept of good manners the problem of sincerity’.¹⁵ Ironically, as this sentiment was passed into the seventeenth century, it led to the mention and refusal of flattery as a rote part of social expression – making ‘sincerity-by-disassociation’ a conventionalized trope for speech and letters. Citing Stefano Guazzo’s *Civil Conversazione*, which first appeared in Italian in 1574 and was published in English shortly thereafter, John Martin discusses the way in which sincerity, or professed accordance between expression and meaning – the ‘proffered heart’ – came to be seen as a necessary component of successful rhetorical suasion: “‘it is necessary that whoever wishes to move others with his actions, first feel himself moved and that he draw out the feelings of his heart’”.¹⁶

Lucy goes on to reference her ‘awne concense’ as a witness to the fact that she has not given ‘breathe to anny thoughte, wch myghte euer sound your leaste disgrace’. Juxtaposed problematically with the rhetoric of sincerity, this oath makes an explicit distinction between *having* a potentially scandalous thought and actually *saying* it out loud, where it might be heard by others, as ‘the power that words had to damage reputation had its roots in the very nature of that reputation: reputations, in a largely oral world, were what people said’.¹⁷ This statement seems to make Lucy’s perspective on civil society all the more transparent (perhaps even giving away too much): i.e., Lucy’s notion of friendship as a rhetorical skill, or a performance based in language. Therefore, despite the fact that she seems to be claiming for concordance between her ‘heart’ and expression in other sections of her letter, what essentially is at stake is the maintenance of external appearances, part of

¹⁵ A. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 221.

¹⁶ J. J. Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 107-8.

¹⁷ Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, p. 132.

which (ironically) called for professions of inner sincerity (despite the fact that both correspondents knew that this concord was not true).

As an extension to this, and similar to her strategy for ensuring a response seen at the beginning of the letter, Lucy incorporates a more general culture of civility to elicit the reaction she wants from Joan by indirectly threatening her positive face. At the beginning of the letter she indirectly puts Joan's good reputation (as someone who is courteous enough to respond to a letter) on the line, and here she goes even further by implying that Joan is responsible for accepting her request of friendship: that she 'wyll the rather be pleased to aaccepte of thes lynes' – very clearly attempting to script relations the way she would like them to be, or (as it has been described in speech act theory) making the world fit one's words. Joan would be *wronging* Lucy 'by a harde construction' otherwise. To the modern reader, this line of reasoning might sound particularly ineffectual, and presumably easily dismissible for Joan; but for the early modern English aristocracy, the expression of social relations in writing was seen as an effective way of forging and maintaining actual relationships. In this sense, talk was not cheap in the upper echelons of English society and it is important to remember that 'friendship' could mean something very different in early modern England from what we think of today: 'the word "friend" was the most commonly used kinship term [in early modern England], but the exact breadth of its reference remains obscure'.¹⁸ The performance of friendship was in many ways a matter of using language in an effective way: 'at the heart of [the] humanistic conceptualization of friendship lies the suggestion that rhetorical skill is in fact capable of engendering friendships, not merely mobilizing existing networks, a conceptualization that needs to be extended to include women'.¹⁹

The way in which Lucy draws a distinction between her gesture (which does of course involve some amount of flattery) and 'base flattery' or 'seruill feare', even going so far as to claim that her heart is 'not acquaynted' with making false petitions '*with* all' (i.e. 'at all') also reflects some period distinctions described by Lynne Magnusson in terms of politeness:

Implicit in Erasmus's practice is a qualitative distinction between the "flattery" that he recommends and the "flattery" he condemns: Erasmus's selected flatteries are all recognizable as positive politeness strategies, which Brown and Levinson consider the building blocks of friendship and intimacy²⁰

¹⁸ P. Rushton, 'Property, Power and Family Networks: The Problem of Disputed Marriage in Early Modern England', *The Journal of Family History* 11:3 (1986), pp. 205-19 (p. 211).

¹⁹ Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers*, p. 259.

²⁰ L. Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue: Dramatic Language and Elizabethan Letters* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 69.

Lucy goes on with this point in saying her mind ‘wyllingly makes offer of the owner, for performance of the freendlyest effectes’ in ‘studeing to becom yours’ – again drawing concordance between her innermost thoughts and her outward expression. Understood within this conception of friendship, Lucy’s gesture, although seemingly unwarranted by past actions, would have carried with it legitimate and recognizable rhetorical force. By performing the role of a willing friend (acting on her own volition) through language and rhetoric, she makes it more difficult for Joan – who also would have been familiar with this method of socialization – to reject her gesture.

To further bolster her presentation, Lucy also contrasts her ability to keep her speech civil with that of Joan’s husband, John, who ‘touched’ her honor in the ‘highest degree’ through ‘scandelus reporte’. Here again, the language emphasizes Lucy as the victim, *wronged*, *accused* and *touched* by the harmful speech of others. And by presenting this information in a way which distinguishes her and Joan’s (presupposed) set of values from those who have allegedly been talking about her, Lucy creates a feeling of ‘us versus them’, using positive politeness to lessen the social distance between her and Joan and creating a sense of genteel unity. By referencing John Thynne’s uncivil behavior Lucy defends her own past actions, implying a comparison between the two by the fact that the discussion of John’s scandalous speeches are followed directly by:

whear fore, since the offence I haue comytted agaynst you concerning your sonn, rested more in **manner**, then **matter**, and that all, *wch* I may lustely be charged *wth* all, : I wyll hope betwen your good disposition and myne awne good deserte (the band being Indisoluble that shulde tye *or* affections together, and *wth* all the reason so vnlyke reason, that shulde deuide wheare cawse hathe so neerly Ioyned) you wyll the rather be pleased to aaccepte of thes lynes, *wch* are the trew wyttinesses of a harte, most wyllingly studeing to becom yours

Here, without going on record and explicitly asking for forgiveness, Lucy expresses positive politeness for Joan in acknowledging the offense caused by the clandestine marriage, but also maintains her own face by qualifying the offensiveness when compared to those of ‘matter’. What Lucy is trying to communicate in making this distinction seems to be that although arranging the marriage in secret (i.e. the ‘manner’ in which it was done) may have been offensive in that it defied the necessary inclusion of both families into a marriage contract, it was not done with the intention of being hurtful and the match itself (i.e. ‘matter’) was not intrinsically offensive – after all, Maria’s family was of a higher estate than Thomas’ and the Touchet name would have added significant clout to the Thynne’s closest circle. In contrast, John Thynne’s words against Lucy were, in themselves, an affront to her person, purposefully hurtful and a ‘matter’ of genuine offense. The point here rests on the amount of responsibility that Lucy sees herself as

accountable for. In relation to this, Goffman describes how in many societies it is common to distinguish 'levels of responsibility' to which a person may be held according to their past actions.²¹ In Lucy's case, she argues that Joan's taking offence was in fact 'incidental': 'these arise as an unplanned but sometimes anticipated by-product of action – action the offender performs in spite of its consequences, although not out of spite', as opposed to 'malicious' offence, clearly designed to be spiteful. Therefore, although Lucy very plainly admits to the fact that she may reasonably be held accountable for having transgressed convention in arranging the marriage without including Joan, she argues that Joan's 'good disposition' ought to forgive the incidental nature of past offences, particularly considering the fact that Lucy has not contaminated the relationship through malicious public speeches.

When compared to the tropes of the English aristocracy more generally, the self-inflated class distinctions within Lucy's comments and her comparison with John's behavior become all the more apparent. Distinguishing *manner* from *matter* was in fact a more general way for members of the aristocracy to distinguish themselves from aspirant classes (what they would have viewed as imposters), as observed by Whigham:

Aristocratic ideology had to deal with this disruptive fact [i.e. social mobility]; he who would occupy exclusively the position of established aristocrat must de-emphasize not only his own efforts at self-manifestation but the substantive efforts of those below. One solution was to emphasize *manner* rather than *matter*: others may be found who can do the things a gentleman does, but they cannot do them *properly*.²²

This information is particularly relevant given that the Thynnes, originating from merchant backgrounds, epitomized the notion of social climbers in Elizabethan England, while Lucy and Maria belonged to the superior and irreducible class of landed gentry by their relation to Lord Audley. Therefore, by emphasizing the triviality of offences of manner, Lucy implicates that her and Maria's own social status is, as far as the Thynne's were concerned, material enough to support an acceptance of the marriage, despite the fact that they may have been offended by the manner in which it was conducted. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Joan did not accept this interpretation without a significant qualification of events, terms and possible futures.

As described in the previous section on the risks of writing, Joan begins her letter by drawing attention to the weightiness of past events, firmly communicating that she is not in a position to put them completely behind her and embrace Lucy's terms of friendship. In describing the way her son was 'rongfully detained' (again, appropriating

²¹ Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, p. 14.

²² F. Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Los Angeles and London, 1984), p. 34.

Lucy's word to her own usage), Joan uses a metaphoric reference to Christ, taking it as 'a heuie crose in this worlde', 'lay[ing] the faulte one your Ladishype [i.e. Lucy]'. Although this may sound dramatic, the fact that she explicitly goes on record and blames Lucy shows how Joan was not using this rhetoric to prompt sympathy or friendship. Instead, Joan is interested in describing events on her own terms by making her reasons for maintaining social distance clear, foremost of which is the high level of responsibility she holds Lucy at for past offences. This blaming serves as a pre-requisite to Joan's strategies of self-politeness in that by casting Lucy into the 'wrong' she creates space for a rejection of Lucy's 'proffered heart' without being 'counted so vnusuell, as to reieckt true frenship'.

The fact that Joan does not accept Lucy's terms of friendship would have threatened an association with (in Lucy's words) a 'good disposition'. Therefore, despite her rather blunt laying of blame, Joan also finds need to defend herself against the indirect challenges to her civility. To this end, at the beginning of her letter Joan states that '**I blush not** to acknowledge, that I looked to haue binne sought vnto, ether att the first, or longe sence att leaste', which shows that this was probably the first attempt Lucy had made at approaching Joan under the auspices of friendship. Joan's expression of her feelings here works similarly to instances qualified by performative *confess* described in Chapter 4. However, instead of communicating hesitancy, Joan's reference to her not blushing more forcefully expresses a lack of shame. This mode of expression would also counter Lucy's challenge to Joan not 'wronging' her with a 'hard construction' in that it re-orientates the relationship according to the reality of the transgressions committed by Lucy in the past in which she 'scorned' Joan's rights as a mother. Following, Joan continues with self-confident expression in writing 'blam me not, if I can not att the first concar my oune pacience, which hathe binne to much vrged, by lousinge him that once I loued mor then my selfe'. Here Joan is again using the self-politeness strategy of justification, explaining openly why she finds it impossible to accept the friendship Lucy has proposed. The idea that 'patience' was something Joan found difficult to 'conquer' further reiterates the period's concern with emotional reservation and is antithetical to Lucy's desire to forge a friendship built on civil superficiality. Of course, rhetorical friendship would have been much easier for Lucy to accept from the perspective of face loss, particularly considering she had essentially gotten her way in all other respects, and probably saw reconciliation with Joan as the last familial/political hurdle in managing social relations to do with the marriage of her daughter. Joan makes it clear, however, that such reconciliation is not plausible given the gravity of past offences, and to further her own defense she continues by qualifying Lucy's rhetoric with the idea of friendship by *trial*.

Joan makes reference to the idea of friendship by trial on three occasions, all towards the end of her letter, and most poignantly in ‘I haue neuer bin counted so vnusiell as to rieck **true frenship**, beinge freely aforded, nor will I be so light of belefe, that on letter **without triall**, shall haue powr holy to ouersway all my intencions’. Here Joan not only defends her civility – as it was challenged by Lucy’s implicit references – but also qualifies the values she associates with friendship using a separate set of terminology. It might seem as if Joan is making a distinction between the surface level face relations needed to preserve the order of hierarchical society and that of true friendship, reluctant to accept Lucy’s rhetorical display as friendship tried in the real world. However, while this may at first appear to be a more practical, experience-based and extra-textual conception of social relations, this rhetoric of friendship is equally observable in other period letters.

The idea of friendship by trial seems to have run in parallel, or perhaps as a reaction to the rhetoric of friendship used by Lucy. A similar instance appears in a letter written from William Knollys, a blood-related cousin to Queen Elizabeth I, to his friend and ‘gossip’ Anne Newdigate (the sister of Mary Fitton, Knollys’ object of romantic infatuation), in the 1590’s: ‘The many testimonies you have made of your worthy respect of me bind me to be thankful by all the means I may, and you shall ever be assured I will not fail to perform the part of a **true friend** whensoever you shall have cause to **try me**’.²³ Occurrences even closer to Joan’s use appear slightly later in the seventeenth century, in two supplicatory letters from Lucy, Countess of Bedford to Lady Jane Cornwallis – first in a letter of 1620:

when you can find any subject to exercise your interest in me on, be not sparing to **make such full trials from what a hart they comm**²⁴

And then again in a letter written the following year:

beseeching you to beleve that no absence nor lengthe of tyme can diminish that affection in me I have so many years professed and you so well deserved; for, whensoever you shall have **occasion to make trial therof**, you shall find all in my power in yours to comande for your servis to the uttermost it can be extended²⁵

The occurrence of these terms in other period letters points to the fact that it was one of the several conventionalized ways of expressing one’s duty by offering service in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Furthermore, the way in which the first letter from the Countess of Bedford incorporates the idea of trial alongside reference to her ‘hart’ suggests the way in

²³ Lady A. E. Newdigate (ed.), *Gossip From a Muniment-Room: Being Passages in the Lives of Anne and Mary Fitton, 1574 to 1618* (London, 1898), p. 23.

²⁴ *Corpus of Early English Correspondence Sampler*, Compiled by J. Keränen, et al. (Helsinki, 1998), Distributed through *Oxford Text Archive*, <<http://ota.ahds.ac.uk>> Accessed July 14, 2009.

²⁵ Ibid.

which the rhetoric of trial (used by Joan) could be used in conjunction with the ideal of sincerity (that we have seen in Lucy's letter). By placing the two concepts side-by-side, the writer invites their addressee to challenge the proof of their sincerity by trying friendship through requests for service and other performances of duty.

Magnusson has identified a related, although clearly distinguishable discourse of friendship which she refers to as the 'pleasures style' – based on the giving and taking of favors and gifts (material and otherwise) between correspondents who also offered themselves to be of use to their recipients, where 'the argument that affection is enhanced by this form of persistent "use" certainly gives a different accent to familiarity than we are accustomed to today, when "being used" by a friend has an exclusively negative connotation'.²⁶ This is clearly very similar to the idea of trial in that it is dependent upon the offering of service based in actual experience, as opposed to more abstract protestations of the heart and mind. And given Joan's use of this rhetoric as a defense against Lucy's protestations of the heart and mind, it seems likely that in conjunction with the pleasures style described by Magnusson, the rhetoric of trying and friendship by trial may very well have arisen as a qualificatory set of terminology which followed the rhetoric of sincerity.

Another important distinction Joan makes in her letters is between honor and friendship. The word 'honor', closely related to 'courtesy' and 'civility', is central in Lucy's mentioning the 'scandalous reports' of John Thynne. Joan admits to knowing of her husband's speech against Lucy. And as Lucy did in her letter, she actually goes as far as to compare her civility with John's. She acknowledges having heard 'mr Thynnes callinge of your **honor** in question', but immediately states that 'I am not soe redy to ronge inferiour parsones, much les an **honorable Lady**, of your place and reputacione'. So, despite the fact that Joan and her husband were clearly of the same faction and Lucy was part of the opposition, Joan firmly sides with Lucy when it comes to the preservation of honor through speech. Again, this shows that despite their differences the two shared a social ideology that held the maintenance of civility as central in social relations, which is the socio-cultural backdrop to their correspondence. But despite whatever common ground they might have held, honor and friendship are two very different things according to Joan and her reciprocated recognition of the social ideology of honor is not contradictory to her refusal of Lucy's terms of friendship.

Joan's response to Lucy's terms of friendship might be summed up, in her own words: 'sence you wear pleased not to scorne my sonne to be yours, me thinkes, you shoulde not haue scorned to haue acknowleged me to be his mother, in respecktinge me as

²⁶ Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, p. 82.

was my due [. . . therefore] I haue mor reason to respect **your honor** then **your frenship** towards me yett'. So, whereas Lucy emphasizes friendship in terms of the present, citing her willingness while also offering a definition of her past actions in a way aimed at minimizing their offensiveness (i.e. matter vs. manner), Joan bases her description of things almost solely by considering the offenses Lucy has caused her in the past. And while Joan does not completely dismiss all possibility of ameliorating the relationship, she makes it clear that she will consider things only 'as tryall shall aproue'. In this scheme, Lucy's proposal of friendship in her letter elicits honor but not true friendship and it seems clear that Joan's recognition of Lucy's honor is mostly a reference to her superior position in the social hierarchy (although she is perhaps also acknowledging Lucy's ability to remain civil in speech). Rhetorically speaking then, Joan takes some advantage over Lucy in what is a power play to do with terminology by defining Lucy's conception of friendship as less valuable, or less 'true' when compared to her own.

Address Terminology

The use of address terminology has been recognized by historians and historical sociolinguists as an important indicator of social relations in early modern letters. Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness in particular has been applied to the historical study of address terms in letters collected in the *Corpus of Early English Correspondence*.²⁷ From such studies, it has been shown that from the late medieval through the early modern period positive politeness increases in the address terms and subscriptions of early English correspondence, with correspondents from below the gentry leading the trend. Relative power has been regarded as the greatest influence in the choice of address terms, where positive politeness tends to be employed by superiors writing to those of inferior status, inferiors writing in cautious, negative modes of politeness to their superiors. The increase in positive politeness has been attributed to the fact that increases in literacy and privacy in the actual process of letter-writing led to a 'loosening of formalities',²⁸ encouraging 'expressions of individual feelings of affection'.²⁹ Address terms and subscription formulae are a helpful object of study in that they epitomize the way in which language can reflect socio-cultural relations: 'Forms of address reveal a carefully graduated scale of social hierarchy, thus reflecting the power relations of Late Medieval and Early Modern

²⁷ M. Nevala, 'Family First: Address Formulae in English Family Correspondence From the 15th to the 17th Century', in *Diachronic Perspectives in Address Term Systems* (Pragmatics and Beyond New Series 107), ed. I. Taavitsainen & A. H. Jucker (Amsterdam, 2003), pp. 147-176; T. Nevalainen and H. Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Constraints on Politeness: The Pragmatics of Address Formulae in Early English Correspondence', in *Historical Pragmatics*, ed. A. H. Jucker (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 541-601.

²⁸ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Constraints on Politeness', p. 541.

²⁹ Nevala, 'Family First', p. 150.

English society'.³⁰ These observations, alongside what was said in several period manuals on social etiquette help indicate the relevance of address terms as they were used in the exchange between Joan and Lucy.

One telling factor is the frequency with which address terms are used. On the one hand, Lucy gives no term of address before commencing the body of her letter, whereas Joan employs such terminology frequently throughout, for a total of ten times in her response. Historical sociolinguists have pointed out that the use of no address term may have suggested (by one letter-writing manual at least) relations of close friendship,³¹ which is affirmed by Bryson who observes 'the dropping or shortening of titles, then as now, was an expression of familiarity', whereas 'the most obvious element in verbal deference was the use of formal titles in salutation and discourse'.³² Bryson goes on to quote an etiquette book by William Fitson called *The Schoole of Good Manners* (1629) which states 'in speaking to any Honorable or Worshipful Person, it is good manners to repeat now and then the title of his Honour or Worship'.³³ Therefore, the fact that there is only one instance in which Lucy refers to Joan as 'Mrs thynn' is an indication that she was trying to fashion her letter in a friendly way, perhaps being less formal than she might otherwise have done. Joan on the other hand frequently defers to Lucy using address terminology, which would have honored Lucy's higher social position, without necessarily indicating familiarity or friendship.

The address terms used by either woman confirm the unequal balance of power and their respective placement within the social hierarchy. Lucy's reference to Joan as her 'suposed freend' in the address is interesting in that it correlates with the conditional terms under which Lucy compliments Joan in the rest of her letter, suggesting how Joan is expected to act in response in a friendly (i.e. genteel) manner. In the body of her letter, Lucy refers to Joan as 'mistress', abbreviated to 'Mrs', while Joan refers to Lucy as 'Madame', 'Good Madam', 'your Ladishipe', 'honorable Lady' and 'your honour'. The title of *mistress* was used to refer to both gentlewomen members of the lower gentry as well as the wives of some merchants.³⁴ *Madam* became more and more the cover-all term for women of the gentry during the seventeenth century, however, it is unlikely that this term would have been appropriate for addressing Joan as early as 1602, particularly by her social superiors. Lucy's reference to Joan, therefore, clearly emphasizes her inferior place in the social order, as a woman of the nobility (such as Lucy) would never be referred to as

³⁰ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Constraints on Politeness', p. 547.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 562-3.

³² Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, pp. 166 and 165 (respectively).

³³ Ibid., p. 165.

³⁴ Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 'Constraints on politeness', p. 587.

mistress. Likewise, Joan's combination of adjectival titles such as 'good' and 'honorable' reiterates that she is an inferior addressing a superior: '[in instances of social inferiors upwards] noblewomen often received a form of address with *lady*, as in the early sixteenth-century *right honourable and my singular good lady*. Later forms include *my much/most honoured lady*. On the other hand, *madam* was a valid alternative from the sixteenth century onwards'.³⁵

While at first glance these observations seem simple enough, the placement of the terms within the letters is crucial to the force with which they are delivered. Lucy's addition of 'Mrs thynn' in the sixth line of her letter between the conjunction 'wheare fore' and the directive speech act 'lett not Mee, be wronged in thease Lynes' adds substantially to the elocutionary force of her explanation for writing and her request that her letter be interpreted in the terms of 'loue' and 'freendship' she lays out afterward. This directive is central to the purpose of Lucy's letter and the fact that she adds Joan's title to the phraseology reinforces pressure on Joan to accept Lucy's terms. In turn, Joan uses *madam* to similar effect in the sixth line of her letter, combining a conjunction with an imperative – opposed to Lucy's more indirect *let me*-phrase – in speaking of her son: 'for beleeeue itt **madam** I held nothinge mer clearly myn then I did him'. The use of a title adds emotional gravity to what Joan is writing, and emphasizes the fraught relationship between Lucy, Joan and Thomas. Interestingly, Joan also juxtaposes the opening 'Madame' at the beginning of her letter with the imperative 'thinke not much that I did not precently answer your letar'. In this way, Joan's opening serves two seemingly contradictory functions at once in that although it begins with a deferential term that observes Lucy as a member of the nobility, it is immediately followed by an imperative statement based on Joan's own personal demands, reconfigured at the expense of what would have been Lucy's face loss at receiving a letter late, two months in the making. This fashion of placing blame is also observable when, again writing on the loss of her son, Joan states 'I must lay the faulte one **your Ladishype**'. But perhaps nowhere is it more poignant than when Joan writes concerning Lucy's comments on keeping her speech civil: '**your Ladishipe** sayth you neuer gaue breath to the thought that might sound my disgrace, **Good Madam** I hoop you could not, I haue only that to be Ioyfull of, and I pray god make me thankfull for itt, that **my greatest enimies** could neuer tuch my credite indisgracefull manar'. It seems impossible to read this line without adding some exclamatory emphasis to the 'Good Madam'. The way in which these lines move from addresses of deference to suggesting the possibility that Lucy is one of Joan's 'greatest enimies' (a suggestion she cleverly

³⁵ Ibid., p. 576.

leaves to Lucy to decide) epitomizes Joan's simultaneous recognition of Lucy's place in the peerage and the system of social ideology that put her there, alongside her own personal distrust.

Consistent with the rest of her letter, Lucy closes with familiarity and self-assurance, 'So I rest bothe your eyes and my hands, remayninge, your assured freend'. The fact that she mentions both her hands and Joan's eyes communicates equality between the two and would have added coherency to Lucy's reconciliatory gesture. Furthermore, she presumes to title herself Joan's 'assured freend', a self-referential address term which Nevala categorizes using Chen's model for 'self-politeness/reference' as being confident in order to promote one's own positive face.³⁶ Joan, also running congruently with the rest of her letter, uses what is essentially a negatively polite formulation in closing with 'and this in hast, fereinge to robe **your honour** of your better employed time'. This is a clever twist on the method of ending a letter by referencing 'haste'. Usually in early modern letters, the time constraint would have been attributed to the haste of the writer themselves or that of their messenger, but here Joan attributes it to her own deferential concern for taking up Lucy's valuable time. Then, reengaging with her concept of friendship by trial, Joan signs 'your Ladyshipes as tryall shall aproue'. Joan's more conventional and deferential usage coincides with other features observed thus far in that it maintains social distance between her and Lucy: respecting her honor but, crucially, not her friendship.

Some Telling Linguistic Features

A central linguistic feature to Lucy's letter is her use of qualification in making requests, including parenthesis, conditional wording, and indirectness. A parenthetical phrase appears at the very beginning when she explains that she has not written before due to the 'many reasons Inducing a mystrust', which communicates positive politeness in recognizing an understanding of Joan's feelings. Towards the end of the letter, Lucy qualifies a 'hope' regarding her 'awne good deserte', the 'band [i.e. bond of marriage] being Indisoluble', wherein reference to 'desert' also engages with language found more widely in Elizabethan suitors' letters.³⁷ Parenthetical phrasing is coupled with conditional wording in 'yf I desire your loue, or seeke to Imbrase your freendship (as vnfaynedly in all treuthe I do) and wyshe yt long since'. The variable *if* is discussed in Lynne Magnusson's study of Elizabethan women's suitors' letters, where she describes how conditional clauses indicate a 'low level of modality' and associates their use with letters of humility and

³⁶ M. Nevala, *Address in Early English Correspondence: Its Forms and Socio-Pragmatic Functions* (Helsinki, 2004), p. 75.

³⁷ Whigham, 'The Rhetoric', p. 872.

entreaty in which truth statements are made with a low level of assurance.³⁸ So even though Lucy assures Joan in her parenthetical statement that she does ‘in all truth’ desire her love and friendship, making the ‘yf’ empty in terms of literal meaning, the inclusion of the conditional wording would have made it sound somewhat less insistent and therefore respectful of Joan’s negative face. In slight contrast, she adds some emotive force to her discussion of gossip when she writes that it is ‘not a matter vnlykely (thoughe very vnnaturall)’ that one of her kin has ostensibly been speaking ill of her in Joan’s presence. Here, Lucy’s high estimation of her own opinion is expressed by making two declarative statements without any conditional qualification. The lack of a conditional clause here, versus the one coupled with ‘yf’, may be attributed to the fact that Lucy is again writing under the assumption that Joan will share her judgments, further expressing her presupposition of a common set of values that binds them socially.

The contrast between Lucy’s indirectness and Joan’s more direct language is again observable when Joan is defending her ability to keep her speech civil, writing, ‘I am not soe redy to ronge inferiour parsones, much les an honorable Lady, of your place and reputacione, and so conseue of me, for soe you shall euer finde me’. Again, Joan omits the use of any directive verbs but simply puts her request in the imperative. This contrasts with a similar situation in 1600, also cited in Chapter 4, where she requests that her husband not be angry with her over the management of household accounts (laying the blame on a household clerk), where she does include the polite *let* with *entreat*: ‘good mr Thynne **lett me intreate** you not to conseue other wise of me then by leaue I will desarue’. In other directive speech acts to John, she almost invariably uses *I pray you*, whereas the only instance of this verb in the letter to Lucy is addressed to god: ‘I pray god make me thankfull’ (and here it is used somewhat tongue-in-cheek with reference ‘that my greatest enimies [i.e. the Audley faction] could neuer tuch my credite’).

Joan’s use of *methinks* also appears to have been a charged marker in its expression of strong self-assurance. Notably, there are only two other occurrences of this construction in all of Joan’s letters. It occurs once in a holograph letter, written to her husband, in which Joan writes rather disparagingly of John’s inability to gain the title of knighthood despite the fact that many of his peers already have theirs:

it is reporteid here my brother Tounsens shall be kniteid if it be true I can be but sory that your stainge and creadeit at courte can not procure you as much grase as he: ware I mr Thynne as you are I wold not abyn without it if I had geuen well for it if all your courtly frendeis can not proqure you that

³⁸ L. Magnusson, ‘A Rhetoric of Requests: Genre and Linguistic Scripts in Elizabethan Women’s Suitors’ Letters’, in *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700*, ed. J. Daybell (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 51-66 (61-2).

tytell I thinke the will do very Letell for you if men can not procure it yett
my thinkeis som of your greate Ladeis moughit do so much for you³⁹

At first it may seem that Joan is being sarcastic here, spurred on not only by the lack of knighthood, but also by John's relations with other women at court. However, given women's frequent role as intermediaries in the culture of patronage at court and abroad, it seems more likely that she is earnestly suggesting that he take action by other, perhaps more effective means of courting influence. Either way, Joan was upset over John's underachievement and reprimands him to motivate him to follow as many lines of influence as possible. The other occurrence comes from a scribal letter to Thomas and again she is upset, this time over the fact that Thomas failed to send a reply over pressing concerns for his sister's dowry:

I marvaile much that yow wold not perform yor promise in cominge to me nor yet send me some aunswere of my late sent *lres* I conceaue yor great businesses *wch* yow haue there daylie staided yor cominge but yet **me thinkes** yow might haue sent some messenger *wth* aunswere vnto them as I wold haue donne to yow yf yow had writ to me touching matters of like ymportance⁴⁰

Joan frequently uses *I think* to express herself in her letters, but seems to reserve *methinks* to only a select number of cases, all of which are very clearly charged with some emotional significance. In this way, Joan's usage of it in her letter to Lucy is very fitting. It is hard to know whether or not Lucy would have picked up on the usage; however, research done using the Helsinki Corpus shows that *methinks* was relatively uncommon throughout early modern English texts and it seems that its use was somewhat distinct from the much more common *I think* construction.⁴¹ It would have been an older form in Joan and Lucy's time, having been slightly more common in the early sixteenth century; by the early seventeenth century its appearance in private letters is extremely rare and may have belonged to a more formal register. Therefore, it is likely that a formalized usage in Joan's letters was meant to highlight the intensity of her feelings about the subject, much in the same way that she uses formal/deferential address terms to elocutionary effect.

The statement that begins 'if I can not att the first concar my oune pacience' sounds very much like a direct reply to Lucy's 'yf I desire your loue'. Instead of introducing a request as in a construction such as 'if it please you' or in a statement which is dependent upon certain conditions, this *if*, although it may appear conditional, actually offers the writer's feelings without any following qualifications. In this way, Joan is not suggesting

³⁹ V.108 (1601).

⁴⁰ VIII.36 (1611).

⁴¹ M. Palander-Collin, *Grammaticalization and Social Embedding: I THINK and METHINKS in Middle and Early Modern English* (Helsinki, 1999).

that there is something unsure about the fact that she cannot get over the wrongs committed against her; and likewise, Lucy was not trying to indicate that she may or may not desire Joan's friendship – instead, like the *let me*-construction, it creates a situation of artificial approval.

The rhetorical *if*, which is not actually introducing a hypothetical statement, is found nowhere else in Joan's letters, holograph or scribal. Nor is it found anywhere else in the (albeit limited) group of Lucy's letters. There is, however, a similar usage in a letter from Maria to Joan, in which the former writes, 'thinke not that ytt proceedes of any carelesnes of yr fauor, or forgettfullnes of the dewtye I now owe you, **yf** henceforth I omitte wryghtinge vnto you'.⁴² It is highly doubtful that Maria would have written this with the intent of making it sound ambiguous and even though she did end up writing later letters to Joan, her intent here was to convince Joan that she meant not to. It is also worth noting that Maria was, in a way, excusing herself in making the decision to discontinue her writing to Joan, and was trying to maintain her own face just as much as Joan's. Therefore, at least among this small group, it would seem that the rhetorical use of *if* was reserved for sensitive occasions in which the writer knew that they were committing a serious face-threatening act. In Lucy's letter, the threat she risks in *desiring* Joan's love and friendship is Joan's refusal. For Maria, it is the fact that she is purposefully and explicitly discontinuing the correspondence with her mother-in-law. And for Joan, it is her wariness of accepting Lucy's epistolary gesture and the larger social implications that this would have for conceding power to the Audley faction.

Summary of Politeness Strategies

As I have suggested throughout this chapter, the politeness strategies employed by Joan and Lucy differ in fairly clear ways. Lucy, in the position of having committed a serious (non-linguistic) face-threatening act in arranging the secret marriage between Maria and Thomas, and then writing to Joan with the knowledge that Joan remained of a 'harde' disposition, uses mostly positive politeness in an attempt to ameliorate the relationship. Her opening incorporates several positive politeness strategies in an attempt to coax Joan into a positive response. She uses Brown and Levinson's 'Strategy 1: Notice, attend to H (her interests, wants, needs, goods)', in admitting to the fact that Joan has had many reasons to mistrust friendship with Lucy. Lucy's optimism (whether actual or feigned) is expressed in her referencing an 'assured hope', which is built on a belief in Joan's good manners – 'Strategy 11: Be optimistic'. One might also categorize Lucy's

⁴² VIII.18 (1602).

gesture towards Joan's positive face as 'Strategy 15: Give gifts to H', which includes not only material goods but 'human relation wants', here manifested as Lucy praising Joan's 'vertu and curtesi'.⁴³ That Lucy assumes Joan will understand the distinctions she makes between 'base flattery' and some more acceptable expression of friendship also incorporates a positive politeness strategy described by Brown and Levinson as 'Presuppose H's values are the same as S's values'. Of course, admitting that she had committed a past offense and making a request to a social inferior would have warranted self-politeness strategies from Lucy as well. The main way in which Lucy exhibits self-politeness is through the confidence she expresses in her deservingness of friendship: for example, the way in which she legitimizes her own rhetorical performance of friendship by reiterating the congruencies of her heart and mind with that of her epistolary expression, or the parenthetical statement where she assures Joan that she 'unfaynedly in all truethe' does desire her love. Self-politeness is also realized by Lucy as she justifies the 'manner' in which she has acted in the past by emphasizing the seemingly indisputable grounding of 'matter' (i.e. her sense of her and her daughter as above the Thynnes socially and therefore desirable as in-laws).

In-group terminology further emphasizes the union of the two families, and Lucy even uses the possessive in claiming Thomas as 'my dearest own' and offering Maria to Joan as her 'loving and dutiful' daughter. Intimate-sounding phrases such as 'your loue', 'Imbrase your freendship' and 'freendlyest effectes' also promote Lucy's strategy, incorporating a terminology of positive politeness that Tieken-Boon van Ostade describes in the familiar letters between Sarah Fielding and Elizabeth Montagu in the eighteenth century as particularly characteristic of letters between 'genteel' women.⁴⁴ Of course, the motives propelling these strategies are complicated by the fact that they were intended to pressure Joan into accepting rhetorical friendship and to protect Lucy's face from the potential of being rejected. And in this respect, Lucy is using the rules of social etiquette as an indirect way of coercing Joan into the action she desires:

When a person treats face-work not as something he need be prepared to perform, but rather as something that others can be counted on to perform or to accept, then an encounter or an undertaking becomes less a scene of mutual considerateness than an arena in which a contest or match is held.⁴⁵

Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that Lucy positive 'politeness' is in fact a rhetorical method of exploiting power to script the relationship as she wishes.

⁴³ P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 101-29.

⁴⁴ I. Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 'A Little Learning a Dangerous Thing? Learning and Gender in Sarah Fielding's Letters to James Harris', *Language Sciences* 22 (2000), pp. 339-58 (p. 351).

⁴⁵ Goffman, *Interaction Ritual*, p. 24.

Joan responds to this by way of negative politeness or simply by going baldly on record with her discordant emotions. The use of negative politeness is observable in Joan's employment of deferential address terms such as *good madam* and *your ladyship*, as well as in the way in which she emphasizes her respect for Lucy's 'honor'. This is also evident when she writes towards the beginning of her reply, 'I confes your Daughters berthe, far aboute my sonnes desertes or degree', wherein 'desertes' responds to Lucy's use of the term, agreeing to some extent in drawing attention to Thomas's lower birth than Maria. Joan's closing could also be categorized in terms of negative politeness, in that it superficially respects the value of Lucy's 'better employed time'.⁴⁶ These realizations of negative politeness would have been conventionally appropriate to Joan's lower social standing; however, their deferential tone is strongly juxtaposed to Joan's unabashed emotional expression, and her use of self-politeness in rejecting Lucy's gesture and maintaining social distance.

In all likelihood, Joan would have much preferred not to have replied to Lucy at all and that she was not averse to simply letting a letter go without a response is clear from the frustration expressed by Maria in her letters to Joan (see especially letter VIII.18, in which Maria writes that 'no intreatyes of myne Can prevayle'). However, the fact that Lucy was of a greater social status and that she involves Joan's civility and reputation clearly added some motivation to reply. Given that Joan was unwilling to accept Lucy's terms of friendship, her letter is essentially a mitigation of expressing refusal, while not completely sacrificing her civility; therefore, she uses several positive self-politeness strategies such as justification and confidence, providing an argument for *why* she is reluctant to accept Lucy's terms. To do this, Joan recasts the light back onto the Audley faction, laying blame on Lucy for wrongful acts (even going so far as to suggest that she is one of her 'greatest enemies'). Joan also goes on record with her own definition of 'true friendship', which qualifies Lucy's in significant ways.

The seemingly contradictory use of strategies, providing deferential address terms and the negatively polite closing, with self-politeness and the reference to Lucy as one of her 'greatest enemies', gives Joan's letter a 'hot/cold' feeling which might well have been precisely what she was hoping for. One might assume that Joan chose to respond in this way because it manages to pay lip-service to at least some of the codes of civility, maintains the social distance between her and Lucy that she wished to preserve, but also adds some force to what was clearly an emotionally charged subject.

⁴⁶ For a description of 'deference' as politeness strategy see Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, pp. 178-87.

Keeping all of this in mind, the choices made by Joan and Lucy only partly correspond with what might be expected if one were only to consider their respective social stations. Both Brown and Levinson's original study and historical sociolinguists have made the observation that positive politeness is usually reserved for superiors addressing inferiors, whereas negative politeness is more common in letters written in the other direction:

A superior in relative power usually has precedence over his/her inferiors, which is displayed in his/her ability to use positive politeness in address even if the distance is close. In Early and Late Modern England, as in many of those present-day societies where the majority of public relations are governed by power relations, this appears to be asymmetrical: negative politeness is used by inferiors in return.⁴⁷

Therefore, Lucy's use of positive politeness and familiarity might be seen as a conventionalized method of corresponding with Joan as a socially inferior woman, further reflecting the way in which although negative politeness was the most common method of interaction in the Elizabethan period, 'familiar styles do nonetheless exist for negotiating relations'.⁴⁸ Joan, on the other hand, if she had acted according to period conventions, would certainly not have gone on record with her views and emotions or been so explicitly discordant with Lucy's attempts at positive politeness. However, it is clear that the socio-familial context made a conventionally polite response a hard thing for her to manage and therefore she is forced into redefining civility on her own terms. The fact that it took Joan two months to reply, along with her deference to Lucy's honor but not her friendship and that she is unable to 'conquer my own patience' reveals the tension she felt in trying to respect Lucy's face while simultaneously preserving her own.

Palaeography and Text

In addition to the rhetorical and linguistic dimensions examined thus far, there are several observations to be made about the material aspects of the letters to do with handwriting, layout and the use of space. As described in the previous chapter, these aspects of a letter were a language of their own, which were as significant as any other linguistic feature. And just as there were observable differences between Joan's holograph and scribal letters, there seems to be something particularly significant about Joan's letter to Lucy as well. In fact, it would appear that Joan may have fashioned features of her response in accordance with those found in Lucy's letter.

⁴⁷ Nevala, *Address in Early English Correspondence*, p. 237.

⁴⁸ Magnusson, *Shakespeare and Social Dialogue*, p. 74.

The overall layout of the letter from Lucy to Joan is clearly different from other surviving letters from her (of which there is one to Maria and several to Thomas). In the letter to Maria and also one of the letters to Thomas, Lucy carries the body of her text over into the margin, running on for a number of lines. In the other two letters, the text ends about half-way down the page and therefore a significant amount of the page remains blank. The letter to Joan, on the other hand, fits perfectly on the page on which it was written, maintaining an overhead and left hand margin, with the body text finishing with just enough room to include the closing and signature. This feat of spacing probably required careful planning, and perhaps even several drafts. Likewise, Joan's letter to Lucy is unlike other examples of Joan's writing (compare, e.g., the facsimile at the beginning of this chapter with that from Chapter 5 and examples of Joan's writing in Appendix 1). Particularly in her holograph letters, Joan tended towards a less strictly ruled spacing, oftentimes carrying over into the left-hand margin or over additional pages. In contrast, the spacing in her response to Lucy is nearly identical to that of Lucy's letter to her. The body text fits the page perfectly, with clear and neat margins above and to the left. The signature is tucked into the extreme bottom right-hand corner, but without cramming the letters. The place and date of composition (inclusive of the day, month and year) were written separately in the bottom left-hand margin. If it is given at all, Joan's holograph letters often fit the date into the last line of the body of the letter, while the closing and the signature commonly follow into the left-hand margin. Scribal letters also include the place and date within the body text, but tend to leave a large amount of negative space towards the end of a letter. Therefore, the spacing in Lucy's letter to Joan resembles that of Joan's reply more than any of Joan's other letters, whether holograph or scribal. This observation emphasizes the fact that both women were highly conscious of organizing space for effect. The time it would have taken to compose a letter in such an organized way may have reflected the writer's willingness to address the subject-matter (and their recipient) without being rushed. This makes Joan's comment about being 'in haste' all the more trope-like here, as the letter itself was very clearly not written in haste.

Perhaps even more striking is the handwriting of the text. Both are without question some of the most careful and ornately flourished italic scripts to be found amongst the Thynne Papers during this period. Joan's letter in particular was written slowly by someone with a steady and well practiced hand. The stylized 'clubs' on the end of ascenders and descenders in letters such as capital <i>, lowercase <f> and others 'became a vogue in the 1620's and 1630's'; with this letter offering a slightly earlier, although

perhaps less exaggerated example.⁴⁹ The clubbing of these letters, which are essentially purposeful ‘blots’, suggest that there was a slight pause and a deliberate pen lift before and after finishing each and every letter; and given the fact that ink was on a quill, it would have been easy to make a mess of one’s letter by writing in this fashion. Therefore, it would have taken an extraordinary amount of time to write a letter like this in comparison to Joan’s more usual holograph italic, or even the secretary scripts in her scribal letters. There is also a great amount of attention paid to the flourishes added to the ascenders on the capitalized version of some letters and consistently with <l>, <t>, <h>, etc. Throughout the body text, flourishes frequently loop back through themselves, which was usually an extra effort that writers saved for elaborating their signature, further emphasizing the significance of presentation of the text. Given the fact that what survives from Joan is only a copy of what would have been sent, one can assume that the final version would have been equally, if not more carefully written with attention to detail.

Like the layout, this palaeography is unprecedented in any of Joan’s other writing, holograph or scribal. Upon observation of Lucy’s initial letter, it would seem that the one is modeled on the other. Furthermore, it appears that Joan attempted to gain an advantage over Lucy in the presentation of her script, although it is unclear whether or not she wrote it herself. It is fairly sure that Lucy wrote her letter as she closes, ‘So rest I bothe your eyes and my hands’, however, it is in a script much neater and well formed than other surviving examples. There is no such reference to composition in Joan’s letter and the spellings provide no obvious irregularities. But whether it was holograph or not, it is clear from the evidence that the organizational and paleographic features of Joan’s letter here were much closer to Lucy’s than to any other of Joan’s own surviving letters. Furthermore, there can be little doubt that this was done under the influence of the exchange and the sensitivity to do with power relations. It is difficult to imagine that Joan would have composed her letter in this fashion simply as a deferential gesture towards Lucy. It was more likely done to communicate that, like other aspects of her response, Joan was not only capable of recognizing forms of courtesy and virtue, but that she could very well offer her own interpretations, and recompose (even better) them herself.

Linguistic accommodation is a well recognized category of explaining sociolinguistic variation both in present-day and historical study. Allan Bell (2001) explains that, ‘audience design is generally manifested in a speaker shifting her style to be more like that of the person she is talking to – this is “convergence” in the terms of the

⁴⁹ G. E. Dawson and L. Kennedy-Skipton, *Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650: A Guide to the Reading of Documents and Manuscripts* (London, 1966), p. 108.

Speech/Communication Accommodation Theory'.⁵⁰ From the historical perspective, Jeremy J. Smith has described how language-users 'monitor' and adapt their speech towards prestigious prototypes (oftentimes over-shooting the mark), which has been a significant factor in linguistic change for English – particularly in the case of the aspirant/merchant classes.⁵¹ Albeit brief, the evidence here suggests that these theories could also be applied to the material and paleographical aspects of epistolary exchanges – perhaps even writing systems.

The Complexities of Negotiation

Power relations between Joan and Lucy were complex and the terms under which their relationship was to proceed were subject to negotiation. This chapter has exhibited the way in which multiple dimensions interact in the rhetorical, linguistic and material strategies employed in their epistolary exchange. Many times, these factors reiterate one another in ways that amplify the face either woman had adopted to present their views on past events and the possibility of 'friendship'. Furthermore, it has become clear that in order to comprehend the significance of any one feature of the text, it is necessary to consider it in relation to other strategies, taking into account how these relate to the overall communicative significance of the exchange. For example, because the address terms in Joan's letter seem to express deference and might be categorized as such in a larger study of address terms in relation to Joan's inferior social station, this in no way fully accounts for the complex way in which she uses these terms for elocutionary effect, and in contrast to separate notions of friendship from Lucy. The incorporation of politeness strategies – derived from Brown and Levinson's theory – is also complicated in that considerations of addressee-orientated politeness must be considered in conjunction with self-politeness and its rhetorical implications.

In addition, this study has offered interesting evidence for the terminology and rhetorical language with which the upper classes scripted social relations. Conceptions of friendship are perhaps the most importantly contested issue in the letters, especially considering that Lucy's letter is essentially a rhetorical display, worded in a way that puts pressure on Joan to accept 'friendship' and Joan's response is a guarded refusal. But beyond the stark dichotomy of request/refusal, there lie the different terminologies for characterizing friendship, which both women use as arguments for their views on the relationship. Lucy emphasizes the importance of rhetorical friendship and 'sincere' (albeit

⁵⁰ A. Bell, 'Back in Style: Reworking Audience Design', *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*, ed. P. Eckert and J. R. Rickford (Cambridge and New York, 2001), pp. 139-68 (p. 143).

⁵¹ J. J. Smith, *A Historical Study of English: Function, Form and Change* (London and New York, 1996), p. 93.

superficial) displays of affection, however, Joan's reply communicates a defensive strategy in that it demands some degree of proof, or 'trial'. Likewise, language and social ideologies to do with what might be categorized as genteel civility – suggested in words such as 'virtue', 'courtesy', 'reputation', 'honor' and 'disposition' – prove to be crucial points of reference and contention. Almost every facet of Joan and Lucy's social lives would have been governed by general understandings of civility, the belief system within which all members of the aristocracy were evaluated by their peers. In this way, control over defining these terms was crucial for either woman to forward her case and express her own views, while maintaining some personal sense of social integrity, or 'face'. A key in formulating this negotiation on the page has to do with the way in which both Lucy and Joan explicitly foresee and provide preemptive defenses against potential interpretations of their letters (e.g. Lucy emphasizes her claims of sincerity and Joan justifies her tardiness in replying and her wariness of Lucy's gesture), a point which reiterates Fitzmaurice's observation that 'the utterer is necessarily interpreter, just as the addressee is also necessarily interpreter and utterer' in epistolary communication.⁵² For pragmaticians today, recognizing the ways in which this was accomplished and how individual expression commonly references wider socio-rhetorical understandings of terminology and ways of conceiving of relationships requires close reading, oftentimes between the lines.

Joan and Lucy's epistolary exchange offers a window into what was a more general movement of change in early modern England described by Bryson: 'far from simply holding up the "civilizing process", such conflicts frequently underlay and moulded notions of civility, and made codes of manners an ambiguous and contested area of social change'.⁵³ Therefore, it may be concluded that the close study of specific letter exchanges such as this offer a rich, if complex, source of information not only for the particular circumstances in which they were written but also for the detailed information regarding the nature of early modern English social life and epistolary practice.

⁵² S. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern England* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2002), p. 177.

⁵³ Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, p. 197.

CHAPTER 7

‘I haue trobled *with* a tedious discours’: Sincerity, Sarcasm and Seriousness in the letters of Maria Thynne, c. 1601-10¹

In their diachronic study of insults in English, Jucker and Taavitsainen recognize the ‘pragmatic space’ between sincerity and irony as a matter of speaker attitude, emphasizing the ‘fuzziness’ this space creates for the interpretation of meaning.² As historical pragmatics, orientating ourselves within this space and deciphering attitudes and meaning for English texts over four hundred years old is complicated by several factors. One is that we have much less, if any access to extra-linguistic cues when dealing solely with textual language. As opposed to speech, where it is possible to compare *what* is being said, literally, with *how* it is said (through intonation, body language, etc.), written irony, and specifically sarcasm, works by juxtaposing *what* is said in one part of a ‘linear string’ and *what* is said elsewhere.³ And analogously, the construction of meaning in letters is greatly dependant upon stringing together present expression with that which has been written elsewhere, both in terms of what has passed between particular recipients and, more generally, what was expected in terms of the conventions of letter-writing, such as address terms, forms of politeness, speech act verbs, and so on. Sarcasm relies on its ability to disrupt these linear strings in writing, using subversive or marked items – what linguist John Haiman (1998) refers to as ‘segmental markers of the sarcastic modality’ – to signal an insincere, or non-literal message.⁴

In extension to the first, the second challenge comes from the fact that the conventional social intercourse of early modern England tends to sound flamboyant or over-inflated to modern readers. Steen makes this point in her investigation of the epistolary ‘voices’ of Lady Arbella Stuart, qualifying an apologetic letter to James I by remarking that ‘whether she means it or not [. . .] she does so in rhetoric that should have been humble enough to satisfy the most absolutist king, rhetoric that to a modern ear

¹ This chapter forms the basis of an article (of the same name) accepted for publication in the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 11:2 (2010, forthcoming). I am grateful to the editors for their support and to the anonymous reviewers for their very valuable and constructive feedback on the original submission.

² A. H. Jucker, and I. Taavitsainen, ‘Diachronic Speech Act Analysis: Insults From Flying to Flaming’, *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 1:1 (2000), pp. 67-95 (p. 74).

³ Haiman distinguishes sarcasm as a particular type of irony: ‘First, situations may be ironic, but only people can be sarcastic. Second, people may be unintentionally ironic, but sarcasm requires intention. What is essential to sarcasm is that it is overt irony *intentionally used by the speaker as a form of verbal aggression*, and it may thus be contrasted with other aggressive speech acts, among them the put-on, direct insults, curses, vituperation, nagging, and condescension’ (1998: 20).

⁴ J. Haiman, *Talk is Cheap: Sarcasm, Alienation and the Evolution of Language* (Oxford, 1998), p. 41.

sounds an ironic note'.⁵ In this respect, we must be cautious in our attempts to judge the effects of stylistic decisions and not mistake what were perfectly acceptable 'sincere' performances for what might seem like purposefully hyperformalistic sarcasm. This quote from Steen also brings up the point that sincerity was an abstract, ideological enterprise in society and language, which makes it difficult to reduce pragmatically as a speaker simply 'meaning' what they say. For, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the importance of engaging with the rhetoric of sincerity (at least in the early modern period) had to do with dealing with potential incongruities between thought and expression by making explicit reference to the transparency of one's 'heart', 'mind' or 'thoughts'. Therefore, it is important to distinguish sincerity as a rhetorical strategy, as someone attempting to be *perceived* as meaning what they say, or write. In this way, sincerity is an extra message, 'I mean this', which accompanies a more central message. Sarcasm, as a communicative strategy, works in the opposite direction:

[. . .] sarcasm is characterized by the *intentional production* of an *overt and separate* metamessage "I don't mean this" in which the speaker expresses hostility or ridicule of another speaker, who presumably *does* "mean this" in uttering an *ostensibly positive* message. The "other speaker" may be the sarcasm's present interlocutor, an absent third person, or a conventional attitude.⁶

This definition works particularly well for the current analysis because it suggests that using sarcastic language is a matter of pragmatics in speech acts: between what is said and what is meant, or locution and illocution. From this perspective, the location of sarcasm in early modern letters is likely to be dependent upon disrupting the 'positive' types of epistolary conventions that have been discussed in the previous chapters. Furthermore, Haiman acknowledges the fact that sarcasm can be used with reference not only to other people but also more abstract, ideological entities such as a 'conventional attitude' – a point we will see is important in Maria's use of sarcasm and irony to subvert what would have been expected of her socially.

The potential relationship between the ideology of sincerity and the subversive nature of sarcasm makes it important to locate potential case histories in English where an individual writer has made clear attempts at both forms of expression as part of their stylistic repertoire. By doing so we may come to better understand the nature of the pragmatic space in/between contexts of utterance and the possible significance this might have for the period in question. Given the fact that examples of sarcasm from quotidian, non-literary texts in Maria's period are rare, the juxtaposition of sincerity and irony in her

⁵ S. J. Steen, 'Fashioning an Acceptable Self: Arbella Stuart', *English Literary Renaissance* 18:1 (1988), pp. 78-95 (p. 93).

⁶ Haiman, *Talk is Cheap*, p. 25.

letters to Joan and Thomas provide us with a unique opportunity for studying these contrasting means of expression in the context of early modern English. Furthermore, Maria's usage opens up questions about how sincerity and sarcasm were in fact deeply related means of expression.

Paying close attention to the linguistic and rhetorical elements employed in the letters, always considering the familial and wider social contexts, the current chapter offers pragmatically orientated readings of Maria's correspondence, specifically her rhetorical strategies and engagement with sincerity, sarcasm and seriousness. Firstly, I will consider her petitionary letters to Joan, extending the discussion on the rhetoric of sincerity started in the previous chapter, and further characterizing it as a pragmatic device allowing for superficial closure of the uncomfortable discord between thought and expression. In addition, Maria's engagement with the notion of *trial*, as well as rhetorical uses of God and kinship terminology will be considered. Next, the sarcastic letter to Joan is described as reopening the gap that sincerity was meant to close, operating through a disruption of conventionalized social scripts and linguistic features. Sarcasm in the letters to Thomas is shown as operating in a similar fashion, but with a different communicative purpose. Then, that the common employment of sarcasm created a need to delineate seriously minded sections of text is shown by describing the explicit and stylistic features of Maria's serious writing to Thomas. Finally, taking into account the way in which sincerity and sarcasm both served as means of linguistic control motivated by a growing awareness of language as performative action, I suggest the wider implications this study may have for the history of the expression of sarcasm in English.

'to trouble you *with* a Longe petytion for yr fauor': Thought, Expression and Sincerity

As in her mother Lucy's letter to Joan discussed in the previous chapter, one of the most salient rhetorical strategies employed in Maria's petitionary letters to Joan addresses the apparent need to reconcile what might have come across as a contradiction between actual/inner *thought* and epistolary/external *expression*. To this end, Maria places a large amount of emphasis on the sincerity and goodness of her entreaties. Although clearly not the first letter Maria wrote to Joan, the first surviving letter seeks reconciliation in lieu of the officiated marriage and begins immediately by stating:

Yf I dyd knowe that **my thoughtes** had euer intertayned any vnreuerent
conseyte of you (good mother) I shoulde be much ashamed so Impudintlye
to Importune yr good oppinion as I haue dune by **manye intreatinge**
lynes,⁷

⁷ VIII.12 (1601).

In this pre-emptive defence of herself, Maria locates a value system which emphasizes the importance of sincerity that she assumes Joan to esteem, and makes her own expression amenable to it by showing her strong disapproval of superficial performances (where expression is non-congruent with thought), using words such as ‘ashamed’, ‘impudently’ and ‘importune’. That this rhetoric, which dealt with the problem of sincerity, came to be particularly associated with the court and nobility makes it significant that Maria herself had been a courtier of sorts, and as a maid of the Privy Chamber to Elizabeth I in the 1590’s she would have undoubtedly been schooled in the highest echelons of courtly etiquette. Such an education may very well have been informal, as it was for Mary Fitton who was also sent to the privy chamber in her teens during the 1590’s, and was advised in such matters by William Knollys (who became romantically infatuated with her). Upon her father’s request, Knollys promises to teach Mary the ways of distinguishing between outward expression and inward intention, as ‘all their songs be Syren-like, and their kisses after Judas fashion, but from such beasts deliver me and my friends’.⁸ Thus, through exposure to courtly rhetoric in practice, Maria’s time spent as an attendant to the Queen would have taught her to be wary of sounding too much like an insincere flatterer in searching for advancement through epistolary petitioning – a sophisticated conscientiousness she makes explicit in her letters to Joan. Tellingly, Lady Arbella Stuart expresses a similar denial of insubordinate thinking in a letter written to James I, in 1610:

I doe (most humbly on my knees) beseech your Majestie to believe, that **that thought never ytt entered my harte**, to doe any thinge that might justlie deserve any parte of your indignacion⁹

Again, these examples provide epistolary evidence of what Martin (2004) has located more generally in the period, and refers to as the ‘proffered heart’, exhibiting how this ideology translated to rhetorical references to the internal thoughts of a writer in relation to their outwardly professed duty, love, and/or subservience to an addressee.

A few years later, in letter VIII.22 of December, 1603, Maria reemphasizes this statement by writing:

To you my Dearlye Loued moother are thess Lynes Sent, from **her that hath vowed** to make her Selfe as worthe, as her best Service can make her, of so kinde a moother as yr Selfe: all my desyer is; that you shoulde not wronge me so much, as to holde **the senceritye of my affection** Susspected, esspeciallye since ther is not any pollityke respectes to cawse desimulation, for I Crave nothinge but yr good oppinion,

⁸ Lady A. E. Newdigate (ed.), *Gossip From a Muniment-Room: Being Passages in the Lives of Anne and Mary Fitton, 1574 to 1618* (London, 1898), p. 11.

⁹ S. J. Steen (ed.), *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart* (New York and Oxford, 1994), letter 86, p. 247.

Explicitly making a *vow*, Maria argues against the possible interpretation that what she refers to in an earlier letter (VIII.20) to Joan as ‘the performance of my dewty towards you’ is only an attempt at her own advancement, or ‘politic respects’. This argument continues to echo period debates as several writers took up the view that “‘civility” is an aspect not of obedience or socially directed virtue but of policy’.¹⁰ As described by Martin, these complications of interpreting expressions of obedience was complicated by the fact that Renaissance identity often drew dually, conversely and even simultaneously on the ‘prudential self (a rhetorical posture that subordinated honesty to decorum)’ and ‘the ideal of sincerity (which subordinated decorum to honesty)’.¹¹ The problem here, of course, is that one was expected to engage with scripts aimed at the ‘ideal of sincerity’ in order to express their duty to others (parents, patrons, etc.) even when – especially when – involved in prudential action.

Awareness of the gap between expression and meaning in an aristocratic culture, highly dependent upon linguistic ceremony, may well have coincided with the development of Elizabethan drama. From *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972), Lionel Trilling writes: ‘The sixteenth century was preoccupied to an extreme degree with dissimulation, feigning, and pretense’, and thus it was ‘surely no accident that the idea of sincerity, of the own self and the difficulty of knowing and showing it, should have arisen to vex men’s minds in the epoch that saw the sudden efflorescence of the theater’.¹² Furthermore, with specific reference to epistolary rhetoric, Frank Whigham observes, ‘Everywhere one meets the Elizabethans peering behind the arras [. . .] Their hostility to painted faces [on the stage] was merely a shrill defence against the reflexive apprehension of painted minds’.¹³ Maria and Joan were very much a part of this epoch, growing more and more aware of the theatrical, performative nature of everyday social life. Nonetheless, the obligation remained for interlocutors to *act* according to that which promoted period social ideologies, namely systems of patronage and civility, which linguistically speaking were to a large extent a means of engaging with sociopragmatically significant performative speech acts (oftentimes directives, as exhibited in Chapter 4), while simultaneously recognizing power networks and giving credence to individuals’ face wants.

Maria’s appeal, with its repeated insistence on sincerity, specifies the pragmatic space within which other linguistic features of her petitions were meant to be interpreted.

¹⁰ A. Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998), p. 205.

¹¹ J. J. Martin, *Myths of Renaissance Individualism* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 117.

¹² L. Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972), pp. 14 and 11 (respectively).

¹³ F. Whigham, ‘The Rhetoric of Elizabethan Suitor’s Letters’, *PLMA* 96:5 (1981), pp. 864-82 (p. 878).

The language of Maria's expression is particularly sensitive to her performance of the 'loving daughter' as it is rehearsed through letters: unable to petition Joan in person, the way in which Maria performs her (hoped-for) role in her letters is the sole outlet for its enactment. In speech act terms, Maria's petitions are attempts at making the world fit her words, wherein her *vowing* is a commissive act that formalizes her desire to be of service and her worthiness to be accepted. In addition, performatives such as *beseech* and *confess* come up in these letters as well, sometimes with extensive attention paid to Joan's sense of negative face. In letter VIII.20, 1603, Maria creates an artificial situation of approval, begging Joan's permission even to desire her favor: '**giue me Leaue I beseech you wth** owt offence, to craue your fauore and good oppinion'. And later in the same letter she writes, '**I must confess** yr fauor woulde giue a greate increase to my happynes', highlighting the way in which these entreaties, although carefully scripted, were threats to Joan's negative face in that they imply a social obligation to accept Maria, thereby limiting Joan's own sense of freedom.

In sum, Maria's petitionary letters to Joan could be interpreted as attempting to solve some of the problems inherent to a culture of patronage, which depended upon, but was also growing suspicious of, the performative nature of its social scripts. Clearly, the concept of sincerity, at least as it is rehearsed in epistolary correspondence here, was more a reflection of anxiety than actual affection. Viewed in this way, the rhetorical posture of sincerity served as a superficial means of closure between thought and expression in situations where the latter very clearly did not/could not reflect the former.

Trial, God, Kinship Terms and Flattery: Extending the Rhetoric of Sincerity

There are several other rhetorical strategies Maria uses to support the 'sincerity' of her petitioning. One part of this repertoire has to do with the way in which she engages with and elaborates upon the terminology to do with 'trial', which we also came across in Joan's response to Lucy. Given that letter VIII.22 was (as Maria herself indicates towards the end) written in response to a letter from her mother-in-law, it might be that Joan had employed the same rhetoric of 'trial' seen in the previous chapter in her letter to Lucy, which could be why Maria deals with it so explicitly here:

becawse **the best prooffe Comes by tryall, trye me as you please**, and yf you finde my words and actions differ, **Lett me be punished wth the loss of my creaditt both wth you, and the worlde**, wch god best knowes woulde be no Smalle greefe vnto me /

In this way – either responding or using it pre-emptively – Maria takes up the challenge of being tried, again offering herself to be at Joan’s disposal, for Joan to test the verity of her affection by calling upon her to perform dutiful service. However, given the circumstances and Maria’s own profession in letter VIII.14 to ‘my Crose fortune, wch yeelds me no meanes to performe any matter of gret merrytt towards you’, it is unlikely that this was anything more than a rhetorical display, further meant to prove that Maria knew how to express her daughterly devotion *in writing*. Whether Joan got much opportunity to actually try her seems doubtful, considering that the next and last letter that survives, written only a few years later, is highly aggressive and very sarcastic, reflecting severe distance between the two to a point that would almost certainly rule out civil interaction. What is particularly interesting about the above passage is that it directly follows the section of text cited earlier from the same letter that mentions ‘the senceritye of my affection’, demonstrating how the idea of trial could serve as a rhetorical extension to the language of sincerity, as was also suggested by the letters from the Countess of Bedford (cited in Chapter 6), who asked Lady Joan Cornwallis to make ‘trials’ of her ‘hart’.

The above section from letter VIII.22 also contains the submissive gesture of laying Maria’s ‘credit’ before Joan and the ‘world’. This too seems to have been a conventional gesture and a similar entreaty is made in a letter from Anne Talbot (née Herbert) to her mother-in-law (and also her stepmother) Elizabeth, countess of Shrewsbury, written in May of 1575. In not having written as often as she was expected to, Anne expresses a consciousness that she has performed her role poorly and that Elizabeth may have taken some offence:

as I haue alwayes profesed and as dewtye doth bynd me, ready at your La: comandement, and In any thyng I maye shoue yf ether at thys tyme or when occasyon serue yf I be not as wyllinge therto as any chylde of your owne, then **lett me be condemened accordynge to my desertes**, otherwys I humbly craue your La: good openyon of me not to decrease¹⁴

So, although the severity of offence would probably have been much less for Anne, the speech act which frames their language is close enough that she relies on similar methods of humbling herself and expressing her daughterly duty, even using the same forms of verbal supplication in a *let me*-phrase. Understanding how properly scripted performances were the key to receiving the ‘good openyon’ of a parent (or any patron) helps illuminate the somewhat complex statement in Maria’s first letter to Joan, ‘I coulede not be so greate an enemye to my owne hapynes, as to wante yr fauor, for wante of desyeringe ytt’.¹⁵ The fact that she states her desire in terms of a duty not only to Joan, but to herself, suggests an

¹⁴ Folger Library MS Cavendish-Talbot Papers Xd.428.121 (1575).

¹⁵ VIII.12 (1601).

understanding that the demarcated roles within the greater hierarchy of English social relations were important and that it was necessary to strive towards performing one's role properly. In instances where duty was not expressed successfully, a daughter (or son) risked not only personal disapproval from a parent but wider public condemnation in their inability to properly perform as obedient, dutiful and loving in other relations, not the least of which was servitude to the monarch.¹⁶

'God' was also implicated by Maria as a rhetorical device and in the first surviving letter to Joan, Maria presents God's 'powerfull workeinge' as something that might turn Joan's heart and force her to realize that her judgement of Maria has been made without just cause:

yf I hade not dyuers and sundrye wayes had greate exsperyence of **gods powerfull workeinge**, I shoulde longe since haue binne discouraged from prosecuting my sute, haueinge often intreated, yett coulde neuer obtayne ytt, butt knoweing **there is in god both a power, and a wyll**, I cannot butt hope he wyll exersyse that power, to the turninge of yr harte towards me; so as one daye you wyll saye; that **I haue vndeservedlye borne the punishment of yr dyspleasure** /¹⁷

In this way, Maria exaggerates previous protestations of sincerity by bringing in the authority of God's own knowledge of the situation – i.e. the truth of Maria's deservingness. Here Maria's letter implies more than personal judgements, even more than wider social judgements, and moves into the religious area of experience. It seems fairly clear that this type of language was meant to do more than simply highlight Maria as a good and godly young woman: it indirectly suggests that by refusing her petitions, Joan is somehow working against the will of God. This juxtaposition of Joan's 'dyspleasure' and 'godes goodnes' re-emerges in the letter where Maria writes of her intention to end the correspondence with Joan (although she does write again later that same year):

not dispayeringe in **godes goodnes**, I wyll betake me to my prayers to hym, with thys hope; that he who hath wroughte sume as greate myracles as thys, wyll in tyme inclyne yr harte to pyttye and pardon yr sonne, and me for hys sake; vntyll wch tyme, and euer, **I beseech the Allmightye to shew you more mercye when you craue ytt**.¹⁸

Maria's sad state in the absence of Joan's 'pyttye' would have played on the common and particularly feminine tropes of melancholic rhetoric we have seen elsewhere – also observed more generally for the period.¹⁹

¹⁶ A. Wall, *Power and Protest in England 1525-1640* (New York, 2000), pp. 81-96.

¹⁷ VIII.12 (1601).

¹⁸ VIII.18 (1602).

¹⁹ J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 252.

As was exhibited in Chapter 4, rhetorical uses of God occasionally played a part in using performative speech act verbs. In performing directive speech acts, Joan *prayed* things of God when the action desired actually rested in her husband's power. God was also used as a witness in *protesting* things, usually to do with the sincerity of one's feeling or their professions of duty. Maria's use of God as a rhetorical device in her petitions to Joan serves a similar communicative purpose in that it creates pressure for Joan to accept Maria while also adding God as a witness to the sincerity of Maria's protestations of love and obedience.

Yet another way of scripting the world as she would have it comes from Maria's use of kinship terminology and possessive pronouns in an effort to create familial unity with Joan. The first few letters contain no mention of Thomas, but beginning in the third petition he becomes an explicit part of Maria's rhetorical efforts to persuade Joan into accepting her. As a means of initiating this language, Maria references her husband's relationship with Joan. According to Maria's presentation, it would appear that Thomas probably delivered letter VIII.16 (1602) personally, on one of his few recorded visits to his mother during this period:

My good moother: haueinge **so good an aduocate as yr owne Sonne to pleade for me**, I thinke ytt needles att thys present to trouble you *with* a Longe petytion for **yr fauor**, for yf **hys presence** maye butt preuayle so farr, as fyrste to obtayne a pardon for hym selfe, I wyll not doubte butt afterwards **for hys sake, ytt wyll please you to thinke well of me**, who **beinge hys; am made as much yours** in vnfeayned Loue, **as thay that are neerer in bloude to you then my selfe**: all that I desyer, ys butt to be blest *with yr better Conseyte*, **so shoulde I haue Iuste cawse**, not only to esteeme of you as **my deere moother**, butt also indeuor by all possible means to carye my selfe so towards you, as best becomes

**Yr most Loueing and
obedyent daughter**

Marya Thinne

This letter expresses an interesting juxtaposition of the idea of the *self* as one's own, separate from others, but also that *self* hinged upon relations with others as a crucial aspect of one's identity – here as a wife and a daughter. This reflects very clearly what Natalie Zemon Davis points out regarding selfhood in sixteenth-century France: 'Virtually all occasions for talking about the self involved a relationship [. . .] especially with one's family'.²⁰ The use of possessive pronouns in this letter also resembles Maria's mother's petitioning when she wrote to Joan how she was 'most wyllingly studeing to becom

²⁰ N. Zemon Davis, 'Boundaries and the Sense of Self in Sixteenth-Century France', in *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. T. C. Heller, et al. (Stanford, California, 1986), pp. 53-63 (p. 53).

yours’; and on behalf of Maria soon after, ‘since **your sonn ys myne**, and so beloued as **my deerest owne**, lett me obtayne thys request **my Daughter may bee yours**’.²¹ *Yours* and *mine* were common kinship terms in early English letters and the former in particular can be found in many letters as a well-wishing to an addressee’s family – e.g., in Joan’s frequent reference to ‘you and yours’ in letters to her husband to refer to him and the children. It remains in present-day use to refer to oneself (as the writer) in a closing, as it was used by Elizabeth Cavendish in a letter to John Thynne Sr., signing ‘**yours** as I am many wayes bowden’.²² In this way, the use of possessive pronouns was a way for a writer to conventionally end a letter or refer to one’s kin at large; however, Maria and Lucy used them in a more explicit attempt to engender the kinship with Joan they both desired.

Finally (also like her mother), in an effort to encourage Joan’s acceptance of these strategies Maria uses some fairly blatant flattery. This approach appears very clearly in letter VIII.14, written in February of 1602:

My good moother, yf you dyd butt knowe att how highe a rate I woulde estymate yr fauor, and how much I woulde Indeuer to deserue the contynuanace therof; the reuerent conseyte I holde of **yr vertuous dysposition** makes me rest assured, that you woulde wyllinglye bestowe ytt, wher ytt shoulde be receiued *with* so gratefull an acknoledgment of **yr goodnes**, and be requytted *with* so large a measure of zealous affection,

This passage continues to distinguish what is perceptible in the performance of epistolary supplication from what exists truly in Maria’s innermost feelings: if only Joan could know how she truly felt (she says)! This rhetoric expresses the notion that because Maria *thinks* a certain way about Joan – at a ‘high rate’ – she deserves to be treated as the ‘loving, dutiful and obedient daughter’ she signs her letters as. And again, Steen describes how a similar strategy is employed by Arbella Stuart in letters to the court of James I, wherein Stuart ‘emphasizes Cecil’s and James’ honor and beneficence, to the extent that should Cecil not grant her request and serve as intercessor, it would seem to invalidate the honor she attributes to him’.²³ Likewise, Maria’s ‘reverant conseit’ for Joan’s ‘vertuous disposition’ puts pressure on Joan – if she is to refuse – to refute the laudatory terms she uses to describe her. Furthermore, as the construction of early modern relationships was to a large extent based in rhetoric, because Maria makes reference to the gap between meaning and expression (and thereby recognizes the potential for incongruity), she makes it all the more difficult for Joan to merely dismiss her petitions as the productions of an insincere flatterer. In a sense, because Maria is ‘playing by the rules’ she would expect Joan to respond in a way that maintained the rules of civil exchange wherein those who

²¹ VII.232 (1602).

²² IV.243 (undated).

²³ Steen, *The Letters*, p. 54.

knew the right way to structure an epistolary performance could expect to be rewarded with acceptance.

Joan, however, seems to have felt little or no pressure to adapt her own personal acceptance of Maria according to legal judgments or petitionary attempts to script it the way Maria wished it to be. Despite this, Maria moved into Longleat as mistress of the house soon after the death of John Thynne in 1604. Shortly afterwards, and in sharp contrast to the letters just discussed, the last surviving letter from Maria places much less emphasis on scripting a believably sincere voice. For as petitioning called for a repeated insistence on the harmony between obedient and loving internal thought/feeling and written expression, the following letter explicitly manipulates the relationship between what is written and what is actually meant, purposefully exposing the incongruities between the two in the production of sarcasm. What the rhetoric of sincerity might have provided tentative closure for, sarcasm reopened with a vengeance.

‘yf you please’: Sarcasm in the Final Letter to Joan

VIII.10 (Wall 49). Maria to Joan Thynne. 1605? No address. Body text in Maria’s Script.

Good La: owt of my Care to yr health lett me intreate you to temper yr Chollor, esspeciallye Consyderinge you Cannot Comphorte yr Selfe *wth* hope that mr Thynne wyll greeve much att ytt: for my parte (respectinge yr alliance *wth* hym) I wyll not *withowt* leaue tell you that yf you gave anye fee to a Cownceller to indighte yr letter, ytt was bestowed to lyttle purpose, for ther Should haue binn Consyderation that mr Thynne lookes in to waste & Spoyle on yr Ioynter, as to a tennante for terme of lyfe, & So yr Scribe Can proove no nessecarye Consiquence for you to wryghte disgracefullye or Contemptuouslye in bussines *wch* Concerns you not, indeed yf you or yr heyers haue an expectation in reversion of Longleate howse or garden, ther wer reason yr Speak Should passe Currante *withowt* offence or exception, butt the case beinge as ytt ys, meethinkes you Should not vnkindlye intermedle, more then mr Thynne doth *wth* all yr lande of inherytance / I confes (*withowt* Sham) ytt ys true my garden ys to ruinous, & yett to make you more merrye ~~I wyll make~~ you shall be of my Cowncell, that my intende ys before ytt be better, to make ytt worse; for findinge that greate expence Coude never alter ytt from beinge lyke a poridg pote, nor never by reporte was lyke other I intend to plowe ytt up & Sowe all varitye of frute att a fytt Seazon, I beseech you laughe, & So wyll I att yr Captiousnes/ now wheras you wryghte yr grownd putt to Bassest vses ys better ~~then~~ manurde then my garden, Surelye yf ytt wer a gandmoother [sic] of my owne ~~Should~~ & equall to my Selfe by bearth, I Should answare that oddious Comparison *wth* tellinge you I beleeeve So Corpulent a La: Cannot butt doo much yr selfe towards the Soyllinge of lande, & I thinke that hath binn, & wyll be all the good you intend to leaue behinde you att Corslye / you Saye mr Thynne ys starke blinde in hys owne faults, butt truelye I take ytt ther wanted Spectacles on Sume bodyes nose when they Could not see a more becomeinge Ciuill Course (then [sic] ys yr phrase) to be practyzed amongste freinds of equall woorth: you talke to much of mallice and revendge, yr wyll to Shew mallice maye be as greate as please you, butt yr power to revendge ys a bugg Beare that one that knowes hys owne strength no better then mr Thynne doth, wyll never be affrayde of, how farr yr bounteous

lyberalitye hath extended towards hym in former tymes I know not, butt I haue Called my memmorye to a stricte accompte, & Cannot finde anye obligacion of debte recorded ther that hath not binne Substancillye Canceled, for yr well wysshings (wch are all the benifyts I am accessarye to) hath ever binn requyted *with* the lyke both in quantatye & quallitye, So all thinges Consydered lett the insufficiencie of Seince you Speake of rest dew on yr owne parte, beinge a reproch allotted by you to the vnthankfull; to Conclude good La: haueing vowed to fullfyll the Scripture in thys poynte of runinge from father & moother for my husbände, Surely I wyll forsake all my grandmootheres yf thay affoord me more ~~respecte~~ loue then thay are wyllinge he Should partake of, & therfore Maddam yf yr intent be to yeeld hym no dew respecte, I praye know my desyer ys in that as in other woorse fortunes, to be a partner *with* hym in yr displeasure/ butt I doo wyssh you Should remember yr owne Childrens estymacion & Creadite, for yf mr Thynne deserve butt Slender accompte, thay must exspecte rate after rate, he beinge the best flower in ther garland / & So he that made you Save you, & I wyll rest

yr daughter & assured frinde yf you please
Marya Thynne

That the letter Maria writes after becoming mistress of Longleat comes from a different attitude than those produced during her years of petitioning is observable from the very first line: in all previous letters Maria had consistently addressed Joan familiarly as ‘mother’, ‘good mother’, ‘dear mother’ or ‘dearly loved mother’, but in letter VIII.10 she opens with ‘Good La:’. This more formal distinction is maintained throughout the rest of the letter, in which Maria uses an address term for Joan on four occasions: twice as ‘good lady’, once as ‘madame’ and once even as ‘so corpulent a lady’. With obvious exception to the last of these, both *good lady* (rarely) and *madame* (more commonly) were used respectfully in other letters to Joan from male servants and kin (cf. VII.332 from Thomas Hughes, VII.337/8 from Henry Townshend and VII.339 from Thomas Purslow). The potential deference of these address terms is, however, spoiled within the hostile context of the rest of the letter’s disrespectful message, transforming them into insults meant to mock Joan and her station as a disenfranchised widow. Also unlike previous examples where Maria refers to herself as ‘Yr Loueing daughter att Commaund’ or ‘Yr most Loueing and obedyent daughter’, here Maria signs as ‘yr daughter & assured frinde yf you please’. The ‘assured frinde’ element neutralizes the negatively polite deference implied by being a daughter and presumes at least social equality while the qualificatory and somewhat haughty ‘yf you please’ gives a strong indication of Maria’s disaffection towards the relationship.²⁴ Previous terminology was in the tradition of daughterly affection and duty, which while showing reverence for Joan’s superior position also used positive politeness in an attempt to script relations between the two in terms of kinship and intimacy. In

²⁴ Maria also employs this strategy with Thomas in letter VIII.1 (1604-6?), where she is complaining of his not respecting her authority as mistress of Longleat. After expressing her anger at not being allowed to even choose her own servants, she signs ‘yr loueing wyfe, howsoever’, where the hedging with ‘howsoever’ is clearly meant to be a pragmatic marker indicating her attitude.

contrast, the overall lack of such motherly-daughterly language in the final letter reflects Maria's decision to distance herself from Joan, using negatively polite strategies as an accompaniment to sarcastic attacks on Joan's face.

Directly following the initial address term, Maria expresses 'a care' for Joan's health, which had been – and to some extent still is – a conventional way of opening letters since its adaptation from Anglo-Norman models in the fourteenth century.²⁵ However, the fact that it is not found elsewhere in Maria's correspondence to Joan makes its use here all the more suspicious. Equally, the performative directive *entreat*, coupled with *let me*, would normally have been a polite way of respecting an addressee's negative face, but the use of the verb *temper* that follows is condescending in that it suggests something in Joan's expression or manner was undesirably out of balance. Maria's disrespectful intent is confirmed by the reference to 'yr Chollor', choler being 'one of the "four humours" of early physiology, supposed to cause irascibility of temper'.²⁶ As was discussed with specificity to the performative *confess* in Chapter 4, it was a social taboo in the period to let one's emotions become visible; therefore, Maria's pointing out Joan's over-excited, untempered state was meant to offend and embarrass her. Certainly, a respectful daughter – and especially one seeking reconciliation – would not presume to make such mention of her mother-in-law's emotions (at least not when writing to her directly), let alone ask her to better control her temper. Maria's forceful sense of her own judgement – as opposed to deferring to Joan's – is continued in her self-assured use of the modal *should*, the adverbs *truly* and *surely* and also the use of the verb *believe* with herself as the subject.

Another common strategy used by Maria in order to disrupt the conventional scripts of polite language comes from her referencing previous statements made by Joan with the intent of belittling their importance. In one instance of quasi-quotation, Maria cites some disapproving comments Joan has made in a previous letter regarding Maria's apparent inability to maintain the estate gardens. Here she uses the performative verb *confess*, but unlike previous uses immediately negates its usual sociopragmatic significance (of self-consciously revealing something about oneself) by parenthetically adding that she does so 'without shame', completely subverting any indication of emotional hesitancy which the verb usually implied. And instead of humbling herself after unabashedly admitting that her garden is in a poor state, she offers Joan to be of her 'counsel' (i.e. an intimate, in-group knowledge), admitting to plans of plowing the whole thing up and planting fruit trees, effectively clearing the land of all Joan's efforts when she was mistress of the household.

²⁵ N. Davis, 'The *Litera Troili* and English Letters', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series 16:63 (1965), pp. 233–44.

²⁶ OED, Second Edition 1989, 'choler, *n.*'

Then, to undercut Joan's power even further Maria writes, 'I beseech you laughe, & so wyll I att yr Captiousnes'. Here again a potentially deferential performative – *beseech* – is used with negative intent. Foreseeing how Joan might dismiss her statements as benign or laughable, Maria performs a type of rhetorical one-upmanship, writing herself in as having the last laugh. The way in which Maria offers up these offences by inviting Joan to be of a close knowledge to her thoughts – to the effect of 'I'll let you in on a secret' – again subverts the rhetoric of affection by using a seemingly warm, positively polite introduction followed by purposefully hurtful information. Interestingly, here the 'proffered heart' becomes a way of offering internal thoughts in a way that is meant to show disregard for an addressee's face wants instead of its usual employment as a way of professing sincerity, as in the petitionary letters.

Maria also uses sarcasm to exaggerate the social hierarchy, which she felt superior in, being born to the landed-gentry family of Touchet, whereas Joan was born the daughter of an alderman.²⁷ To this end, she refers to the comparison of their estates as 'oddious', implicating not only gardens but also degrees of birth. The sarcastic subversion of rhetoric, where she hypothetically considers *if* it were that Joan was her equal serves as an indirect way of letting Joan know that Maria no longer considers herself in a position where she need humble herself before a woman she considers below her social milieu. Maria also references Joan's old age (calling her 'grandmother'), describing her uselessness and impending death by rather explicitly reducing her legacy at Caus Castle as nothing but her 'soiling' the land with her own 'manure' (and presumably her corpse as well).²⁸

Maria's resentment at previously having had to script herself as good, obedient and loving in the midst of poor relations between Joan and Thomas is clear in the force with which she now expresses herself. This later letter would have allowed Maria to regain what previous loss of face she suffered in being rejected by Joan, letting her mother-in-law know that it had been a performance she no longer deemed worth the effort: she would rather 'forsake' Joan in her 'displeasure' than continue to perform the role of the conventionally sincere and dutiful daughter. The primary method for accomplishing sarcasm in Maria's final surviving letter to Joan comes from a juxtaposition of elements, incorporating conventionally deferential or affectionate language in an over-exaggerated, hyperformalized way alongside contemptuous or disrespectful words or phrases that make

²⁷ Joan's father, Sir Rowland Hayward, while very successful in his own milieu, lacked claims to any landed lineage. And, as was noted in the previous chapter, Joan herself admitted to Maria's higher birth and better 'deserts' in the letter to Maria's mother (VII.237).

²⁸ Maria's clever ability to hide meanings in unplain language might appear to be exhibited in a punning of the word *behind*, however, colloquial use as a noun (as in the body-part) is only first recorded by the *OED* in the late eighteenth-century, making the pun unlikely here (Second Edition 1989: 'behind, adv., prep. [n.]').

it clear that any signs of potentially sincere politeness are actually meant ironically. Many of these words, and the letter as a whole, are dependent upon their relation to other pragmatic spaces along the linear string of correspondence, texts including previous letters written by Maria to Joan (some of which remain) and letters (mentioned) from Joan to Maria and/or Thomas. Previous rhetorics of sincerity, trial, God and kinship seen in the petitionary letters are here either absent or used to contrasting effect. Explicit reference to the accordance between thought and expression are completely lacking. Reference to Thomas has gone from 'yr owne Sonne' to 'mr Thynne' and the link between the three of them severed as Maria expresses her own interpretations of Thomas' feelings 'for my parte (respectinge yr alliance *with* hym)'.

In his chapter on 'Affecting Correspondences', Schneider makes the observation that early modern letters not only played a key role in nurturing intimacy in lieu of in-person contact, but also functioned as a performative space unique and apart from oral, face-to-face interaction:

[. . .] the letter also served as a suitable social 'container' for emotions more appropriately textualized rather than expressed face to face in a society more intent on decorum and on the regulation of emotion. Shame and anger were often negotiated in letters instead of face to face in order to preserve civility; letters also acted as emotional pressure valves, as therapeutic measures.²⁹

Considering Joan and Maria rarely, if ever, met face-to-face, the textual expression of emotion and the epistolary performance of conventionalized/subversive social roles in the letters was based almost entirely on what was written (excepting what came from the mouths of secondary contacts, such as Thomas or messengers, or information and gossip learned through social functions like court hearings). The epistolary basis of the relationship is apparent when Maria brings up a hypothetical face-to-face meeting in letter VIII.22: 'though I haue trobled *with* a tedious discours, yett should I not Leaue talkinge to you, yf ernist ocations dyd not force an end'.³⁰ So even for all her pleading to be in better favor with Joan and to be of whatever service she may, it seems if the two did come across one another that it would be preferred (at least by Maria) that 'earnestness' would allow them not to talk! That Maria expresses these feelings only shortly after having received what she described as a 'comforting' letter from Joan (also referred to in VIII.22) may

²⁹ G. Schneider, *The Culture of Epistolarity: Vernacular Letters and Letter Writing in Early Modern England, 1500-1700* (Delaware, 2005), p. 133.

³⁰ The way in which Maria remarks on *troubling* and the 'tediousness' of her writing is also seen in a letter from Arbella Stuart to Mary Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, in 1603, who writes (emphasis mine): 'I will bethinck my selfe against your long expected trusty messenger comme whatsoever he be, and that expectation shall keepe me from **troubling you with so plaine and tedious a discourse** as I could finde in my hart to disburden my minde withall to you' (Steen 1994: 188).

seem odd, given that it would appear that Joan is finally giving in to what Maria had been working hard to attain through all her petitioning. However, if we consider the fact that emotional control was a highly valued practice in early modern aristocratic culture, the controlled and manageable environment the letter afforded Maria was strikingly disconnected from what was the more difficult to script world of speech set on the public stage. In this way, Haiman's 'sarcasm as theater' analogy was more easily adapted to the written word for Maria, perhaps due to the conventional nature of epistolary expressions (e.g. the 'health formula' and performative verbs) that she could manipulate.³¹ Maria's employment of epistolary sarcasm in places where literal usage would have signalled an unharnessed temper would have allowed her to express herself effectively without being perceived as having lost her sense of propriety and civilized self-restraint, or having to resort to the more explicit culture of insult documented in Gowing's (1996) study of women's verbal disputes in early modern London. Therefore, the medium of letter-writing offered Maria occasion to exhibit measures of linguistic and emotional control over herself and Joan less easily accomplished in the spoken language.

'the effectes of a very much disquyetted minde': Sarcasm and Ironic Play in the Letters to Thomas

VIII.2 (Wall 48). Maria to Thomas Thynne. After August, 1604. Address and body text in Maria's Script.

Address leaf:

To my Loueing husband Sr Thomas
Thynne knighte giue
Thess

Body text:

Myne owne Sweete Thomken: I haue no longer agou then the very laste nighte wryghten Such a large vollume in prayse of thy kindes to me thy doggs thy hawkes the hars & the foxes, & allso in Commendation of thy greate Care of thy bussinesses in the Countrey, that I thinke I need not amplefye anye more on that texte, for I haue Crowned thee for an admirable good husband *with* poettycall Lawrell, & admired the vnexspresable Singularitye of thy loue in the Cogitations of piamature, I can Saye no more butt that in waye of gratuitye, the doggs shall *with* owt intervption expell ther excrementall Coruption in the best roome (*wch* ys thy bed) whensoever full feedinge makes ther Bellies Ake, & for my owne parte Since you haue in all yr letters giuen me authoritye to Care inoughe, I wyll promyse to be inferyor to none of my deuerll neighbors in playeing the good huswyfe, thoughe thay styre tyll thay stinke, now yf for my better incouragement, & in requyttall thow wylte att my erniste intreatye butt for thys tyme Spare diggrye, I Shall be So much Bownde, that nothinge butt a stronge purgation Can lose me / for yf you wyll

³¹ J. Haiman, 'Sarcasm as Theater', *Cognitive Linguistics* 1-2 (1990), pp. 181-205.

beleeve me in Sober Sadnes, my Cosin stantor hath vpon speech *with* me, made ytt appeer that hee hath disgested manye vncivell & vnbeco[m]linge woords from 3 of yr Servants, hee doth not desyere you to remite diggries faulte, butt to dispence *with* hys apparance for hys Sake this tyme, because ytt Conscerns hym in hys profytt, & when you Come in to the Countrie my Cosin wyll Come & throughlye Satysfye all matters in Contraversye between you / I wyll not intreate to ernistlye because I know thow arte Chollrike *with* me ever in thess Cases, butt though thow doste manye tymes Call me foole for yeeldinge to ~~the~~ intysing of fayer woords, yett yf you marke ytt, I haue never yett Craved anye thinge of Such greate Importance as hath ever binn preiudicill to yr reputation or profitt, yf So; (As ytt ys to true ytt ys So) Name me anye man that hath a wyfe of that rare temper, No in good fayth thys age wyll not helpe you to an equall, I meane for a wyfe, alas I Sitt att home & lett thy doggs eate parte *with* me, & weare Clothes that haue worne owte ther prentyshepe a yeere & half Sithence, when my Sisters wyllbe in lundon att ther pleasure, I am talkeinge of foxes & rudder Beasts att home / wyll doo butt make hast home & make much of thy Mall when thow doste Come home, I wyll not be Mallenchollye, but *with* good Courage Spend my life & waste my Sperits in anye Course to please thee, excepte fightinge, & in thys bussines Satysfye my request as you thinke I deserve, & doo not be angrie *with* me for Importuninge you, but aske all the husbands in Lundon, or aske the questyon in the lower howse, what requests thay grante ther wives, & then good husband thinke vpon yr foole att home as ther ys Cawse/ I wyll Saye nothings of anye bussines, for I haue thys last nighte wryghten you a whole sheet of paper & giuenew [sic] you knowledge accordinge to yr apoyntmente of all yr affayers, yf yr leasure wyll not Serve good Sweet Cawse exall to wryghte in hys owne Name ~~no more~~ butt this & this [sic] ys my mrs pleasure & ytt Shall Serve the turne for I knowe yr troble in matters of more waighte ther ys greate & I leek not hys wryghtinge in yr Name for ytt ys as though thow worte angrie god in heauen Send thee well and Speedilye home

Thine
Marya Thynne

Much as in her sarcastic letter to Joan, Maria overemphasizes the polite aspects of requests in her letters to Thomas to communicate her ironic relationship with her social station. Alison Wall describes how such language use makes it impossible to think that she would have ‘internalized’ models for the silent and chaste wife advanced in period conduct literature such as Philip Stubbes’ *A Christal Glasse for Christian Women*, published in 1591.³² She begins letter VIII.2 (directly above) by referencing previous ones, in which she claims to have thanked Thomas for affording her the company of typical English country estate animals, along with his attention to estate business, crowning him with ‘poettycall Lawrell’. However, the only other surviving letter that might possibly predate this one chastises Thomas for treating Maria like a ‘fool’ (which is the word she uses) when it comes to estate management, admitting that her letters are ‘the effectes of a very much disquyetted minde’ (letter VIII.1). Therefore, her professed desire ‘not [to] amplify anymore’ the grievances of previous texts actually drives home their force by way of

³² A. Wall, ‘Elizabethan Precept and Feminine Practice: The Thynne Family of Longleat’, *History* 75: 243 (1990), pp. 23-38.

sarcasm. This is, of course, just as much a criticism of Thomas' failings in the role of a husband as it is of the conventional attitude expected of a wife: not only does it express Maria's disapproval of Thomas for being away for so much time (and therefore suggests that he should be at home with her), but also exhibits her belief that such a lifestyle is below her, showing how 'ironic compliments may allow the speaker to appear to present a compliment, but actually to convey negative intent as well'.³³

Further defying models of a tame Griselda,³⁴ or models of the sheepish wife who keeps her thoughts to herself, Maria makes reference in Latin to Thomas' 'cogitations of piamature' (no doubt an intentional use of Latin meant to mock Thomas' own inability in the subject³⁵) – literally 'thoughts of the brain' – which she promises to repay by allowing the dogs to defecate in his bed!³⁶ As nonsensical as this may seem at first, excrement as a 'comic weapon' is found elsewhere in the period – however, it is more commonly a woman who unhappily receives it from an abusive husband.³⁷ Conventionally it is the body of the jokester themselves that provides the excrement, but perhaps with respect to Maria's status as gentry and her vying for a slightly more composed gesture, she uses the dogs in her joke instead. Therefore, Maria not only subverts gender expectations but cleverly washes her hands of literal offenses (by offering it as a fool's way of giving thanks) and figurative excrement by keeping her own body clear of any associations with excrement. The point, no doubt, was to belittle Thomas' seeming disbelief that Maria could keep an orderly household in his absence by providing him with a stark example of disorder.

Maria's reference to Thomas' husbandly permission in giving her 'authoritie to Care inoughe' is likewise reappropriated for her own purposes in that she mocks the power with which it engenders her – a statement not unlike the sarcastic present-day phrase 'I could care less'. That she perceives herself as merely *playing* the role of an obedient country wife emphasizes her detachment from the station. Clearly, her transference from the court, set at a distance from her 'sisters' in London (possibly a reference not only to Eleanor and Anne, but also friends made while she attended Queen Elizabeth) left Maria feeling de-stimulated, amidst the company of 'foxes & rudder Beasts'. This disaffected

³³ S. Dewis, J. Kaplan and E. Winner, 'Why Not Say it Directly? The Social Functions of Irony', *Discourse Processes* 19 (1995), pp. 347-67 (pp. 349-50).

³⁴ For an account of the Griselda myth with reference to early modern England see P. A. Brown, 'Chapter 6: Griselda the Fool', in *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England*, (Ithaca, New York, 2003), pp. 178-217.

³⁵ By Joan's estimation, Thomas was never a 'good coler [i.e. scholar]' (V.73, to John, 1595).

³⁶ Wall interprets 'piamature' as indicating that Maria is pregnant; however, more likely is the definition from the OED for 'pia mater, *n.*' (Draft Revision March 2009), which describes it as a 'chiefly humorous' reference to 'the brain'.

³⁷ Brown, *Better a Shrew*, pp. 98-9.

tone resonates further in her request that Thomas ‘spare’ one of his male servants: the way that she asks him to do it as a means of ‘encouraging’ her sense of having authority as mistress of the household, again, makes feeble the duties he has bestowed on her in his letters. Maria’s emotional investment in what she proclaims as an ‘earnest intreaty’ is effaced by her pun on the conventional epistolary speech act verb of being *bound* to an addressee for their performance of a request, where she is certainly referencing constipation with her need of a ‘stronge purgation’ (i.e. an emptying of the bowels) to ‘lose me’.³⁸ Being *bound* also suggests confinement, as if in a prison, which is precisely the feeling Maria expresses: isolated in the country among hostile strangers for whom she was to perform a role she was capable of, but found boring, uncomfortable and sexually frustrating.

While letter VIII.12 expresses what appears to be genuine anger, irony in the letters to Thomas also took on a more playful, oftentimes flirtatious tone. Sexual references become explicit in letter VIII.6, which begins:

My best beloued Thomkine, & my best leetle Sirra, knowe that I haue not nor wyll not forgett how you made my modest bloud flush vp into my bashfull Cheeks att yr last letter, thow threatnest Sownde payement, & I Sownd repayment, So as when wee meete, ther wyll be paye, & repaye, wch wyll pass & repass, allgiges vltes fregnan tolles, thow knowest my minde though thow dost not vnderstand me³⁹

Referring to Thomas by using the contemptuously diminutive *sirrah* is, of course, a method of playful teasing, as is her indirect reference to his inferior knowledge of Latin.⁴⁰ Wall has commented on the Latin, ‘allgiges vltes fregnan tolles’, as possibly being distorted on purpose, but with the meaning ‘you will add together, collect [and] frequently rise up’ – which coupled with the blushing and other sexual innuendos makes Maria’s flirtatious attitude unmistakable. This type of spousal flirting – albeit significantly less explicit – is also employed by Frances Seymour, wife to the Earl of Hertford. Lady Seymour writes to her husband from the court in the summer of 1582, relating news of the Queen as well as the estranged relations between the earl and his son, Lord Beauchamp (which, not unlike the Thynne family drama was due to a clandestine match made without parental consent). After warmly commending her husband for wishing her with him she rather surprisingly writes, ‘you shell fynde me a wycht. for I will be reuenged of you for all the engeres you haue done me. but I will leue all querelles tell we mett wyche I truste will

³⁸ The *OED* lists this sense of the word *bound* (i.e. ‘confined in the bowels, costive’) as in use from early in the sixteenth century (Second Edition 1989, ‘bound, ppl., a.²’).

³⁹ (1983: 38).

⁴⁰ From the *OED*, Second Edition 1989, ‘sirrah’, 1: ‘A term of address used to men or boys, expressing contempt, reprimand, or assumption of authority on the part of the speaker; sometimes employed less seriously in addressing children.’

be very shortly'.⁴¹ In the same letter, she playfully incorporates several false farewells wherein she builds from a level of familiar respect in 'my none deare lorde', then lowers his title to 'siwet mr Edwarde' and finally 'siwet sloven'. Clearly, Lady Seymour was not actually angry enough with the Earl to have genuinely referred to herself as a 'witch' and called him a 'sloven', and she ends her letter again by bemoaning the distance between them and making careful reference to his health. The mocking of conventions of address terms was a way for these women to express familiarity and (at least in the case of Maria) sexual yearning at being so far from their partners. It might also be suggested that these playful instances of inferior-sounding address terms were an ironic celebration of gentry affluence. Their effect is after all derived from the fact that Thomas Thynne and the Earl of Hertford clearly did not fit their epithets: certainly neither was a *sloven*, but likewise not a *sirrah* (for Thomas) or a *mister* (in the case of Seymour) either.⁴²

Whether or not this flirtatious language is best categorized as sarcasm, or ironic verbal aggression, or something slightly different, is not that crucial.⁴³ What is interesting is how in both in anger and in play, Maria uses irony to add new communicative value to the conventions of the letter-writing genre in order to express herself in unconventional ways. By overemphasizing the polite aspects of requests, as in punning the rhetoric of being *bound*, or using clearly inappropriate address terminology, Maria effectively communicates the metamessage 'I don't mean this'. However, whereas the metamessage in the letter to Joan was meant to create social distance between the correspondents, those in the letters to Thomas are slightly more complex in that they create a space of familiarity in which Maria is able to express anger, frustration and longing while her husband was away from Longleat.

Ambiguity and the 'off record' nature of ironic criticism are what both Brown and Levinson (1987), and Leech (1983) emphasize as the primary motivation for its use.⁴⁴ In terms of *face*, ironic language indirectly attacks an addressee and actually leaves it to her to decipher the non-literal meaning and therefore reverses responsibility for the face-threatening act. In this way, sarcasm is a language in which one has one's cake and eats it too. By painting a clear picture – in words – of what the ideal wife might sound like (i.e. submissive and 'silent'), while simultaneously rejecting that ideal and her husband's fostering of it in his own letters, Maria is proving herself to be beyond the complicity of

⁴¹ V.144 (1582).

⁴² Ironic terms of address are still of course used today, as one might refer to someone with an over inflated sense of themselves as 'your Majesty', etc.

⁴³ For a list of speech acts, or attitudes related to sarcasm see Haiman, *Talk is Cheap*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ P. Brown and S. C. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Use* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 221-2; G. Leech, *Principles of Pragmatics* (London and New York, 1983), pp. 82-3.

conventional social scripts, but at the same time makes it impossible that she be regarded as ignorant of them or that she is so uncivil as to reject them by using literal language.

‘In Sober Sadness’: Maria’s Serious Voice

The frequency of Maria’s ironic detachment in her letters to Thomas make all of what she writes to him susceptible to being nullified as a result of ‘the boy that cried wolf’ dilemma, where it becomes difficult to tell when, if ever, she is genuinely invested in what she is writing in a literal, plainly spoken way. In several instances, it would appear that Maria becomes aware of a need to signal attitude shifts towards the content in her letters, moving between irony and seriousness. To do this, she employs both explicitly worded and stylistic markers. In two separate letters, Maria asks Thomas to take what she has to say ‘in sober sadness’. The first instance of this occurs directly after the passage in letter VIII.2 given above, in which she mocked the ‘good housewife’ and punned on being *bound*, writing:

for **yf you wyll beleeeve me in Sober Sadnes**, my Cosin stantor hath vpon speech *with* me, made ytt appeer that hee hath disgested manye vncivell & vnbeco[m]inge woords from 3 of yr Servants

Here, this seems to have been a way for her to switch between voices in the midst of a letter, moving from her ironically delivered malaise to actual business that required some gravity of feeling (particularly given the fact that it involved a family member’s reputation – a matter not even Maria would have taken lightly). Maria’s second deployment of this phrase wants to serve a similar purpose, but is perhaps less successful. In letter VIII.6, after describing to Thomas how his last letter has made her blush and promising ‘paye, & repaye’ (also cited above), she makes an attempt to calm her excitement and continues:

now layeinge a side my highe Choller, **know in Sober sadnes** that I am att longe leate, readye & vnready to receive **thee**, & heer wyll attend **thy** Cominge, remember that **yr** laste dayes Iornye wyll be the longer by 5 or 6 miles, & therfore determine acordingly, **yr** horses are taken vp, **& I wyll take thee vp when thow comest home for stayeringe So longe from me**

The ‘sober sadness’ here is obviously to do with Maria’s report on preparations for Thomas’ long-awaited return to Longleat, which would require her to fulfil her duty as mistress of the house. However, the circularity of being ‘ready and unready’ (reiteration along the lines of the clearly sexual ‘pass and repass’) admits at least a small amount of disaffection with the whole process. She does briefly switch to the y-forms of the second person pronominal reference, but despite the fact that she undoubtedly wanted to be taken seriously in her care for his final days of travelling, she quickly falls back into barely disguised sexual innuendo (and, again, the *th*-pronoun).

Letter VIII.8/9 is a helpful example for observing the distinctions between irony and business in that it is almost solely concerned with news and the management of the family's estates. Although Maria starts with her typically detached way of writing, she quickly shifts to a rather toned-down reporting and requesting to do with business that requires immediate attention:

My best Thomken: I know **thow** wylte Saye (receivinge 2 letters in a daye from me) that I haue tryed the vertue of Aspen Leaues vnder my tounge, *wch* makes me prattle So much, butt Consyder that **all is bussines**, for of my owne naturall disposission, I assure **thee** ther ys not a more Sillent wooman Liueing then my Selfe, / butt **to the purpose; you** must vnderstand that I received this daye beinge Sundaye my grandfathers letter to mr Sampford

After making the sarcastic comment on being a 'silent woman', Maria puts in an extra effort to switch into a more seriously minded exposition, matter-of-factly identifying the intent to deal solely with business. The variation of *y-* and *th-* pronouns is also marked here, where she begins with all *th-*forms before switching to the more business-like *y-*form (although she changes back to *th-* towards the end). The lack of the more familiar *th-*form is also well pronounced in letter VIII.1 – albeit for a different reason – where their total absence helps to indicate that Maria was seriously angry (and not being flirtatious): the *y-*forms give it a much colder, distanced tone than her usual way of addressing her husband.

Perhaps one reason that Maria is able to maintain a straightforward way of writing throughout letter VIII.8/9 is that she is for the most part referring to people other than herself. Tellingly, the only place she seems to divert into irony again is when she writes, mid-letter, 'yf I haue not done in ytt as I Should, then **lerne not to place a foole in an office**'. This apologizing for potential mistakes in conducting estate business in the absence of her husband also occurs in letters from Joan to John Thynne. The tone of Joan's version is, however, slightly more drawn-out and hard-headed, and seems to have been done without irony. In letter V.97/8 she suggests that if the keeping of accounts is not to John's liking, perhaps he may 'prouide one that is wiser then eyther my selfe or basset [a man employed by the Thynnes] for to write for by criste I haue lost by his simplisite more then is for my ease'. These two examples serve well to epitomize the personalities of these two women: Joan would rather be blunt – perhaps even cursing as she does here – while Maria would much rather maintain the semblance of composure and disregard for actually caring about the business that she has, in her husband's estimation, failed at accomplishing.

Another particularly salient difference between the language of Maria's 'business letter' and that found in others to Thomas is the use of compound adverbs. Considering the almost total lack of such words in the other four letters to Thomas, the co-occurrence of

‘forthwth’, ‘wher by’, ‘what So ever’, ‘affore sayed’, ‘ther wth’, ‘heerafter’, and ‘wherfore’ in letter VIII.8/9 is significant. The only other place one finds any of these words is in the other seriously minded letter to Thomas, VIII.4, in which Maria is explaining a supposed remedy for the plague: ‘take dragon watter a good draughte, and mingle **ther wth** as much treacle or mettridatt in quantatye as an ordinarye wallnutte’. Otherwise, there are occurrences of *howsoever* (VIII.1), *whensoever* (VIII.2) and *therefore* (twice in VIII.6) in the other letters to Thomas. However, as explained in Chapter 5 regarding the occurrences of *therefore* (as well as the analogous *wherfore*), these were used as grammaticalized conjunctions rather than anaphoric reference terminology.

Given their occurrence in the more serious moments of her letters to Thomas, it might also be expected that there would be some use of compound adverbs in the more formally worded petitions to Joan. And, indeed, there is an occurrence of *hereof* (VIII.18), two of *henceforth* (VIII.18) and four of *therof* (VIII.14 and 22) in the petitions to Joan. Furthermore, there are two examples of *wherfore* (VIII.12 and 22), which, given its occurrence in a business letter to Thomas, may suggest that it was used by Maria as a more formal variant of *therefore* (which was used in the less serious letters to Thomas).

Letter VIII.8/9 also contains by far the highest proportion of the future auxiliary *shall* instead of Maria’s much more common use of *will*. Just as with compound adverbs, Rissanen has described the use of *shall* in the period 1570-1640 as a tendency of official documentation, much more common in formal documents than in private letters or more speech-based texts such as sermons.⁴⁵ Maria uses *shall* 10 times in the business letter to Thomas but only 3 other times in all the other letters to Thomas, and likewise only 3 times in the letters to Joan. The use of *will*, on the other hand is widespread (also common in letter VIII.8/9). At least two of the three other uses of *shall* to Thomas (all in VIII.2) seem to be used to create sarcastic effect: ‘the doggs **shall** wth oute intervption expell ther excrementall Coruption in the best room (wch ys thy bed)’, or ‘yf for my better incouragement, & in requytall thow wylte att my erniste intreatye butt for thys tyme Spare diggrye, I **Shall** be So much Bownde, that nothings butt a stronge purgation Can lose me’. In these two examples, *shall* is a hyperformality, once juxtaposed to dogs pooping in Thomas’ bed and then again in the ‘erniste intreatye’, which contains Maria’s punning of the word *bound*. By contrast, all the uses in VIII.8/9 are used to refer to business without any indication of an ironic attitude.

⁴⁵ M. Rissanen, ‘Standardisation and the Language of Early Statutes’, in *The Development of Standard English 1300-1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts*, ed. Laura Wright (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 117-30 (pp.122-4).

It is interesting to notice as well that Maria saw the conducting of business as something distinct and less personal than her other, notably more expressive letters to Thomas. The fact that she feels the need to explicitly demark certain letters, or sections of letters, as mere ‘business’ demonstrates not only the importance of being able to distinguish between voices, but also the lack of emotional investment she felt to have in these parts of her writing. At the end of letter VIII.8/9 she tellingly adds a postscript that says: ‘In any wyse Sweet lett Sume body receive my other letter of the Caryer for **ytt is all bussines to**’. Considering the ‘high coler’ witnessed elsewhere, it is difficult to believe that Maria would have written anything to Thomas that she would have not cared whether or not he read himself. Yet, she explicitly tells him not to on this occasion. Maria clearly wanted to distance herself from certain social scripts (as is evidenced by her sarcasm elsewhere) and it may have seemed embarrassing to her to have Thomas read plainly worded letters, even if they were concerned with important topics to do with estates, servants and large amounts of money.

Conversely, Maria also adds commentary to non-business orientated letters, as in the postscript of the highly sarcastic ‘excrementall Corruption’ letter, VIII.2: ‘I wyll Saye **nothings of anye bussines**, for I haue thys last nighte wryghten you a whole sheet of paper & giuenev [sic] you knowledge accordinge to yr apoyntmente of all yr affayers’. And in the same postscript (following this), Maria goes on to earnestly ask Thomas that if he cannot write for himself then have his scribe write in his own name, as it otherwise appears he is upset with her (as discussed in Chapter 5). This in itself is interesting commentary. For if Thomas’ scribe, Exall, a Marvin family retainer no doubt known by Maria, was writing letters that he could in fact just sign himself, then these letters must have been largely impersonal. The emphasis on the separateness of business correspondence reiterates the distinctions Maria makes in her own letters to Thomas where she actually tells him it is not worth him reading some of them. Looking at the only surviving letter from Thomas to Maria (XL.8, which does appear to be in his own hand), despite his beginning with ‘Good Sweet’, closing as ‘Thine’, and some brief glimpses at his opinion of the unkindness of his brother-in-law and the ‘knavery’ of his shepherds, there is little in the way of spousal affection. In contrast, Maria’s excitement at having received what she perceives as ‘kinde wanton letters’, which she responds to with enthusiasm in letter VIII.6 suggests that such a personal indulgence on Thomas’ part was a rarer, and therefore very welcome occurrence.

Letter VIII.4 figures somewhat awkwardly between these scripts in that Maria is attempting to express her concern for Thomas – given the virulence of plague in London – and therefore being serious, but without dealing with business *per se*. This can be seen,

again, in her postscript, which explains ‘heer is not So much as halfe an *iota* of bussines to aquaynt yo *with* all’. It is also relevant that she begins the letter by cheerfully stating that ‘I haue **nothinge to Saye** butt how dost thou’ (before going into a detailed description of preventatives and cures for the plague). That she has ‘nothing to say’ could be interpreted as meaning that she is not planning on expressing her usual ironic complaints and is therefore more closely adhering to expected wifely concerns for a husband’s health. While her thoughtful opinions of medicine, death and God are anything but demure when juxtaposed to the paragon of the ‘silent woman’, they are at least not ‘shrewish’ in the sense that they are rehearsed without Maria’s usual sarcastic sting. She also promises ‘I wyll be a Carefull officer in yr absince’, which is one of the few moments she actually references her social station without the least indication of disaffection.

Sarcastic expression, then, came at a communicative cost. Simultaneously widening the space for speaker/writer-orientated expression as well as addressee-orientated interpretation, non-literal language not only required its own linguistic markers to signal its presence, but also exaggerated the need to mark literal expression as such so as to avoid the risk of never being taken seriously. Again, this would have been particularly important for the language of epistolary communication in that a writer lacked extra-linguistic means of signalling their attitude towards what they were writing.

The Period Specificity of Sarcasm(?)

Social and literary historians such as Bryson (1998) and Trilling (1972) have convincingly argued for the significance of the early modern period in the development of the ideal of sincerity and its corresponding rhetorical manifestations. Having come full circle from ideologies of sincerity, through sarcastic expression and then back to concerns with making expression and meaning literal again, these readings of Maria’s letters have touched upon some of the complexities inherent in the social and linguistic relationships between these means of expression. Linguistic power and sociability in sixteenth-century England were exhibited by maintaining control over one’s external expression, which was often rehearsed through avenues of politeness, and even in cases of dispute was usually conducted through direct, literal modes of communication. Maria, however, overcomes conventional limitations to the internal/external divide through her use of sarcasm, which pays lip-service to convention – and therefore maintains the semblance of respect – while simultaneously expressing potentially subversive internal feelings. The irony here is that

sarcasm was often formulated in reaction to scripts of sincerity in an attempt to express something more authentic, something ‘behind the arras’⁴⁶:

In an odd, rather paradoxical way, irony and sarcasm are advertisements of *the speaker’s sincerity*. If the divided self is seen as consisting of a private personal core and a social front or image, then sarcasm is meant to provide a revelation of the core: “Yes, I am playing a role, but look! my inner nature rebels against it” is a possible paraphrase of the metamessage “I don’t mean this.”⁴⁷

Given sarcasm’s reliance on the same sort of awareness of the split between expression and meaning that gave rise to notions of sincerity in sixteenth-century England, is it possible that the early modern period was also a significant time for the development of sarcasm?

No doubt due to its impoliteness, it is more difficult to find references to the culture of early modern sarcasm than to sincerity in period conduct literature. It does, however, receive brief mention in a supplement to the later sixteenth-century editions of Angel Day’s immensely popular letter-writing manual *The English Secretary*, listed under ‘Tropes, Figures and Schemes’. Here Day provides us with clear documentation for period understandings of several types of ironic speech acts:

Ironia, a scoffe or flout, as when wee saie, Alas good man, or to one that hath set debate or contention, you haue spun a faire thred: or to him that hath made a long speach to no purpose, you haue brought forth a mighty mole-hil, or to a lewd person, you are an honest man.

Sarcasmus, a bitter bob as wee saie, or enuious derision, as of one arraigned for fellonie, to twit him, that hee had like to haue knockt his head against the gallows, or of one suffering for treason to saie, that it made him hop headlesse.

Antiphrasis, when a word scornefullie deliuered, is understoode by his contrarie, as of a dwarfe, to saie in iest, what a gyant haue we here, or of him that telleth a matter ordinarie for strange, to saie, what a wonder telleth he, or to say, the man hath a sharpe wit, when we intend he hath a verie blunt capacitie, or of a blacke Boore woman, to saie, Will ye see a faire pigion.

Charientismus, as when we scoffe a man in his threatning mood to say, O good words, I pray you, or kill vs not at the first dash, or, Bite not my nose off I pray you, and such like.⁴⁸

That these four figures are distinguished as such – primarily according to different social contexts – points to the fact that Day and his contemporaries perceived no lack of occasion to express ironic insults in late sixteenth-century English society. The way in which several of the examples incorporate otherwise conventional language (such as the

⁴⁶ The figurative notion of ‘arras’ as useful in conceiving of early modern self-presentation and rhetoric comes from both Whigham (1981) and Steen (1993).

⁴⁷ Haiman, *Talk is Cheap*, p. 80.

⁴⁸ A. Day, *The English Secretary* (London, 1599), pp. 80-1, from *Early English Books Online*, <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

performative *I pray you*) interacts interestingly with Alexander Bergs' conclusion that English letter-writers of this time 'had the possibility of employing the complex notions of standard and stigma for their needs [. . .] to use and gauge their own language and that of others in direct comparison to language *as it should be*' (2004: 222).⁴⁹ Reference to the Latinate rhetorical terms alongside those of the vernacular, such as a 'scoffe or flout' for *ironia*, or a 'bitter bob' for *sarcasmus*, implies that some of these terms already had everyday linguistic currency in English. The examples given by Day are primarily speech-based and he offers no instruction on, or examples of their use in letters. However, the fact that he sees ironic language as a marketable component of his letter-writing manual, and that such usage appears in Maria's letters indicates that ironic expression was increasingly becoming a part of registers beyond the spoken language.⁵⁰ The correlation of evidence (from Day's manual and Maria's letters) and observation (in Bergs) suggests that by the late Elizabethan period the conventions of English letter-writing activity would have become transparent to the point that their subversion – including non-literal uses of conventional epistolary language and rhetoric – would have become an alternate mode of expression. This observation strongly resonates with what Bax and Streekstra have observed happening in mid-seventeenth-century Dutch letters, wherein the conventionalized nature of letter-writing gave way to 'ritualistic play', or 'a distinct type of early modern *simulatio*' (e.g. 'feigned modesty') – something they too link to the rise of the theatre.⁵¹

So while the current study has for the most part been limited to a relatively small cache of letters from two or three women, it offers suggestive evidence for language-use influenced by a combination of period-specific factors. Social perceptions of courtly – and by extension much of aristocratic – culture were becoming sources of anxiety due to rising consciousness of the divide between expression and meaning. Martin summarizes the complexity of this situation:

[Renaissance people] lived in a culture that valued theatricality and emphasized the importance of self-presentation, performance, and rhetoric, but not, as many postmodernists have tended to assume, at the expense of a self-consciousness about interior experience or inwardness or the tensions that existed between such inwardness and one's stance in the world.⁵²

⁴⁹ A. Bergs, 'Letters: A New Approach to Text Typology', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 5:2 (2004), pp. 207–27 (p. 222).

⁵⁰ Sarcasm *does* seem to occur in several other instances of the Thynne women's letters – albeit much less dominantly than in Maria's correspondence (some examples are given in Wall [2001]). My own reading of other collections, along with personal discussion with scholars who have done wide survey work, does however indicate that sarcasm is certainly not a common means of expression in *surviving* (the key word) period letters.

⁵¹ M. Bax and N. Streekstra, 'Civil Rites: Ritual Politeness in Early Modern Dutch Letter-Writing', *Journal of Historical Pragmatics* 4:2 (2003), pp. 303–26.

⁵² Martin, *Myths*, p. 18.

Sincerity developed within these cultures as a rhetorical cover, providing linguistic closure for the gap between the oftentimes contrived surface of sociability in language and the internal thoughts which lay behind ulterior motives. This, coupled with the stylistic malleability of the letter genre and its separateness as a unique performative space apart from the public stage of social interaction seem to have been amenable precursors for the sarcastic language found in the letters of Maria Thynne. Sarcasm offered a sophisticated way of reappropriating power in a performative context, an alternative to physical force used to express emotions and subvert familial gender expectations.⁵³ Could it be that sarcasm was especially attractive to highly educated women, ‘melancholy’ at being left at home, playing the ‘fool’? After all, the large amount of antifeminist literature of the period is rife with references to the need to suppress the quick and masterful ‘tongue’ of shrewish women: and as Brown’s study makes clear, women’s jest culture response ‘asserts[s] that women possess[ed] a satiric weapon in a world that continually denies them agency and wit’.⁵⁴ Could the development of sarcasm somehow have correlated with gender distinctions, perhaps conjoined with class?

A young woman who had spent time at court in the heyday of Elizabethan theatre, married into a family below her birth and never accepted by her mother-in-law, Maria was very clearly a part of her period with regard to social anxieties, and there can be little doubt that her epistolary response is one of the most powerfully worded examples to have survived. It is a reaction that can be seen as a response to cultural shifts, to ‘the ways in which the rulers of English society managed to find or forge new cultural forms, self-images, and codes of conduct which preserved their identity and upheld legitimacy in a changing world’.⁵⁵ However, this remains a tentative, yet intriguing suggestion requiring more close readings of more text types from medieval and early modern England.

⁵³ Brown’s study of women’s jest culture in early modern England offers interesting parallels here regarding the performative reappropriation of power by women (2003: 6). See also, A. P. Nilson, ‘Wit: An Alternative to Force’, *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* 40:4 (1983), pp. 445-50.

⁵⁴ Brown, *Better a Shrew*, p. 89.

⁵⁵ Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*, p. 24.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusions and Directions for Future Research

The readings offered in this thesis augment, complement and, in some cases, problematize previous approaches to the Thynne archive, and indeed to individual letter collections that survive from early modern England more generally. By using the concepts and methodologies of historical pragmatics it has been possible to give a multi-dimensional and cross-disciplinary account of Joan and Maria's letters. The results of the analyses in Chapters 3-7 have proven the value of this method of approaching letters by producing an interrelated set of observations that illuminate aspects of social, linguistic, palaeographic and textual meaning. Each analysis helps us better understand the communicative world of these women in particular and how their individual uses were embedded within a linguistic and historical moment. These results will be reiterated in brief in this conclusion. Equally significant, however, and the main focus of this final chapter, is the way this study has identified a number of previously unarticulated questions to be taken up by future work in historical pragmatics, and other research methodologies. These two levels of results – questions answered and questions posed – will be dealt with on a chapter-by-chapter basis.

Chapter 3: Punctuation and Pragmatic Markers

Chapter 3, in which analysis began, asked how Joan and Maria organized their letters into meaningful units of information by way of punctuation and other pragmatic markers. Beyond rhetorical formulae, it was shown how 'chunks' (including phrasal, clausal and sentential units) of text could be signified by a number of different methods. When they were present at all in Joan's holograph letters, punctuation marks functioned in a variety of ways: sometimes grammatical, at other times more rhetorical, to list items (as in the use of the colon in constructions such as ': I haue reseaued' . . . ': I haue reseaued' . . . etc.), attached to speech acts in the letter, or occasionally in an emotive 'staccato' style. Joan's scribal letters on the other hand are much more consistent in their punctuation (a point that was further emphasized in Chapter 5) and closer to that observed elsewhere in Elizabethan legal documents. Maria's letters were also consistent and to a great extent reflect grammatical concerns with which we are more familiar today.

The analysis of Joan and Maria's punctuation practice performed in this thesis is a type of study unprecedented in the field of historical linguistics. When it is dealt with, manuscript punctuation in the history of English (excluding Shakespeare and the

grammarians) has for the most part been left to palaeographers, with next to no consideration of familiar letters. No doubt this has something to do with the irregularity with which many texts from the period are punctuated. In accordance with standardized grammar, current usage of punctuation is oftentimes described in prescriptivist terms; however, the use of punctuation in the Thynne women's letters has shown early modern practice to be more flexible and multi-functional.¹ Joan's letters in particular suggest that even within the writing of one individual, there might be a variety of possible functions for punctuation. Looking at more examples of 'everyday' punctuation from the period would make it possible to draw conclusions about larger trends and developments in punctuation practice more generally among lay writers.

In addition to punctuation, other pragmatic markers – namely discourse markers (e.g. *well*), conjunctions (e.g. *therefore*), phrases (e.g. *for my part*) and present participle forms of speech act verbs (e.g. *desiring*) – were highlighted as significant ways for either woman to structure their letters into meaningful 'chunks' and add communicative, elocutionary force to their prose. In Joan's letters, these markers are particularly helpful in cases where punctuation marks are absent. In Maria's, they oftentimes coincide with punctuation, suggesting a relationship in the development of punctuation with other features of the text. The structure of opening and especially closing formulae were also discussed in terms of discourse markers (such as *thus*) and speech acts (such as taking one's *leave*) and in Joan's letters there was clear signs of change in these formulae over time. Closings were also described as pragmatic markers in themselves as they served to signal the end of a letter in a conventionalized way.

Chapter 3 thus demonstrates a method for, and shows the value of clearly and systematically describing and analyzing punctuation and the organizational features found in pre-standard English epistolary texts. This reconsideration could benefit from cognitive approaches to language and linguistic 'rules', which emphasize the fuzziness between forms and the functions they serve. From this perspective, instead of equating a lack of punctuation with a lack of organizational structure, the historical pragmatician can discuss the ways in which early modern writers relied on elements of the spoken language (evidenced by discourse markers) as well as features more common to written traditions (e.g. present participle forms of speech act verbs and closing formulae) in order to fulfil structural functions instead of, or in conjunction with, punctuation marks.

¹ For an amusing and perhaps eccentric prescriptivist account of punctuation see L. Truss, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation* (London, 2003).

Up until only quite recently, with the advent of historical pragmatics, there has not been a perspective in historical linguistics able to articulate questions to do with the level of the written text dealt with in Chapter 3. And in many ways, it may seem that historical pragmatics, more focused on the history of speech acts, have yet to really address the pragmatics of the written text. Jeremy J. Smith has made this point in a comprehensively broad context for historical linguistics, drawing into question the validity of the often held belief that speech ought to be the primary object of study in linguistics, with writing systems following ineffectually afterwards:

Many scholars would exclude consideration of writing-systems from their discussion of linguistic matters, either ignoring it completely or considering it part of a separate discipline; after all, the written mode undoubtedly follows speech chronologically, and many languages have never developed a written equivalent to speech. But it is worth recalling that the word *grammar* derives from Greek *grapho* 'write', and that, in a number of cultures – including English – the written mode has developed a considerable prestige [. . .]²

Writing is not simply a loose recapitulation of spoken varieties but is an interactive process that develops equally in relation to the act of writing itself and structuring meaning on the page. Furthermore, writing directs its own influence on later attempts at both written and spoken language. In addition to organizational structure, other aspects of writing – such as handwriting – have also been considered as pragmatically significant in this thesis (particularly in Chapters 5 and 6). Therefore, although it is significant that letters have been characterized as a written form close to speech, it is clearly important that they be seen as valuable not just as ways of reconstructing earlier speech, but as sites for discussing the unique aspects of earlier written English and writing systems, including handwriting, orthography and punctuation. This would involve the development of what might be termed *historical textual pragmatics*.

Chapter 4: Performative Speech Act Verbs

Due to their common occurrence, along with the fact that the range of speech act verbs are revelatory of the particular culture in which they are performed, Chapter 4 investigated the sociopragmatic significance of a number of performative speech act verbs that appear in the Thynne women's letters. Each verb was categorized according to previous typologies as being directive, representative, commissive or expressive – which was actually found to account for verbs' communicative function in only the most general

² J. J. Smith, *An Historical Study of English: Function, Form and Change* (London and New York, 1996), pp. 55-6.

sense, with many verbs occupying a fuzzy space between categories. In the case of directives, it was shown how despite the circularity of dictionary definitions, performatives in this category functioned in discernibly different ways. Therefore, verbs such as *pray* and *beseech* – although they are used to define one another in the OED – actually carried different pragmatic messages, the latter being reserved for more formal or desperate circumstances. Also, unlike other directives in the letters, the directive *entreat* always involved hedging (e.g. with *let me*), seemingly as a means of lessening the potential threat this verb may have caused for an addressee's sense of negative face. Commissive performatives such as *promise* and *vow* played an important role in reiterating social obligations through letter-writing and several examples were located in close concordance with reference to the 'performance' of such duties. Then, verbs such as *assure*, *confess* and *protest* were categorized as representatives – perhaps the fuzziest of all categories. The sociopragmatic significance of *confess* in particular was related to early modern emotional reservation, where the verb, once realized performatively, served as a qualifier to emotionally sensitive information, or material that revealed delicate inner feelings or opinions. *Protest* on the other hand was used to emphasize the exposition of one's innermost feelings or sincerity (via their 'heart' or 'mind') and was often found in concordance with 'God' as a witness to the verity of one's committal to love, duty and obedience. Expressive performatives were found to typically occur in more conventionally worded parts of the letter, particularly the opening and closing formulae. And expressives such as *remember* were described as serving as a way of explicitly reiterating the larger sociopragmatic function of letters as symbols of *remembering* one's duty or affection for the addressee, further supporting a connection between performatives and specific text types. The results of this chapter show that the systematic, pragmatic analysis of performatives creates a readable link between early modern language and its culture by exhibiting how these verbs were in fact ways of reiterating social values and conventions, which in their familial contexts provided explicit proof that their users (i.e. the letter-writers themselves) were aware of the proper way of performing socially sanctioned/expected acts by giving them their correct 'names'.

One aspect of their correspondence that limited the consideration of Joan and Maria's use of performatives was the fairly narrow range of correspondents for whom letters have survived, as most of the letters are to their husbands. Another approach to the sociopragmatic aspects of performatives would be to study texts written to or from a particular writer for whom there is a larger range of correspondents than the Thynne women. The category of directives in particular may offer interesting evidence in such a study where, for example, one might look at directives written to social equals, superiors

and lessers, in a variety of situations in order to clarify the hierarchy of performative directives and how they relate to variables such as the social relationship between correspondents, politeness, formality, subject matter, etc. This type of research could be facilitated by examining either outgoing or incoming correspondence across a range of correspondents and from varying communicative contexts.

An interesting example of the sort of variation which might be found in these types of investigation comes from elsewhere in the Thynne archive, in a letter from Christian Thynne to her husband, John Thynne Sr., where observable differences in speech act verbs distinguish the body of the letter from a post-script written by Christian's scribe. Christian's own message offers little in the way of supplication and makes no use of a performative: 'I wold vnderstand yor mynd'.³ The post-script on the other hand, written in the same hand, by what must have been a man of Thynne's house with duties that went beyond penning letters for John's wife, writes 'praying you not to forget yor goshawks' and 'I wold be so bold to intrete yow' (again requesting that John bring back hawks to his estate; and, with the hedged use of *entreat* observed elsewhere).⁴ Here the scribe switches styles, from his patroness' to one more fitting of his own station, despite the fact that he wrote both (this also has implications for the holograph/scribal distinction discussed in Chapter 5).

Another area where this thesis demonstrates there is scope for further research is in the semantic and sociopragmatic significance of individual verbs for the period more generally. The analysis in Chapter 4 makes use of the OED, other period letters, Angel Day and selections from the works of Shakespeare; however, wider, sociopragmatically directed corpus searches are needed to more concretely discern the function of performatives and their meaningfulness in relation to society in early modern culture at large. Such a study would involve the type of work carried out in Wierzbicka's *English Speech Act Verbs: A Semantic Dictionary* (1987), but in a historic context, and with a more pragmatic emphasis, drawing on uses from all genres of texts. Furthermore, this proposition also highlights the need for sociopragmatically annotated corpus tools for the period. Currently, the only corpus of this type is the *Sociopragmatic Corpus*, which is limited in both period and genre in that it consists of what is only a subsection of the *Corpus of English Dialogues* from 1640-1760.⁵

³ Although *will* may be described as a performative order in medieval English, the use of *would* in early modern English seems to be more of an indirect request. This, added with it being a past tense, makes it clearly non-performative. For a detailed discussion of these forms see Kohnen (2000c: 167-70).

⁴ I.135 (1559).

⁵ M. Palander-Collin, 'What Kind of Corpus Annotation is Needed in Sociopragmatic Research?', *Studies in Variation, Contacts and Change in English*, 'Volume 1: Annotating Variation and Change' (2007), <<http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/journal/volumes/01/palander-collin/>> Accessed July 11, 2009.

Chapter 5: The Significance of the Holograph/Scribal Distinction

Chapter 5 explored the social, textual and linguistic significance of Joan's using a scribe in her letters, particularly those written to Thomas in the early seventeenth century. Earlier correspondence with her husband, along with an insubordinate response to her scribal letters to Thomas from Maria helped situate Joan's use of a scribe as a meaningful gesture, which was contextualized within the larger culture of women's letter-writing provided by previous research completed by social historians. On this level, it is clear that the use of a scribe would have created emotional distance and added legal gravity to the claims for Thomas' sister's dowry money that he owed her. The use of a scribe was also shown to have effects on spatial aspects of the text, punctuation and orthography. Most significant, however, were the findings to do with the lexico-grammatical variation between scribal letters written to Thomas compared with other holographs, particularly her final letter to her son, written in 1611. Here it was found that anaphoric language (such as *the said* and *thereof*) and the formalized speech act verb *advertise* were common to scribal letters, but lacking in holographs. And conversely, conjunctive *therefore* and *for*-clauses were common in holographs (including but not limited to the final letter to Thomas), but almost completely absent from scribal productions.

These findings have clear implications for historical linguists interested in pairing types of language with types of people (e.g. in sociolinguistics and pragmatics). In the case of the Thynne letters, their inclusion into the Supplement to the CEEC (initiated in 2000) is limited due to the reliance on Alison Wall's edition (1983), which, apart from being modernized, does not distinguish between holograph and scribal productions. Whether or not the lexico-grammatical influence came directly from Joan's scribes themselves, or if the use of scribes simply coincided with the legally sensitive context for using this sort of language is difficult to tell; but the findings here clearly problematize connections between author and language when a scribe is involved. Although comparative studies done on the scribal letters of the Paston women (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg [1996]; Bergs [2002]; Wood [2009]) suggest that scribes copied language verbatim, it is not until the early modern period that we have clear instances where a woman's holograph letters have survived alongside scribal examples. However, this sort of research is almost non-existent for early modern letters. Therefore, the present study strongly suggests that more research of this type be conducted in other instances where both holograph and scribal letters have survived from a single writer.

Although no morphosyntactic items are here identified in Joan's letters, my own readings of early modern women's letters outside the Thynne archive provide a clear, albeit royal (and therefore exceptional), example of holograph/scrabal morphosyntactic variation later in the sixteenth-century letters of Elizabeth I. Most of Elizabeth's letters were of course scrabal: given the vast amount of letter-writing that was required 'by the Queen', it would have been impossible for her to write even most of her letters herself. However, despite modern editors' conclusion that it is 'often impossible to separate the queen's "authentic" voice from an official style that she developed in conjunction with her secretaries',⁶ there are some clear differences between holograph and scrabal language in Elizabeth's letters. For one, scrabal letters correlate strongly with the use of the royal *we*, along with the royal *us*, *oursel* and the possessive *our*, whereas Elizabeth's holograph letters often used the more familiar use of the first person. For example, in holograph letters to King James VI of Scotland, Elizabeth omits the use of royal pronouns altogether. And while this might be expected in letters between royalty, it is observable elsewhere in her correspondence as well, even when the writing was less socially equilateral. In a letter to George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, in 1572, the Queen adds a post-script to an otherwise scrabal letter and the difference between holograph and scrabal pronoun usage is again evident.⁷ In her post-script Elizabeth uses *I* and the possessive *my* while the preceding scrabal body of the letter uses the royal *we* and *our*, or *oursel*. The Queen also refers to the Earl rather warmly as 'My faithfull Shrewsbury', whereas the scribe writes in a more conventional, completely impersonal fashion, 'Right trusty and right well-beloved cousin and councillor' (a generic way of opening that could have been used for just about any one of Elizabeth's subjects).

This language reflects more generally what was a characteristic way of ruling for Elizabeth: making those who served her feel bound to her – almost maternally – by means of expressing her personal affection for them. Furthermore, this stylistic variation of familiarity and the first person pronouns in Elizabeth's letters seems to have been consistent. In a copy of a letter sent to Margery, Lady Norris, Elizabeth writes a superscript note which refers to Margery as '*Mine* own Crow' (italics mine), apparently referring to the woman's dark complexion.⁸ The rest of this letter, however, uses the royal *we* and possessive *our*. And again, in a post-script to a letter written to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon (the son of Mary Boleyn) in 1570, she refers to him as 'my Harry', the scribe uses the repeated 'Right trusty and well-beloved cousin', and she switches from the royal

⁶ L. S. Marcus, J. Mueller and M. B. Rose (eds.), *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, (Chicago and London, 2000), p. xiii.

⁷ A facsimile image of this letter is reproduced in Marcus, Mueller and Rose, *Elizabeth I*, p. 213.

⁸ Ibid., p. 389.

to first person pronouns.⁹ Elizabeth was very clearly aware of the power of stylistic variation and the way in which linguistic expression could strongly signify social meaning. Not only did she offer her subjects something under her own hand, but with a familiar, almost maternal-sounding epistolary voice to match. Furthermore, in letters *to* Elizabeth, Fleming has observed how Mary Queen Scots also used the royal *we* as a pragmatic device: in conjunction with the Scots language, Mary replaced the first person pronoun with the royal one in instances where she wished to express her ‘confidence in the rightness of her cause’.¹⁰

The stylistic variation observable in letters sent between early modern queens is not equivalent with any other level of correspondence for the period, particularly the example of royal pronouns. But what it suggests, alongside the findings in Joan’s letters, is that stylistic variation between holograph and scribal examples, whether conscious or not, was happening in English letters and was highly dependent upon the conditions and hands under which a specific correspondence took place. A potential case study is the correspondence of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, but better known to posterity as ‘Bess of Hardwick’ (c. 1527-1608). These letters are currently being edited and analyzed in the AHRC-funded *Bess of Hardwick Project* within the Department of English Language at the University of Glasgow, under the supervision of Alison Wiggins. There are a total of eighty-four surviving letters from Bess, approximately two-thirds of which are holograph, with the remaining scribal, making her correspondence well suited for this type of study. And of special note, at least one of the ‘scribal’ letters was written by her son, William, from whom there also exists holographs written on his own account. Studying the three types of letters between these individuals – i.e. holographs from Bess, scribal letters from her but written by her son, and holographs from her son (in his own correspondence) – would tell us whether or not her son altered ‘her’ language to be more like his own when writing for her, or if he reproduced her language as it was found in her holograph examples.

Another case is the cache of letters from Elizabeth Bourne, writing in the later sixteenth century and located by Daybell, from whom approximately seventy letters survive.¹¹ Most of these are holograph, although she did employ assistance in some of her business correspondence. Furthermore, Bourne wrote under several pseudonyms, which she herself referred to as her ‘secrete syphers’. Although slightly different from the study

⁹ Ibid., p. 125-6.

¹⁰ M. R. Fleming, ‘An Unequal Correspondence: Epistolary and Poetic Exchanges between Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth of England’, in *Women and the Feminine in Medieval and Early Modern Scottish Writing*, ed. S. M. Dunnigan, C. M. Harker and E. S. Newlyn (Basingstoke, 2004), pp. 105-19 (p.109).

¹¹ J. Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006), p. 92. The dates of Elizabeth’s life are not given.

of holograph and scribal language, it would also be interesting to see how Bourne may have changed her language to accommodate her different pseudonyms. It may be an eccentric example, but one of potential interest and value in terms of indicating one author's level of linguistic awareness and shifting stylistic self-consciousness.

Such studies need not, nor should they be limited to only women's letters. Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, is also a case that offers much potential. Essex, apart from serving as Elizabeth I's secretary on occasion, also employed a number of secretaries for his own correspondence, stating that 'amongst the infinite letters *which* are offred to me to signe' it was possible that 'I might signe some such ere I knew whatt yt was'.¹² From this statement alone it seems unlikely that there would not be significant linguistic variation between many of the earl's letters.

Unlike the medieval period, from early modern England there are a number of examples of men and women for whom we have both holograph and scribal letters, and more case studies such as that performed in Chapter 5 would give us a better idea of how much linguistic variation was actually happening under scribal hands during this period.

Chapter 6: The Direct Exchange Between Joan and Lucy Audley

One aspect of performing pragmatic studies of early modern letters is that direct exchanges between correspondents, where we might see how meaning was interpreted and responded to, are not always easy to come by. Chapter 6 dealt with the only direct exchange in the Thynne women's letters, between Joan Thynne and Lucy Audley in 1602. Although other areas of the Thynne correspondence quite clearly participate in the same epistolary dialogue, referring to other letters and sharing terminology, studying a direct exchange offers detailed and exact evidence for how social relations were negotiated in letters – particularly in cases such as this where informants were on bad terms. A number of features of the letters figured in the discussion: rhetoric, address terms, politeness, and even the graphic and spatial dimensions of the texts. Lucy's strategy was characterized by familiarity, positive politeness and indirect threats to Joan's own face in an attempt to get her to respond positively to the language of 'friendship' and 'love' that she uses in the initial letter, whereas Joan's response maintained social distance through addressee-orientated negative politeness and took on self-politeness strategies in rejecting Lucy's conception of friendship. It was also shown how Lucy's engagement with the rhetoric of sincerity and Joan's countering with the conception of friendship by 'trial' were personally

¹² A. Stewart and H. Wolfe (eds.), *Letterwriting in Renaissance England* (Seattle and London, 2004), p. 71.

configured uses of what were in fact conventionalized means of expressing friendship in period letters, exhibiting the way in which conventions were exploited and negotiated in actual communicative contexts. In terms of material aspects of the letters, the fact that Joan's response is much more like Lucy's letter than any of her own letters written before or after this indicates the sensitive context of palaeographic and organizational features in letter-writing. This suggests the possibility of extending the notion of audience design and linguistic accommodation theory (described by Bell 2001) to material and palaeographic aspects of epistolary texts. The culmination of these details, and the larger significance of this chapter, exhibits the need to consider texts holistically, multi-dimensionally, and in relation to other texts to which they are responding in order to fully appreciate their communicative content.

Another way of approaching this exchange might be to apply an alternate theory to see if it changes our understanding of the dynamic between the two women. An example of such a theory is Watt's relatively new approach to politeness (2003), which he distinguishes from Brown and Levinson's theory based in face threats, face wants and face-saving strategies. Watts considers politeness to be something much more socially discursive than Brown and Levinson, continually negotiated, whereas conventional, unspoken aspects of linguistic etiquette fall into a separate category of 'politic behaviour'. Watt's emphasis on power and the discursive nature of polite behaviour seems particularly relevant to exchanges like Joan and Lucy's, where the relationship is very much a struggle for power over terminology and interpretations of concepts such as 'civility', 'honor' and 'friendship'. A reconsideration of the exchange between Joan and Lucy from a different perspective would undoubtedly yield new results and a comparison of these models of politeness when applied to specific exchanges could offer insights into the ways in which the concepts of face and politeness have hitherto been characterized in early modern England and how they interacted with the linguistic and textual dimensions of epistolary exchanges.

Generally, the study of direct epistolary exchanges is another underdeveloped area of historical pragmatics with much potential for future research. Although Fitzmaurice (2002) has performed pragmatic analyses of direct exchanges between literary writers from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, there is very little of this type of work completed for earlier periods. Finding direct correspondences is of course more difficult as the archives become sparser the further one goes back; however, there are clear examples of direct exchanges even in the Paston letters. Norman Davis, in his edition, makes notes linking letters he has identified as in such a relation. Also, from the century following the Pastons, there are numerous sets of direct exchanges in the Lisle letters, written in the first

half of the sixteenth century. Of these exchanges, there are letters between Lord and Lady Lisle, Lady Lisle and John Husee (discussed in Chapter 5 as a Lisle retainer and one of Lord Lisle's scribes), Lord Lisle and Cromwell, as well as others.¹³ More research in other collections would undoubtedly reveal other direct exchanges in the period, which would be valuable sources for analyzing the ways in which meaning was a product of negotiation and response between correspondents in early English letters.

Chapter 7: Sincerity, Sarcasm and Seriousness

Finally, Chapter 7 described Maria's exceptional stylistic repertoire, particularly the relationship between the rhetoric of sincerity (in petitions to Joan), sarcasm and playful irony (in her final letter to Joan and several to Thomas), and serious language (solely in letters to Thomas). In the first section, the discussion of sincerity was extended from Chapter 6, and it was shown how Maria engaged with language similar to her mother when writing to Joan, albeit in a more deferential way, as daughter-in-law. The sociopragmatic significance of this language was described as creating rhetorical closure of the gap between written expression and actual, 'inner' thoughts – which was shown to reflect larger period concerns to do with sociability in connection with the court and Elizabethan theatre. Then, in her final letter to Joan, Maria exploited conventional modes of politeness and deferential language – for example, in speech act verbs such as *beseech* and *confess* – to sarcastic effect in order to reopen the gap between expression and meaning as a way of communicating anger, spite and emotional frustration. In letters to Thomas as well, conventional modes of deference are employed ironically, sometimes to express anger, but also as a means of spousal flirtation. The juxtaposition of sincerity and sarcasm illustrates the way in which although early modern sociability and the language that went into letters was in many ways conventionalized, it was also possible to subvert these conventions for communicative effect: Maria simultaneously pays lip-service to the type of voices expected from her (i.e. the 'loving and deferential' daughter, or the 'obedient and chaste' wife, *bound* by duty), while also showing her disapproval and rejection of them. Given her frequent use of non-literal language, it was also observed how in instances where Maria needed to report business or be taken seriously in parts of her letters to her husband, she sometimes marked sections of text as 'business' or 'in sober sadness'. In conjunction with these explicit signals, Maria employed different linguistic features in sections of seriously minded text: the *y*-form of the second person pronoun (as opposed to her more familiar use

¹³ See M. St. Clare Byrne, *The Lisle Letters*, 6 Volumes (London and Chicago, 1981).

of *th*-forms elsewhere), anaphoric reference terms (also found in Joan's scribal letters) and the future auxiliary *shall*, all of which were linked to more formal registers of early modern English. This three-part reading demonstrated how rhetorical and linguistic forms worked in an interrelated way in/between the pragmatic space of Maria's shifting attitude(s), proving that – despite its challenges – doing this type of work in a historical and textual context is possible and rewarding.

Chapter 7 also contributes to what has been a repeated engagement with notions of theatricality and performativity amongst scholars of early modern England, and letters especially. For example, with specific reference to women's letters, Daybell's work has shown how 'scripting a female voice' was a performative feat in that feminine rhetoric was often appropriated by male writers in an attempt to gain pity and favor from would-be patrons.¹⁴ Furthermore, both Fitzmaurice and Magnusson's pragmatic readings of early modern correspondence employ terminologies of performance and theatrical metaphors to describe letter-writing. Fitzmaurice refers to correspondents as 'actors' and the social world of letters as produced from the textual one, which requires an 'affective presence of an absent individual'.¹⁵ Magnusson's study is particularly interesting in this respect as it provides direct links between letters and drama, showing the way in which particular rhetorical forms, what she refers to as 'social scripts', were part of a collective discourse, observable in the plays of Shakespeare as well as in Elizabethan letters.¹⁶ Chapter 7 adds to these discussions by showing how the awareness of the performative nature of early modern life (i.e. the macro, socio-historical context) manifested itself in actual communicative circumstances (i.e. the micro, localized context) not only through conventionalized rhetoric (which has been the focus in previous studies), but also in the subversive use of irony and sarcasm. With this in mind, the final part of Chapter 7 suggested that, in parallel with the development of the ideal of sincerity and its connections with Elizabethan theatre, sarcasm too may have developed within communities in which the conventions of social interaction were becoming increasingly transparent – perhaps even with some specificity for aristocratic women.

Although irony, in a linguistically unspecified and abstract sense, has been addressed to some extent by literary scholars, sarcasm (i.e. verbal irony) is a feature of English unexplored. Given this mode of expression's current high status in Anglo-American culture – where sarcasm is very often the norm more than an exception to the

¹⁴ J. Daybell, 'Scripting a Female Voice: Women's Epistolary Rhetoric in Sixteenth-Century Letters of Petition', *Women's Writing* 13:1 (2006), pp. 3-22.

¹⁵ S. Fitzmaurice, *The Familiar Letter in Early Modern English: A Pragmatic Approach* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2002), pp. 1 and 35 (respectively).

¹⁶ In addition, Alan Stewart has explored the use of letters *within* Shakespearean dramas (i.e. fictive representations of epistolary culture) in *Shakespeare's Letters* (New York and Oxford, 2008).

rule¹⁷ – an investigation into its history is doubly significant: both for pragmaticians interested in the early modern period but also for those who wish to better understand current usage. Future research, then, might explore other letter collections as well as other types of texts in search of language that purposefully exploits the space between expression and meaning in order to make larger claims about the development of sarcasm in English and its relation to other developments in the conventions of language and rhetoric.

Conclusion

Taking the letters of the Thynne women as its principal site of investigation, this thesis has illustrated a methodology of multi-dimensionality, wherein the central aim has been to suggest the types of analyses that might be engaged with when reading early modern letters from a cross-disciplinary and pragmatic perspective. By orientating itself within the field of historical pragmatics, this study has benefited from the ability to consider a number of features and influences – linguistic, social and textual – as a way to understanding the letters as communicative events, and how the different parts of each related to one another in the construction of meaning. On another level, in that it has focused on a particular group of texts by two writers of the same family, this study has exhibited how a specific socio-familial narrative relates to its manifestation in text and language, allowing us to understand the women themselves in a new light. Applied to other period letter collections, there can be little doubt that this type of methodology would yield further insights, as well as more questions such as those described in this conclusion, questions that are best elicited from the practice of close reading.

¹⁷ J. Haiman, 'Sarcasm as Theater', *Cognitive Linguistics* 1-2 (1990), pp. 181-205 (p. 203).

Appendix 1: Diplomatic Transcriptions

Transcription Policy

The primary aim of this policy is to provide diplomatic transcriptions that reproduce the original manuscript letters of the Thynne women as faithfully as possible within the limits of a typescript. Therefore, features such as orthography, punctuation and spacing follow the manuscript. In addition, the reference headings at the beginning of each transcription discuss the graphic dimension of the text, locating scripts and hands involved in the writing of different parts of the letter. These features are important to conducting pragmatic analyses in that in order to fully understand a letter's communicative function and meaningfulness, one must consider letters holistically (i.e. multi-dimensionally).

As mentioned in the introduction, the letters have been edited by Alison Wall for the Wiltshire Record Society (1983); however, Wall's edition is for the most part modernized and gives no indication of the scripts and hands involved in particular letters. For comparison, take the beginning to letter VIII.26, from Joan to Thomas in 1607, first as I have transcribed it:

Good Sonne. The cause of my slacknes in not writinge to you since
I recd yor laste *lre* by ffisher, was one while sicknes, another while ~
want of a conuenient messengr, and cheiflie a match moconed to be had
betweene mr Whitneys sonne and yor Sister Dorothe not brought
to anie head till now;

And then, as it is rendered in Wall's edition (letter 53):

Good son, the cause of my slackness in not writing to you since I received your last
letter by Fisher, was one time sickness, another while a want of a convenient
messenger and chiefly, a match motioned to be had between Mr Whitney's son and
your sister Dorothy not brought to any head till now [. . .]

The fact that this letter was written by a scribe, in a secretary hand, is a significant fact not recognized in Wall's edition. Furthermore, and in addition to the mistranscribed word 'time' for 'while', the original punctuation, orthography, abbreviations and lineation are also lost. As is demonstrated in the chapters of this thesis – especially Chapter 3 which deals with original punctuation and Chapter 5 which studies the implications of the holograph/scribal distinction in Joan's letters – all these features are important in accounting for the letters' communicative value. These new diplomatic transcriptions will also be of use to future analyses and serve as a replacement for Wall's modernized edition as part of the CEEC.

Reference Headings

Each letter is preceded by a reference heading, which is made up of six parts:

1) Archive Reference

All the letters written by Joan and Maria are from the Thynne Papers held at Longleat. The archive reference begins with the volume in Roman numerals, followed by the foliation number(s), e.g. V.5.

2) Wall's Number

For the purposes of comparison, I have included the corresponding letter number to Alison Wall's edition (1983).

3) Sender and Recipient

The names of the correspondents are given in modernized spelling.

4) Date

The dates in the reference headings are derived from the manuscripts themselves, if possible. Where it is not made explicit in the letters themselves, the dating is derived from historical references and context (and here Wall's historical research, and notes to her edition, have provided a helpful reference point). If a date is not given in the manuscript itself and is untenable otherwise, 'no date' is abbreviated as ND. All dates are given in accordance with the modern calendar and New Year. Since the New Year began on the 25th of March in Joan and Maria's period, all the dates in letters written between January 1st and March 25th appear as the year previous to that given in the reference heading.

5) Palaeography

The letters of Maria Thynne are all written by herself in a handwriting that remained consistent throughout. The script is always bold, and for the most part fully italicized (see Fig 6). She uses long <s> when it appears between other letters. Characteristic of her handwriting is the way she abbreviates 'your' by looping the descender on the <y> fully around the bottom and over the top, in a clockwise direction to end in a superscript <r>: I have rendered this simply 'yr' in my transcriptions (an example of this may be seen in the third-to-last line in the facsimile Image 3 located in Appendix 2). In the case of Joan Thynne, however, the record strongly suggests that she may have had several different types of scripts she used herself, some of which are limited to those letters written earlier in her life, some only later. Furthermore, Joan signs some of her earlier letters in a script which differs from the body of the text (although both seem to be in her own hand), making palaeographical descriptions interesting and important. As far as it is possible to tell, Joan had at least four scripts which she herself employed throughout the whole corpus of her correspondence, not including that found in the letter to Lucy Audley, which might

also be Joan's own (see Figures 1-5, below). In cases where Joan used a scribe to write for her, this is noted as 'scribal'. All scribal scripts are secretary, however, there are differences between them and on occasions when the script is particularly neat and formal-looking (as in those to Thomas), I have made a note of it in this section to the reference heading.

6) Damage

On occasion, sections of the text are torn or have been made illegible by water damage.

7) Marginalia and additions by archivists

This section describes the scripts and hands involved in the addition of material presumably after its receipt. In particular, the Thynnes were in the custom of giving their letters endorsements, such as John writing 'my wyfe to me' (sometimes giving the date as well) on letters from Joan. These occur on the outside of the letter near the address and are added as the first item in the transcriptions (when present), listed as an [endorsement:]. Also, on several occasions, notes in the margins have been added to letters, which are listed after the signature as [marginalia:]. Any relevant discussion of these features is added as the last section of the reference heading.

Scripts

Fig 1. Joan's Script 1 (taken from V.4, 1575):

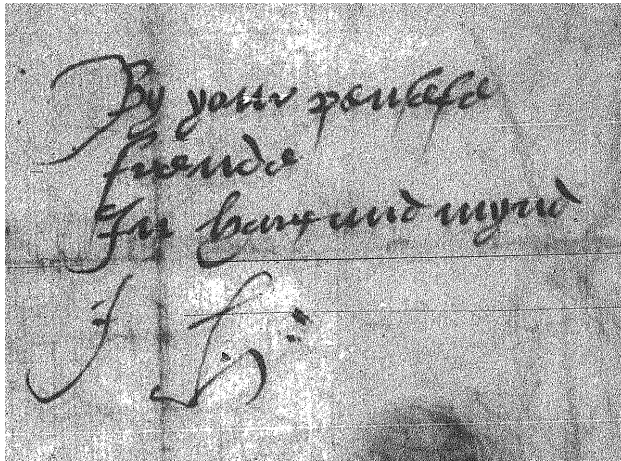


Fig 2. Script 2 (from V.10, 1576):

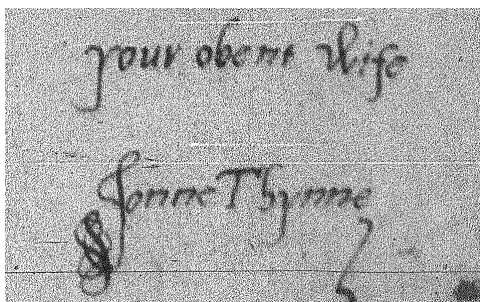
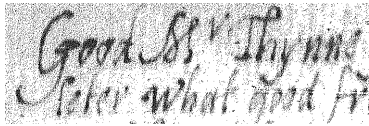


Fig 3. Script 3 (found exclusively in V.34, 1580):



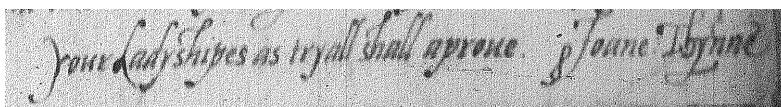
Good 8th Thynne
Peter what good fr

Fig 4. Script 4 (from V.95, 1600):



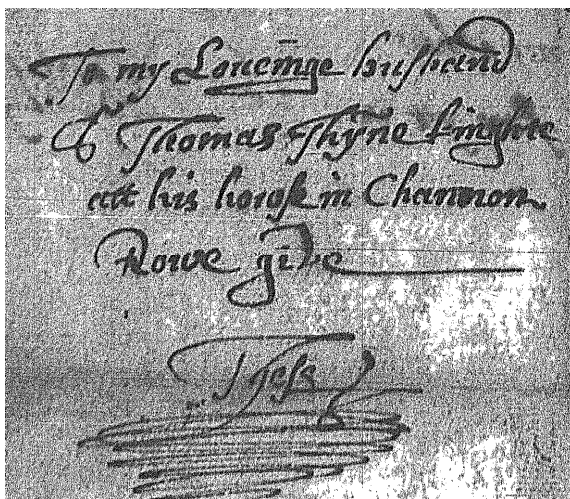
you cannot call the xvij
your own Coniugate with
Joane Thynne

Fig 5. Script in (copy) letter from Joan to Lucy Audley (exclusively in VII.237, 1602):



your Ladyships as myall shall approve. Joane Thynne

Fig 6. Maria's Script (from the address of VIII.8/9)



To my Lordeinge husband
Thomas Thynne Esquire
at his house in Chancery
Rowe give

Orthography and Punctuation

Capitalization follows that of the original manuscripts; even in cases where either Joan or Maria had a tendency to capitalize most instances of a particular letter in word-initial position (as is oftentimes the case with Maria Thynne's word-initial <S>). Word division also follows the original manuscript: for example, <to morrow>, PDE <tomorrow>. Special attention has been paid to the accurate reproduction of punctuation marks, and there has been no modernization in either woman's use of periods, commas, colons, virgules, etc. There are, however, no special fonts or characters used. Original spelling is also maintained throughout, including the <u>/<v> distinction and the <i>/<j>

lack of distinction (there being no <j> in either woman's orthographic repertoire). In cases where words, or parts of a word are illegible due to damage or ink blotting, the letter 'x' in square brackets is used to fill the number of letter spaces which are missing.

Abbreviations

Abbreviations are generally not expanded, however, most abbreviations contain letters in superscript, which are lowered and reproduced in italics. The exception to this is in cases of elaborated <p> for *per*, *pro* and *par*-forms in Joan's scribally produced letters, where the abbreviation is expanded with the additional letters written in italic. Where a macron appears above a section of a word to suggest an additional minim – specifically *m* or *n* – the extra letter is added in italics. When it is difficult to tell whether or not the macron is indicative of an additional letter, only the letter over which the line appears (most centrally) is given in italics. This regularization is done primarily in the interests of linguistic searching using the computer in which superscript letters and macrons could potentially make searches more difficult.

Deletions and Additions

Deletions in the text are represented by strikethrough formatting. In cases where words have been completely obscured to illegibility, or in cases where there is an ink blot, the letter 'x' is again used to fill the number of letter spaces missing. Where words have been added (usually above the line), they are added with caret marks, ^thus^. In areas where water-damage makes the text illegible or part of the letter has been torn off, period marks enclosed in square brackets are added, with a note in the heading indicating the type of damage.

Layout and Lineation

Due to the meaningful allocation of space in early modern letters (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6), space between openings, closings and postscripts is designated by editorial spacing. Although this spacing is impossible to represent exactly, it is reproduced as faithfully as possible in typescript. In some letters, indentures appear mid-text and although their frequency is rare, these are maintained as they may be perceived as means of punctuating the text. The original lineation of the text is also preserved and page breaks noted in square brackets. In many letters, writing is carried into the left-hand margin.

These are marked by square brackets, i.e. [continued in the left-hand margin]. Because these lines are usually much longer and cannot always be accurately rendered in typescript, breaks are indicated by bracketed line numbers, such as [line 1:]. In several of Joan's earlier letters, ruled lines have been drawn onto the page, seemingly for the mechanical purpose of practicing new scripts. This ruling has not been reproduced in the transcripts; however, sections of the text which have been written on lines like this are noted in the reference heading in the section on palaeography.

Joan Thynne's Letters, 1575-1611

V.4 (Wall 1). Joan Hayward to John Thynne. Written after October, 1575. Body text in Joan's Script 1. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me.

Body text:

Good mr thin I geue you / most hartie thanks
four your letter but yt well not suffise me
from leting you to vndarstand of my heue
harte and my pencefe mynde hoping
yt whan you vndarstand the casu you well
doo youre Indeuer to relefe me of sum part
of It It [sic] which If I could speake with you
It shewlld not be long vnknowne vnto you
for as the destance Is short so I thinke youre
abcance longe

By your pensefe
frende
In hart and mynd
I h:

V.5 (Wall 2). Joan Hayward to John Thynne. Written after October 10, 1575. Address and body text in Joan's Script 1. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wyfe to me

[address:]

To my frend
mr Iohne
thine

Body text:

mr thine as the owres be short so I haue thout the tyme
longe since I last sawe you but I am glad to se you
so welleng to kepe youre promyse In hope you well
kepe it as weall hereaftar and as I am glad to hear
of your helthe so I wold wishe the paintar to

show me your pecttar to se if I colld parsue by youre
cowmtance yt you conten^eued In your owld sewte
wiche was ageainst my mynd

But as fiere can not be separated
frome heat nor heate from fiere
so as the hartes of faithfull frendes
whiche shere In one desiere

By youre assewred
I.h.

**V.10 (Wall 3). Joan to John Thynne. Written sometime in 1576.
Address scribal, body text in Script 2. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1576.

[address:]

To my loving husband
mr Iohn Thynne at Sr
Rowland heywards house
in Phillip lane in
London. /

Body text:

mr Thynne Ima not in pute it vnto you for not writting vnto me, for ether
the mesenger are vere slake in bringe or you ~~xx~~ slothuful for not
writting tome for I ether thynke that your helt^he is not ^{so} prfat as I
wolde it ~~wich~~ ^{ware} or that your besnes falth otherwise then you lokd for
I pra you send me word thou the mater stanse be twene my
loarde stafered and you, this with my hrte commendaciens to my
father and mother your ~~xxx~~ selfe not forgotten my brethern and sister^s
and all my frense I leue you to god from mr berntongton this
persent winsede

your obent wife

Ionne Thynne

**V.12 (Wall 4). Joan to John Thynne. December 7, 1576. Address scribal, body text in Script 2.
The entire body text, closing and signature of this letter are ruled by straight lines. Holograph
endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1576

[address:]

To the right wourshipfull mr
Iohn Thynne at Sr rowland
Haywards house in Phillip lane
in london geve thes / /

Body text:

My harty commendacons remembred. sence your deperture, I haue thought yt
no short tyme: yf retune be not made speedely I shalle thinck yt
much longer, for almst dayly my lady kepes her accustomed curtesy
towards me, which I may cont a hell to heauenly Ioyes, or shuch
ladyes loue that will force me to leaue this country, which I woulde
be loth sith your peasure is to the contrary, but yt I hope you will not
haue me staye where I. shall be so uyly abused as nowe I am,
more metter for csome searuant then forone of my estaet, wherfor as you
tender my case, I am most humblely to craue you to redresse ye same
Thus longing to heare from you and your busines. I wishe you in=
crease of health. my harty commendacions not for goten to my-
parets. I leue you to god. longlete this vij of december 1576

your obedient wife,
Ionne Thynne

V.13 (Wall 5). Joan to John Thynne. 1576. Address and body text in Joan's Script 1, signature in Script 2. The closing ('your obedient wife') and the signature are bothe written on ruled lines. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1576

[address:]

To my loueng husba^nd^
mr Iohn thenne
geue thes with
spede

Body text:

Mr thenne I ~~praye you~~ this Is to
leat you vndarstand that my bruther
palle Is com to Sr Iohn hornars to speake
weth you from my father desireng you to
mete him thear and by him you shall
vndarstand my fathers mynde and I for
my part woldd be verye glad you woldd
seke anye waye to a pase his angar so that
we myte be to gether for If you ded
th [sic] know the vnquieat mynd that I haue
In your abcence I thenke you woldd

seke for anye waye to be In my companye
stell a [sic] thearfor good mr thenne fullfell
this my requeast In meting weth
my brother palle who well teall you his
mynd as your frend and no otherwyse
and he stayse for you at Sr Iohn hornars
desierig you to met him thar to morrew

Yo^u^re obent wife
Ionne Thynne

V.14 (Wall 6). Joan to John Thynne. 1576. Address and body text in Joan's Script 1, signature in Script 2. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1576

[address:]

To my very loueng
husband mastar Iohn
thynne geue thes weth
spedd

Body text:

Good ^mr^ thine I haue reseued your letter
weth thanks for the same and wharas
you wryte to me of the sellus loue you
haue vnto me I parswad my selfe your
loue Is weth as good afeckcsion towards
me as myne Is towards you which is
as moch as I desier and furthher to let
you vnderstand yt I haue talked with my fathar
twys or thrice sence your departing and at
the furst tyme fownd him muche moued with
angar as It semed to me but aftar ward
I fownd his ~~ha~~ angar was not so much as
it was to the owtward show as he sayd to make
you humble your self and know your dewtie
towards him as It Is the part of a naturull
sune to do to his father as I nede not reveall it
unto you for you know It uerye well thearfore good
mr thenne let me parswade you to take all meanes
possiblle to please and content him for you must
thenk that you haue oftne tymes moued him to
~~him to~~ great displesewar agaynst you and so oftne
most you seke to pasify him a gayne and so doing
It well make your frendes thenke It prosede
from good natewer in you and thearfor as he Is
very well content to haue your companye and
to forget all so wolld he haue you to fullfell his mynd
In puting awaye of rowe your man as I wolld
weshe you so to do and to wryte to him a letter

sume what a aknowlag your fallts allthough theyr
be none and fullfelling these my requestes
I shall thenke my selfe bownd vnto you

By your obedient wyfe dowreng
life Ione Thynne

**V.15 (Wall 7). Joan to John Thynne. ND. Address and body text in Joan's Script 1.
Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me.

[address:]

To hir louing husband
mr Iohn thinne deleuer
this with
sppde

Body text:

Good mr thynne I haue resaued youre letter
which Is wallcom vnto me with all my hart
and I geue you a thousand thanks for whare
as you wret to me of my vnquieat lyfe I
thinke my lyfe the unquieatar by resune of youre
abcence thearfore I want nothings I geue god
thanks at this tyme but youre companye
ye whiche I praye to god to send me shortly mr thynne
my father haue sent you a letter y by mastar
browne he showld haue sent It by the carriers
but he thought It not good because he wolld not
haue It com to youre fathers handes for thaye
haue one to deleuer him my ladye haue sent you
a token and my ladye your mother another and
my sestar thouneshend haue sent you one with
theare commandacions and myne furst to yore selfe
and then to my father and to my ladye and to all
the reast of owre fryndes and thus I bed you
farwell leueng you to his kepeng to houle
I make my dalye prayers vnto you for youre
safe and spede returne

By youre loueng wyfe
dewring life to command
Ione thenne

**V.17 (Wall 8). Joan to John Thynne. ND. Address and body text in Joan's Script 1.
Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me

[address:]

To my louing husband
mr Iohn thenne geue
weth spedd

Body text:

mr thenne I haue resaued youre letter at the lakes handes
whearby I do heare of your good helthe and walledoeng
whiche I praye to god longe to contnew and whearas
you wryt to me of the setting vp of a balle I know
not youre meneng thear by and thearfore I thinke It good
to let it a lonne tyll youre commyng home and you tell
me that yore bowe and youre arrowes be ruddye bent
and if you well do by my cownsaill you shall vnbend
them a guyne and heigh ye home to london and so
Into more felldes whiche is beast showtyng theare
as I take It this fayre weathre and further to llet
you vndarstand I haue my helth and lakyng no thyng
as yet which if I ~~xxx~~ ^dyd^ you must not thynke but
to hear of it hauing no dout of your relefe In the
tyme of my nesessetye

By youre louing wyfe
Ione thinne

V.18 (Wall 9). Joan to John Thynne. March 7, 1576/77. Address and body text are scribal, in a bold secretary script, signature only in Joan's Script 2. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1576

[address:]

To the Worshupfull her
loving frend mr Iohn thynne
esquier *dd*

Body text:

Mr Thynne *wth* hartie commendacons . . [sic] I do ^not a^ lyttle
marvell that I heare from yow but not by yor owne
wch surely geveth me occasion to thynke that yow are not
in good health. wherfore *Sr* to put away such doubttes
I hartely desire yow that yow wold take so much paynes

as to wryte to my yor self *wch* shall not a lyttle ~
engladden me. wheras now I stand in great doubte
Sr I pray yow let this bearer be entertayned.
Thus signyfing vnto yow the good health of my
father and mother who hartely commend them vnto yow
Sr Iohn and my Ladye. I do commyt yow to god. from
London the vijth of marche 1576.

Yor loving wyfe
Ionne Thynne

V.19 (Wall 10). Joan to John Thynne. March 8, 1576/77. Address and body text are scribal, in the same bold secretary script as letter V.18, signature only in Joan's Script 2. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1576.

[address:]

To my loving frend mr
Iohn Thynne esquier
yeue at longe leat

Body text:

Mr thynne my hartie commendacons not omytted / *yor lre*
I haue Rd. for the *wch* I hartely thanke yow and am
not a lyttle glad to heare of *yor* good healthes god contynue it
I haue also sent to Sr Iohn a night capp of red satten
wch cost vjs viij*d* / I pray yow let hym send vp monney for it
Also for *yor* hobbye ther will not be any more geuen for hym
then iij*le*. wherefore I pray yow let me vnderstand *yor* mynd
for he dothe stand yow in great charge and more will doe
I haue not yet provided a muske rose tree but by the
next god willing yow shall receave it. thus trusting
yow will make my humble commendacons to Sr Iohn
and my Lady and the rest of my frends there I do comyt
yow to god. London the viijth of marche 1576.

Yor loving wife
Ionne Thynne

I haue also sent yow the key for
the blacke chest. And for crystall
buttons I can get none vnder vs
vd the dosse.
Also I haue sent my brother
frannces ij bands

V.23 (Wall 11). Joan to John Thynne. March 6, 1579/1580. Address and the body text scribal, signature alone in Joan's Script 2. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1579

[address:]

To the worshipfull her lovinge
husbande mr Iohn Thynne
Esquier at woster or ells
where *dd*

Body text:

Mr Thynne I comende me vnto you trustinge in god that are in
goode health *wth* my father & all your companie: Thes are to
certifie you that I came to London this *presente* sunday
at iij of *ye* clock I did endure my Iourny verie well but I was
verie werie at night, wherfore I hope you will parden me
because I did not wryght my selfe, my horses did travell
excellent well ~~æH~~ & I haue sent them downe all well.
I praye you goode mr Thynne as you loue me doe one thinge
at my request *wch* is this, (~~th~~ if my father doe happen, to
speake any thinge angerly, towards you or your father
touchinge this matter) I praye you for godes sake beare *wth*
him for that you doe knowe his hastie nature & allso
it may growe to farther inconvenens, for in dede my brother
warren tould me that he was moved towards your father
abot *ye* matter before he wente away but saye nothinge who tould you
allso I pray you if you loue me come *wth* my father to london
presently for my ladie is verie desierous to see you she is verie
weke & nothinge lyke to lyue wherfore if euer you will doe
any thinge for me ^come^ vp *wth* my father *presently* that my
mother may see you (before she dy~~ſ~~) *wch* she doe gretly
desyer
Thus nothinge doubtinge your helth I ende
London the *vid* of march 1579

your assured lovinge wyfe

Ione Thynne

V.34 (Wall 12). Joan to John Thynne. 1580. Body text in Joan's Script 3. There is water damage on this letter, which has made one word illegible; the signature is torn.

Body text:

Good Mr Thynne you shall perseue by Mr Berrintons
leter what good frendes you haue here in this contry for
as I here the wold haue you a condoctor of to honddard
men in to Irrland but I trust you will make such mens
to the Consell as that you shall be discharged of that
bad offes for if you shold gooe it will be a grete dis
grace to you ther for good mr Thinne as you loue your
selfe delle so wisly in this mayter as that your enemes
[. . .] may haue now case to regose at you thus with my

commendacions ^to you^ and my sestres bes I leue you to god

your loving wife
[. . .]

V.65 (Wall 14). Joan to John Thynne. March 10, 1590. Address scribal, body text and signature in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1589

[address:]

To the Right wor=
shipfull my very
lovinge frend Mr
Iohn Thynne at
cannon Rowe nere
wesminster these
be *dd*

Body text:

I haue acordinge to your leter sent vp your horses and am
glad to here of your comyngedone but nothings loyefull to
thinke of my bad and dangrus H~~xx~~ gone and ware it not
to that plase I should be verie ill willynge to trauell in
case as I am if my sister be in london I prayou [sic] in trete
her to preuide me of agood midwife for me ^a^ganste easter
or ~~xxxx~~ ^ten or tuelles dayes^ after for I thinke my time will be much there
about here is none worth the hauinge now goodde bar=
ber is ded and therefore I pra you be earnest with her
and tell her that I hope shee will not deni to comdone
to me and so I pra you tell her from me desire her not
to thinke ane vncines in me for not writinge to her
so often as I would be cause I haue not my helth
as I was wonte and therefore I pra you to make my
excuse toher and to my father it ware good you did
by somthinge for my sister chamberlynes nuyer
gefte which you ma do nou you are there yourselfe
if my gone be good I will thanke you ~~otherwise the xxx~~
and so in haste I com~~mit~~ you to god from Longeleate
the x of this month

I pra you by a brruch [sic]	your louinge and
and som pines for me	faythfull wife
and * tospeke tomy brother	Ioane Thynne
tomas to by to cornachengre=	
bates for my nese doll	

[in left-had margin:]

I thinke ^it^ ~~you~~ ware beste for you to com to ~~pres[x]re~~ ^presbre^ from
~~from~~ london and not to make to Iornes

for if you do you shall be shure to haue anoufe
com for mo=
ne

**V.73 (Wall 20). Joan to John Thynne. May 30, 1595. Address scribal, body text in Script 4.
Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me *ye xxxth* of maye 1595 XXX

[address:]

To the Right worshipfull
my very louinge frinde
Iohn Thynne esquior

Body text:

Good mr Thynne I haue reseueid your cinde leter by cendret
for which I thinke my selfe much be houldeinge vnto you for
it and the kniueis: and for my potocote hose and pougarnates ^and^ the
vardeingell all which I reseueid the laste weake with aleter from
my cosen halywell which was opened afore it cam to my hande
and so I pra you tell him: my loue to your selfe ^is such^ not to be broken
by kniueis or any thinge else whileis I lyue yet much to be in
creased by your vnfaned parformananceis which I haue
good hope of and I troste your trobels will trone all for the
beste and to both our coumfortes all thoth the strome be grea_
te for the present yet I hope our meteinge shall be Ioyeful
to vs both and therefore my good hosban I beseich you not to
care for any thinge to horte your selfe but to make much
of your selfe for my good and your childrens comfort: I
haue delte with my sonn toching the contentes of your for=
mer leter how hath of his one minde writen to you what
he will do and byde by apon his oth to me which I ashure
my selfe he will now parform ~~if he ma be cept from them~~
vnfanedly to vs both and so I pra you to exceip of his true
repentainceis which I hope you will reseue him in to your
fauer agane and to haue that fatherly care which here to
fore you haue had of him all thoth he hath Iustely ~~incourde~~
desarueid your desiplesher yet consither of him by your
selfe when time was and ~~prent~~ preuente danger in
him and his brother here after in alouinge one to teth
him and his brother which will be but one charge to
you and beter for them both to larne together for
now this doth but lose his time and all longe
of your selfe

[folio 5.73b]

which if I myghit remede as you ma it should ^not^ be as it is for
all thoth he will neuer be good coler yet if there ware one
that coulde teth him with decreschen and parsuagens
I thinke he woulde larne more now after this trobell
then here tofore he hath don which my cosen hegens is of

my mynde and woulde wish you to preuide one from
oxenforde for them both for I thinke it not good for him
to go from you or me awile tyll this mater be paste
all which I leaue to your consitheracion beinge verie
glad to here that cause is so nere anende as I hope for
our quiteis and good for which care and charge I do
not thinke my selfe aletell be houldeinge vnto you and
my good cosen halywell to home I pra you commende
me moste hartely your good selfe not for goten
and my Lade hawarde with my sisters and brother
waren and so prainge god to sende you well to
com hether I take my leaue from cause castell the
xxx of maye

doll remembreth her dutie your louinge wife for
vnto you and the are all well euer

Ioanne Thynne

~~praet~~ pattract was
gon to his master
as good hap was a
fore I reseueid
your leter

V.80 (Wall 17). Joan Thynne to her ‘cousin’ (Wall suggests a Thomas Higgins, which is supported by letter V.84, in which Joan ‘confesses’ telling her ‘cosen higen’s’ about her sorrow); April 15, 1595. Address damaged to illegibility, body text in Joan’s Script 4.

Body text:

omy Good cosen how harde Is my hape to lyue to se my chefest hope
of Ioye my greatest grefe and soro for you kno how much I
haue all waise dislykeid my sonn to mach in this sorte but alas
I fere it is to late but If there be any remede for it good cosen
let there be spede order for it: he is contented to leue her seinge
nether I nor his father am contented with the mach alas the
boye was be trade by the maruens which I haue often toulde mr
Thynne what the woulde do and now it is to sure but I troste
the ma bedeuorsed for I thinke it is no good mareg in laye for
that he is vnder x ages and therefore I pra you persuade mr Thynne
for the beste: I woulde be glad to here som good nuse of your pro=
sedeingeis from you I pra god it ma be beter then the laste was
to me and so not douttinge of x your frendely persuadeinge
mr Thynne how I hope will aquante you with my leter
and my cosens that you ma se at large the desateis that
hath byn yoused to deseue asily childe which is moste
soryfull for his falte desires you to be amene to
his father for him and so commendeing me to your
good selfe I take my leaue from cause castell the xv
of aperll

your euer ashured frende
and cosen

Ioane Thynne

V.82 (Wall 18). Joan to John Thynne. April 20, 1595. Address scribal, body text in Joan’s Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me ye XXth of Aprill 1595

[address:]

To the Right woorshipfull my
very Lovinge frinde Iohn
Thynne esquior at his
howse in Cannon
Rewe nere wemester

Body text:

Good mr Thynne I am verie glad to here of your safe ariauall in London all thoth
the nuse of your commitinge is no thinge pleseinge yet I am glad the
abode was no Longer, for it was saide here you ware not relesed
as yet such nuse was at shrosebere which was nothinge plesein=
ge vnto me but I thanke god it is much beter then I harde
and I hope will proue them Lyears that reporte otherwise then
troth: your comeshin shall not be slakeid in any thinge that I ma
forder: I can not but maruell to here with what fase sor Iam=
es maruen can com to you consiringe what tratres abuses he
and his haue offered vnto you and me. which for my one parte
I will neuer thinke well of him nor any of his you ma do as
you plese. for seinge the woulde not parsuade by frenship
the shall neuer make me eylde to my cradel for there good
I haue apon my soneis submission and apon his promiseis and
oth afore my cosen higen geuen him my bleseinge conde_
shenoally that he will be ruled by you and me from
henseforth which I haue good hope he will and I troste
there is remedie innouf for that which is paste consiringe
how cosseingely the haue delte with him and you all
thoth the Lade adely[x] haue youseid all the polesy and
coneinge to make it so shure that you nor I shall not
breake it for after the contract she caseid a pare of sheteis
to be Lade on a beid and her dafter to Lydon in her cloth_
eis and the boye by her boteid and sporde[x] for aletell
while that it myght be saide the ware abeid to gether hor
selfe and edman maruen in the chanber aprete waye of
and hath caseid her dafter to write diuers leters vnto
him in [x] the laste namainge her selfe mary Thynne which
name I troste shee shall not longe inloye I ~~troste~~ hope

[folio 82b:]

to here ^som^ comfort from you by the nexte mesenger which I
pra god ma be as good as your selfe can desire or wish your
children I prase god are all well and doll was in hope her
father had byn com when mores cam and when she sa not
you n[~~x~~]t shee criede out and now she desires your bleseinge
for hir selfe and her sister and so commendeinge me to your
~~xxx~~ good selfe I ~~xxx~~ take my Leaue not for geteinge my
good cosen halywell from ~~xxx~~ cause castell the xx of
aprell 1595

your Louinge wife for
euer

Ioane Thynne

I pra you helpe me to som white
starch and pourder blu all
thoth I haue som yet I would
be glad of store and apare of
knifes I [sic] you plese for
my selfe no fine ones but
good edge to cote the sheref of
shropshire hath proseis aganste
you as I here I thinke it tis for
the substed but am not sure

V.84 (Wall 19). Joan to John Thynne. May 8, 1595. Address scribal, bodt text in Joan's Script 4. Binding has rendered some parts of words illegible. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me viij o may 1595

[address:]

To the Right worshipfull
my very Lovinge frinde
Iohn Thynne esquire
yeve these

Body text:

my Good hosban I beseich you Lett not the desobedense of one be the
ouerthore of your other children and my good in hose helth and Lyfe
consistes my loye and comfote and therefore in the beter=
nes of my greffes I desire you to haue care of your selfe as
the heid and wellspringe of my good not douittinge but
god will deall marsiffully with vs both in geueinge vs pasences
to beare this his heuei cros confeissinge my falte in Louinge
him to well aboue the reste for which I fere I haue offend=
ed all mite god: I haue examend him what spesshes sur
Iames had with him in poles and the reste all which you shall
reseue vnder his one hande writinge with afwll resolution
neuer to com nere or medell with them or any that shall
com from them which I haue good hope he will parform and
is verie sorifull for his vnaduised deisobedences beseichinge
you y~~x~~ houbmely to parden his vndutiefullnes in this his
childeish doinge which the parsuaideid him was with your
consente as he will veryfie to there shame I hope:
he vtterly denise that euer mr clarke yoused any [xxx]
speches or persuaideingeis vnto him but that which he seit
his hande to was a Leter of ordenari commendaions to Iohn maruen
of diuers thingeis which he bouthe for hm at that tyme which
the boye apon his oth sueterth it to be no thinge else but a an=
ser of ~~xx~~ of Iohn maruens ~~vnto xx xxx~~ Leter for thinges

which mr clarke bouthe for maruen nether deid mr clarke
euer speake vnto him of her nor he ever see her sences the
forste nite that he say her for the wemen which he say at
mr craftes it was mestres borne and her dafter and to
more that he kun not there mames [sic] as he auoweth to me
apon his [x]soll to be tru for the kepeinge of it cecrett here
dout you not of it for here is no meistroste of this mater but
all my heueneis is in puteid to the Lorde stafardes shute and the ouer
thro of my fathers will which I haue geuen out and for my cosen hige=
ns I am shure he is so onest and his Loue to vs both such that he will not
for a thosen pounce speake any thinge of it and for that time I was forced
by grefe to confeis or I else I thinke my harte woulde haue broken *with*
sori for here was nor is none that shall kno my mynde but
with wepeinge teares I desire you not to

[folio 84b:]

grefe but to remeid it if you can for he is hartely sory and hath
voueid to me to be ruled by vs both hereafter for he was ashu=
red by the Lady adely and Iohn maruen that he should haue
your good will and all the doutted was to haue my consente
which is as far from them as yours protesteing to you that he
shall neuer haue my consente or Lykinge that wayes and
so I haue toulde him what your detarmenacion is if he wi[. . .]
not be ruled and constant in that which he hath promeseid
to me other wise Leit him neuer take you nor me for his
father nor me for his mother if he consente to them but sti[. . .]
I hope for the beste: for he hath voueid neuer whiles he
Lyueis to ofende you in this sorte and therefore I hope yo[. . .]
will the soner forgeue him whose childeish deide hath th[. . .]
ly brout him to a hartye repentanceis of his former fal[te]
which I beseich you to excepte of ^his^ ouble desire he thinketh th[. . .]
the will sende vnto him shortely som Leter from her for
sor Iames tolde him so when he spake with him in poles
if I shall reseue them Let me kno your minde or what
corse I shall take if there com any from them for the
boye suereth I shall know if any mesech be brote to him
but ~~ashu~~ ashur your selfe I will wach him my selfe
for I fere if any besente it will be to partrec Iohn
maruens boye the coke which is here and for the cornet
boy heshall be sene to well inouf I woulde all thingeis wa=
re endeid to your contente and your selfe here with me
where you ware neuer so wellcom as now you shoulde
be vnto me amoste discontented creature tyll I here
from you or see you which I hartely pra you ma be
as sone as posibell you ma tary as letell as you will
and so comendeinge me to your good self and my good
cosen halywell prainge god to send you helth and to bles all
your prosedeingeis I take my Leue from case castell
the viii of maye

[in lefthand margin:]

your Louinge wife for euer
Ioane Thynne

V.88 (Wall 21). Joan to John Thynne. October 3, 1598. Address and body text scribal, but signature in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne. There is a short

marginal note on the lefthand side, at the top of the first page which Wall reads as 'Item furnace to brew with with all'; although it is difficult to read, this would appear to be at least partly correct. The note is in a different hand from that of the body of the letter (perhaps a note written by John upon receipt).

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1598

[address:]

To the worshipfull my
very lovinge ffrend
Iohn Thynne esquier
at longeate geve
these

Body text:

Good mr Thynne here is great want of a bruinge fuarnace therfore
wold desyer you to take some order that there may be one provided
with all the ~~th~~ spead that may be for that they cannot lenger
brewe with this but to yor great losse he muste conteyne
therty gallonds at the leaste, for the cause tuchinge the
lord Stafford I have with the ayd of my cosen halliwell
dealt wt mr Reynoldes the vndersheriffe as effectually as
we may who semeth to make shoue of ~~what~~ vnfeyned kyndnes
towardses you, yett vpon sunday morninge my cosen williams
sent me word that the highe sheariffe for some spleane
towardses you wold not for the perswation of any frend delay
the ~~the~~ Retorne of the writ but of himselfe without
the advise of his vndersheriffe sett downe the names of a
Iury which you shall Receve hereinclosed, yett I not satisfied
herewith sent the same day to the vndersheriffe to know what
had passed who sent me word that the highe sheriffe had
set downe the names but not Retorned them till his cominge
who absented himselfe of purposse & at his cominge to him findinge
him humerows & not to be perswaded ^to delay yt or^ to alter any of the names by
him set downe, wished him advisedly to deall therin & told him
that beinge a matter of such importans yt were good to take
the advise of mr Iustice who wold be the next day followinge
at denbighe & so by reason of many causes to him alleged
cased him to yeld therevnto & the next day beinge the second present
the writ with the names shold be with the Iustice to have
his advise for the Retorne thereof by which meanes as he
sayeth yt is vtterly dashed for that there is not an attache
made xv days before I have wrot yesterday to my cosen
halliwell to the same effect, good mr Thynne lett me intreat
you so sonne as may be send so mucche of the like cloth as
the children last had as will make them three gownes &
Iohn Thynne a hoose & Ierkyenn but of some other prety collar

[folio 88b:]

I wold have yt the sooner because otherwishe I shall hardly
have yt ^mad^ before christmas, I stand in very great want of

a furniture to Ride with wherfore yf yt shall please you
to geve my cosen halliwell advise for one I shall thinke
my selfe muche beholdinge vnto you & you shall have my
company with you a huntinge. for I have neyther sadell nor
pillion cloth, I pray you to bye a bottell of hore hownd such
as you were vsed to have for that I thinke yt will not be
a misse for yor selfe & the children this winter & even
so with my hartiest of comendacions to yor selfe I end from
caurs castell this therd of october 1598

I pray you send me an answer of
my letter sent by pinnocke lett me
have yor answere for nothings shall
dyspease me & Retorne the boy wt
speade

yor ever lovinge wife
Ioane Thynne

V.95 (Wall 22). Joan to John Thynne. September 17, 1600. Address is scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me Aunswred 1600

[address:]

To the wor: my verye lovinge
frende Iohn Thynne Esqr
at Longleate these
dd

Body text:

Good mr Thynne I was in good hope to a harde from
you but you haue in som sorte desea
ueid my expeictacion and there fore
hereafter I will not loke for it
but how so euer it is I will wish
you as much good as your selfe
can ether desire or ~~dea~~ desearue: my
sister hath writen vnto you as she
senses me worde I pray you lett me
know to what efeict it was for I here
no anser of that wch you and I did write
vnto her I am very much deistetude of
mony and corne for to soo and if you sen_
d in tyme it shall be don other wise it is
lyke to ly vnsone [x]for me nether can
I tary longe here if you sende not
spedely I sent for Iohn whatbroke
for that I ~~nor~~ could not finich
my acountpes and be cause
you shall know that he is here
I ~~thate~~ thote good to aquante you
with it rather then any other
should for if I could aended them

in such sorte as I would he should
not a trobeled your howse but here
after I pray you gett wiser and
parfeiter then bassett and my selfe is
for other wise I am not abell to kepe you=
r recnenes and euen so with my kinde
saluteis vnto your good selfe I ende in ha_
ste from cource castell the xvij of september
your euer louinge wife
Ioane Thynne

V.97/8 (Wall 23). Joan to John Thynne. September 30, 1600. Address scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1600

[address:]

To the wor: my verie lovinge frende
Iohn Thynne Esquier this *dd*

Body text:

Good mr Thynne I am glad to here of your good helth desiring
the continuances of the same to my only comfort: for my
cosen higgens I am sory that he hath vsed him selfe so
ill and vnkindely towards you, *wch* is contrary to his spee_
ches he had with me. I am hartely sory you had suche
a hard and longe Iurne, and to no pourpose in respe_
ickt mr snage faled of his repare theyther, but yett I
here it was not all together in vane of which I am ve_
ry glad to here that there is Loue and frenshipp betu_
ene your brother francis and you: I haue reseaued
the wheate which is very lettell and not so mucche as we shall
~~wante~~ ^nede^ at this tyme not by forty bussheles, for this will not
sarue one of your feledes, and for the sakeis the shall be p=
resently retourned vnto you agayne, the demande mu_
ch more then you write that I should geue them for the
careg of the mellstone but he shall haue no more then you
haue sett done: I haue reseaued ahondered and forecore
pounde fife sheleinges and fore pences, there is agreate par_
te of it owinge, and for the reste I will make what spare I
can, I know your trauell to be both greate and trobelsome
for the *wch* I am ~~hartely~~ hartely sory, wihinge [sic] that it lay in
me any way to ease it: for sendeing of beeffer thether the
moste be fatt and very forod in fatt be fore the com het=
her for here is very letell gras to fede any here, by
resen of the greate wett *wch* hath byn here very lately,
for all the lordes medo is [x] couered with water so
that there can be no fedeinge of any bease tyll therebe
froste to dry it up, and the rest of the groundes are
not much for fedeinge consitherenge how many
are here all redy, and therefore I pray you send as
many fatt ones as you can which moste not be les then

xiiij or fortene and for so many here will be fedeing
and foder so that you bringe not many horses with you
when you com, which I wesh ware soner then it will
be for many caucis: your haye this yeare was not so
much as it was the laste yeare not by xij lode and yett

[folio 97b:]

you boughtit greate store of haye for your catell and
horses and I thinke it will be very much more derer
and ~~skars~~ skarce in the ende of the yeare: I haue
reseaued the xij quarters of malte from gloster_
sheare and there moste be prouided for after the
rate of the note here in closed: I haue sent vnto my
cosen williams for the cartificatt and as sone as
he hath sente it vnto me I will sende it vnto you
to london: richardsonn hath mended the windos
all redy so much as he can but yett it raneth in
for all that he hath mended, and therefore I haue
sente for aplomer to mende the ledeis *wch* will
be ~~v^xtry~~ very chargeabell I feare: simeis hath
byn tould for the lokeinge vnto of the game but
I thinke this wett doth rott many of them for
those that he bringeis into the howse are very m=
uch cored all redy: mr eston hath not yett keptt
your courteis but now the shall be very sh=
ortly: dauis hath byn tould ~~and~~ what your
plesher is and he is contented to sarue you at
arate for fo^ule and not to com here: streten men
cam not as yett but I will send vnto them,
william francis maketh greate mone and is in
greate nede I would [^]you would[^] ageuen him som thinge
but he shall be deis charged presently: and for Iohn
whitbroke I am sory that you showld take yt so vnkindly
for my sendeinge for him it was your pleasher that
he showld make vp my bocke which bisnes did ~~consarue~~
consarne you as well as my selfe and for his cominge
into the howse I was not the firste that brought him
in and as I thinke it is not vnknownen to your [^]selfe[^] all thoughe
you would not take notice of it but I do thinke that they
that brought him in did yt for my sake and therefore
I am the more beholdeinge vnto them and for his offence
all though it ware very greate vnto you yett considering

[folio 98:]

his submishon I thinke it parddenable and I dowbt not but
his carredge here ~~xxxx~~ after will be both towards you and
yours as shallbe fittinge wherefore good m^r Thynne lett me in=
treate you not to conseue other wise of me then by leaue I
will desarue for had I not had him to parfit my bookes I
had bynn able to geue you but a very sllender accounte and
what accounte you will haue hereafter I know not ex_
cept you prouide one that is wiser then eyther my selfe
or basset for to write for by criste I haue lost by his
simplisite more then is for my ease and yett I thinke
him a [x]onest man: and for your plesinge of me I nether
haue nor do mislyke and therefore suete m^r Thynne ron_

ge me not so much as to condem me with ~~ought~~ out Iust
cause of ofence for it I could as well acontented you I
showlde a thoughtit my selfe ahappy woman but seinge that
I neuer haue nor shall contente you I am and will
be contented to do my beste endeueris if it plesse you
to exsteme of them: prainge god you may neuer doo
worse then I haue wished you *wch* I proteste before
god was neuer ~~wote~~ worse then to my one solle
besichinge the all myghite to sende you onse to houlde
abeter consatte of her who euer dos and will praye for
your well doinge and prospores estate and euen so
with my moste kinde and louinge saluteis vnto your
good selfe I ende from caurse castell the laste of
september

your euer louinge wife

Ioane Thynne

V.99 (Wall 24). Joan to John Thynne. October 15, 1600. Address and the body of the letter scribal, signature in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address lead:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1600

[address:]

To the wor: verie good frend
Iohn Thynne Esquier this *dd*

Body text:

Good *mr* Thynne I hartelye praye yow, if that youe haue not allreadye
sent the maulte and hoppos *wch* are to come to Caures, that youe would
wth soe muche expedicon as most convenientlie yow maye, giue order
for the *presente* sendinge awaye of the same, for that I haue here
greate Wante thereof, for that I ame constrained to buy alle
and maulte is heare at an excessive rate, and for yor mill, I ame
forced to leaue the workemanshippe thereof vntill yor Cominge
for that Richardson the mason would not vndertake theeffectinge
of the stone worke thereof vnder *xij*£, wherefore I discharged
him, and sithence his *departure* I cannot heare of anie good
workeman heare in this Countrie for the doinge of the same./
likewise *mr* Edward lloyde hathe sent verie earnestlie vnto me
for the *money* acknowledging his extreame wante thereof,
wherefore I desire youe to send me word before the nexte
Assizes at the Poole, what your determynacon is touchinge
the same/ if possible youe cane, also I desire youe to lett some of
your owne fatt Beeves for *provicon* be sente hither so sone as youe
maye, for fatt ware here is verye deere, & likelye to be dearer
I praye youe Remember the searche for the grene Waxe for
Caurs and Stretton, and alsoe to make searche at westmin[ster]
in the Roles, as touchinge the deed, and alsoe to remember the
money *dd* to Allcoxe for Sukers Costs, and that youe would
speake vnto Bradlie for thinrollinge of the deed/ And even
soe *wth* my kinde salutes wishinge your good healthe I end

Caurs castle this xvth of October 1600/

yor ever lovinge wife
Ioane Thynne

V.101 (Wall 25). Joan to John Thynne. November 15, 1600. Address and body text scribal, signature in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne. Post-script by Charles Thynne in a separate script, apparently his own.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1600

[address:]

To the wor: my good frend
Iohn Thynne Esquier
this deliuer/

Body text:

Good mr Thynne since the wrightinge of my *lre* vnto youe/
I haue called to remembrance that the barrell of sallet
oyle last boughte is all spente wherefore I praye yow
if ~~youe~~ it please youe to in respecte youe are there
to make Choice your selfe, to buy a larr of oyle of
the like quantitie as the last *wch* was boughte, alsoe
if it so please youe as to buy a Kegg of Stiurgane,
wch wilbe verie serviceable for yor table and wilbe
kepte vntill youe please to haue the same spente
bothe *wch* are verie necessarie, if it please youe to
afforde the chardges, And soe still praying for yor
prosperous healthe & wished successe in all yor accons
wth my kinde salutes I end Caurs castle this xvth
of November .1600.

I hartelye thanke youe for the wyers	yor verie lovinge wife
youe sente me, and do request youe to	Ioane Thynne
speake to mrs Lyngen to make for	
eche of your children ij haire wieres	
& ij Roles/	

Post-script by Charles Thynne:

Good Brother I would ~~faue~~ request you
to send down my great Trunck, and then
I would pecke out that writing and send it
you, I pray sett a dubble padlock on it.
Also I desire you to send me down some
stuff to make Nann a gown for I have
no mony to buy her any thing
And yf you please a wire and a Role as for
yor daughters, It must be a heare a little
lighter then Dolls

Yors Charles Thynne

You must forgive me
for trobling you so mutch.
I will remembre it I assure you.

V.102 (Wall 26). Joan to John Thynne. November 17, 1600. Address scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1600

[address:]

To my very good frind mr. Iohn
Thynne at his house in Westmister

Body text:

Good mr Thynne I commende me vnto your good selfe
I haue sent this bearer geffre rabon who is
willing to com vnto you and will do
you any saruis he may as he teles me
I pray you youse him well and I
hope he will breake the baic of Linga_
m I pray you see the subsede mony pade
if mr stafford com vnto you I pray you
youse him frendely and I hope it
~~will be~~ shall be for our good here=
after and euen so with my
kinde saluteis vnto your good
selfe ~~wh~~ hopinge shortely to see
you here I ende from cource
castell the xvii of nouember

I haue geuen	your euer
this bearer	louing wife
xiiij sheleinges	
for pense	Ioane Thynne

V.103 (Wall 28). Joan to John Thynne. May 6, 1601. Address and note in scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1601.

[address:]

To the wor: my verie good frend
Iohn Thynne Esquier
this deliver

[note:]

I pray will you buy
some Tyncture of
saffron for doll you
shall haue it at
one keymis at the
mineries

Body text:

I am sory to here that you are crasi I
hope the worste is paste: for the mony which
you sent by noubery for carlet I haue pade
yett vnto him: and haue the byll of your hand
from him bac agayne: wch I will deleuer you
at your comynge which you saye shall be
at whissentyde: all though I can hardely be_
leauē it will be so: but foleis and childeren
maye be made to be leauē any thinge:
your commyshin for Iohn Lingam was sett
on the laste of aperell where in there was
a faulte that you did not apounte beter
commyshengers for one cam not at tall and
mr goff could doo no more then he mought
[x] for the other to did ouer rule him.
so that if it be not well you most laye the
blayme where it is: for they on Lingams
side chettked and tanted your witneses
xx that xxx they would case geue them
leauē to speake: it ware good your causes
ware beter sene vnto here after for
feare of the worste: if mestres willams haue
any ocasein to youse your frenshipp I pray
you do her all the fauor and kines you may

[folio 103b:]

for I am much behouldeing vnto her
and therefore good mr Thynne show her
all the frenshipp you can and speake
vnto my brother Tounsēd to doo the
lyke for her as I hope he will and
that it may be xx requested from xxx
me vnto him in her be halfe: it ware
not ameis if you did sarue tap with
prosis for your comon for else you
shall haue but letell by his good will
for he douth put in so many shepe and
other catell that you shall haue no comon
there as I here the saye vnto othores but
I houpe you will not lett it pas so carelesly
the stabell shall not be medelled with tyll
your cominge which I pray god may
be shortely and euen so contynually
longen to here from you I end with
my beste loue to your good selfe de_
siringe the all myghite to send you a_
happy endeinge of all your shouteis
and to send vs a mery meteinge from

course castell the vi of maye
your euer louinge wife
Ioane Thynne

[in left hand margin:]

commende me I pray you to my good sister
and brother ~~ky~~ kneueit and to my nese hamden

**V.105 (Wall 32). Joan to John Thynne. Late 1601. Address and body text in Joan's Script 4.
Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1601

[address:]

To my good louing
husban mr Jhon
thine

Body text:

Good mr Thynne the continuall desire that I haue
to here from you will not suffer ~~xxx~~ the fitnes
of so good amessenger as this bearer to pas with out these
fewe Lyneis desiringe you presently to send vp your
horseis that I may retourn vnto my childern who dayly
exspeict my comynge as fitt it ware that I should be
with them vnles the ware beter abell to helpe them selue=
is then thay be and besideis the yeare will be far spent
and I am but abad traualer and to staye Longer from
my childeren ware small comfort vnto me nether will
I by your Leaue willingly and espeshally be cause the
castell is not setteled for the safe kepeinge of it for any
Long tyme nether will I vnder take the commiting
of yett vnto any but vnto those that you shall apo_
nnte your slfe what so euer shall or should hapen
hereafter and therefore good mr Thynne consither spedely what
course you in tend to take and I shall euer be rede to
be commanded by you: pourslo and basit haue writen
vnto me that all prouishon is spent or very nere
and besideis the haue borod mony which most be pade ap_
on my comynge which I trost you will not staye [x] Long
after the resete of this consitheringe what agreate houshold_
e you haue at the castell and how there is nether mony
nor prouishon for them nor none to take order for
those thingeis vnles you or my selfe ware there and at
my soden commeinge I Lefte all thingeis but raly and malt
the haue none and corne the most by to soo your grondeis
or else it will not be well and now is the chefe tyme and
more then tyme to make prouishon for all the yeare
and for crismas which now will com on apase desirei_
nge you onse agayne to Lett me know your spede anser
and what you in tende to do for it is not aletell that will

[folio 105b:]

sarue to prouide and deischarge all that is due as the
write and I know it to be true: and so retaringe it
to your beste consitherracion I ende with my derest Loue
vnto your good selfe hopinge that now you will parform
that which is generrally spoken ether now or neuer I
beid you onse agayne fare well with my harte prayer
vnto god for your well doinge and prospores succes
from saint Iamas parke this present satter daye

your euer Louinge wife

I nether hard nor saye
your sonn sences he went

Ioane Thynne

**V.108 (Wall 29). Joan to John Thynne. June 18, 1601. Address scribal, body text in Script 4.
Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1601

[address:]

To the worll: and my verie
loveinge frende Iohn
Thynne Esquire att his
howse in Cannon Rewe
yeav these *with* speede

Body text:

Good mr Thynne if you ware but halfe so willinge to
com as I am desireis to see you: your staye shoulde not
be Longe after the tearme which now I hope will
ende very shortly: doll is much beter then shee was
but yett not well nor I feare will not be yett
vnles you gett som beter helpe then is here to be
had I feare the worste but I hope the beste at
your cominge you shall know more in the meane
tyme I pray god sende you good succes in all your
shouteis the shrereff of momgomry shere hath the
prosis deleuereid vnto him for the sendeing vp
of olliuer lloide rather ~~he was~~ the sherefe had the
prosis on monday Laste beinge the xv of Iune
the cambrike thrid siluer and spangells with the silu_
er Lase which you sente for your dafteres goneis
I haue reseueied for which I thanke you: mr hen_
nege was here with me to know your plesher and
whether I had harde any thinge from you but
seinge I did not he will staye your plesher
tyll your cominge home gorge fichet desireis you
to by som Lute stringeis and coper som wiere
for the vorgeoles and euen so in haste with

my beste Loue to your good selfe I ende from
caurse castell the xviiiij of Iune
for geit not ^som white^ starch your euer Louinge
I praye you it is wife Ioane Thynne
reporteid here my brother
Tounsens shall be kniteid if it be true I can be but
sory that your stainge and creakit at courte
can not procure you as much grase as he: ware
I mr Thynne as you are I wold not abyn without
it if I had geuen well for it if all your courtely

[continued in the left-hand margin:]

frendeis can not proquire you that tytell I thinke ~~thinke~~ the will do
very Letell for you if men can not procure it ~~xx~~ yett my thinkeis
som of your greate Ladeis moughit do so much for you

V.112 (Wall 34). Joan to John Thynne. April 18, 1602. Address in a neat and flourished italic script (possibly Joan?), letter and signature in Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1602 Aunswred

[address:]

To my very good frinde mr Ihon
Thynne at channon row
giue these,

Body text:

Good mr Thynne Let me be comforted in hereing from you
and of your safe ariual where I now thinke you are wishing
all here with me ware as well as the ware at your goinge
from me but [x] we most ^geue^ god thankeis it is no worse and
I hope the exstremety of danger is paste for there Lyfe
but how it will be for deisui greing of then [sic] I can not
yet tell but there facis are very full sores god of
his godnes send them well: doll takes it very heuily and
mornes very much by resen of the sorenes and store
of them nether can I with out morninge Loke apon her
if you can Larne any thinge that is ~~god~~ good for them I
pray you send it done: this day after dener cam mr char_
Les flode from mr pendrens to tell me that the Lordes
staffordes man haad byn with him to haue a writ drane
and to be sent to him for that he ment to take mr atorneyes
aduise there in but ~~net~~ neyther by his Leter nor man gaue
directions what writ he would haue where vpon he
retorned his man to know his further plesher and in
the meane tyme as mr charles flloyd telleth me: mr
pendren acquaynted him with the cause desiringe him
to signifie so much to me in your abcence sence *wch*
tyme the Lorde staffordes man is retorned with further
directions to haue a writ of nouall deseison which is

drawne and gone towards London to take further
aduse there in and doth thinke that it will retorne shor=
tly to be sealed and *dd* to the sherife *mr* flloyd cam in
kindnes him selfe to signyfie so much vnto me and sayet_
h that if there be any Iury to be impanelled he will
bringe or send me the names of forty onnest and suffy
tient gentillmen if please the sherife to put any of
them in: but wold wish you to haue a spetiall care that

[folio 112b:]

none that shall be of the Iury ware of them that in
dited you: and further he sayeth for ollyuer fillo=
yd for that he hath dealt badly with you he would w=
ish you to take the best course you can with him: and
where as there was a writ for his remoue he dot=
h protest [x] that he neuer sawe ytt but sences exca=
mininge the cause doth finde that his man rese_
ued such a writ and *dd* it to his vnder sherife
but neuer acquaynted him there with: he say=
eth if you plese to parcecute any mater aga=
ynst him he shall be content for he hath [x] him
bownd in a band of a thowsand powndes with suf_
ficient surtyes to safe him ha^r^mles: in and for all m=
atters and forther he sayde that one that was on
the laste Iury tould him that if it had gone forw=
ard he wold apast with the Lord stafford because
he was one that indited you: and therefore he
sayd he would not [x] have byn taken with pargu_
ry because he had passed on the indidment before
which was a great ouer site of your selissitor
and your selfe both: Lett me in treat you to end
the sute be twene richard Linghame and *mr* bemond
his brother in Law for that ~~xxx~~ he is contented that you
shall haue the heareing of the mater be twene them
praynge you to doo for Linghame what you can and
gett for him as much as you may desiringe you to
sende for them both Linghame will send for his
brother if it plese you to send for him and he will
tell you the cause at Large the sartificate for the
subsede you shall reseue of *mr* Hary corbyt
with mesteres corbytes dede and so with

[folio 113:]

my prayer vnto god to sende you helth and Long Lyfe
I ende: with my Louinge saluteis desiringe the all=
myghite to send vs both a mery meteinge from caur_
se castell the xviij of aprell

your euer Louinge wife
Ioane Thynne

mr penderen had a Leter
from a greate man in the behalfe of Lorde sta_
fford to frende him it is thought it is the Lord
cekeres Leter *commend* me I pray you to my
sister kneueit and to my sister brotten desirin_
ge you to frende her what you may: starch

and goonpouder I pray you for gett not to send don=
e

V.114 (Wall 35). Joan to John Thynne. April 26, 1602. Address in neat, flourished italic, same as in the address of V.112; body text in Script 4. This letter is destroyed down the right side due to water damage of the page and therefore has many gaps. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1602 answered

[address:]

To my very good frinde *mr Ihon Thynne*
At his house in channon rowe
These *dd*

Body text:

Good *mr Thynne* if you did but know how [. . .]
I am to here from you and how glad I showld
be to see you here I persuaue my selfe you would
not tary so Longe as now I feare you will which
if it may be: suete *mr Thynne* Lett me in treate
aspede retourne in to these parteis: our sonn
Iohn is this daye takeing his Iurne towardes
oxford god bless him and send him of his grase
and geue vs comfort of him: I am much behould
eing vnto his master. who hath made this Iur[. . .]
of pourpos only to plase him: I pray you [. . .]
nkefull and requite him for his paynes: [. . .]
you will see the boye as you com donne: your [. . .]
dafteres are resenabell well of the small poxs[. . .]
doll is ~~fallne~~ now trobeled with anagee w[. . .]
very sore for the childe: and no Letell grefe [. . .]
me: god in mersi sende her helth: and eue[. . .]
with a heauy harte. at this tyme: I ende wi[. . .]
moste Louinge saluteis from cource castell
xxvj of aprell

I pray you bringe <i>Iohn</i>	your euer Louinge
<i>Thynne</i> som resenabell	wife
shoute from London	<i>Ioane Thynne</i>

V.116 (Wall 36). Joan to John Thynne; April 28, 1602. Address in neat italic script as in V.112 and V.114; body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1602 Answered

[address:]

To my very louinge frinde mr
Ihon Thynne at his house
In channon rowe giue these

Body text:

Good mr Thynne the best nuse that I can send you of from
hence is ~~xx-re~~ the recouery of your to dafteres which I prase
god is now resenabell well and dolls fitts haue Lefte her which
I am not aletell glad of but for my one I ashure you it was not
wors this ~~xxxxx~~ many dayes god send you your helth and aspede
cominge in to these parteis or else where: so euer you are I
proteste I will com vnto you where so euer it be: the Lorde
stafford makes greate bragges what he will do the nexst asises
and hath geuen out that he meanes to driue and to pound
your cattell but I trost he shall com short of that he brages: for
euery nite baly driues them in to on paster: and if nede
be the shall be wached: my corne is all don and so is all thing_
es else here: and therefore I pra you take som good course
to settell this: or else to stay here your selfe: which I wi_
sh aboue all other loyes. if it would plese god onse to pu_
t it in to your hartt: to haue acare of them who desires
your good: more then my one Lyfe: I hope you haue
reseueid my other Leteres: and the to boxses: do what you may
to haue that seled out of the chancery: for the deismesinge of
the shoute betuene that wicked Lorde stafford and you: I
pray you Lett the subsede mony be pade now by you whi_
les you are there now your selfe: I pray you for gett
not the gonpouder nor the starch and euen so desiringe rathe_
r to see you here. then to here from you I ^ende^ in haste with my
kinde saluteis vnto your good selfe and to my dere sister
kneueit and my good brother with my sister brougton
whose good succes I wish in her shoute from caurse castell
the xxviij of aprell
your euer Louinge wife
Ioane Thynne

[in left-hand margin:]

I pray you by Iac ashute of aparell of som resenabell stouf not of the best sorte but
one for holy dayes for I haue don what I may for him praing god to bles him

**V.118 (Wall 37). Joan to John Thynne. April 30, 1602. Address and note scribal, body text in
Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1602 Answered

[address:]

To the worshipp^{ll} my very gode ffreinde
Iohn Thynne Esquier at his house in
Channonrowe at Westminster this deliuer

[note:]

The wrightings of William ffraunch, I have not
For I deliuered them vnto youe longe sithence

Body text:

Good mr Thynn your Leter this morninge I reseaued as
amost wellcom geaste ~~vnto~~ vnto me who am
very yell at this tyme I besech god send you
yours to be much beter you ~~hit~~ writ that I
should send you word what rett the Lorde
stafford had procured from mr ~~pendr~~ pendren wch
is as I here a ~~writ~~ rett of novell deser but he had
that from pendern but yett it is not com bake fro_
m his consell nor mr shereff heres not of him but
I will send vnto him and by the nexste you shall
here from me I wrot vnto ^you^ abought this mater a_
fore by corbyt I hope you haue reseaued it and
sent vp the note for Iaces Leuing in a box and iij
very fare and good cheses which ware geuen
you at your beinge here which on my faith ware
the very same how so euer the carver deseaued
you I protest the ware such as I can not tell how
to helpe you to the Lyke for the reste of your Leter
I will anser by the nexst mesenger for this is in
great haste and my selfe in no great ease fearein_
g my tourne will be nexst to Lye by it for yester
daye bes Tounsand fell sike and so I thinke wee
shall ~~xx~~ do all your to dafteres are paste the worst
I prase god vnto whome I will dayly pray for
your helth and good succes and euen so restinge euer
your Louing wife I ende from cause castell the
Laste of aprell Ioane Thynne

commend me to my sister
kneueit and to my sister
broughton and tell her
I praye for her good succes

**V.120 (Wall 40). Joan to John Thynne. June 21, 1602. Address scribal, body text in Joan's
Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.**

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1602

[address:]

To the Righte Worshipp// my
verye gode ffreinde Iohn thynne
Esquier at his house in Channonrowe
this deliuer at
Westminster

Body text:

Good mr Thynne all though I wrot this daye
yet most I not Let any fitt mesenger

pas with out akinde salute beinge
hartyly glad to here of your well_
doinge: this daye diueres of the Iury w_
are here for the vewe of the castell
as my cosen admes can tell you: w_
hose endeferncy you nede not fe_
are: if there be any trouth in m_
en: mr pryse of the new tone
and mr ~~rathan raugen~~
rauan stade be hinde the rest
of porpos as it semes: who afte_
ar all the rest ware gon cam in
to see me: and tould me that I
should ashure my selfe of there
in defferenci with fauar: and
many other good wordes: from
mr prise: with ashurance of his
frendes: which if it plese you to
goo to tryall I thinke and so dos
all your frendes that you can
neuer have abeter Iury: and
therefore good mr Thynne be carefu_
ll and well aduised: not to pas this go_
od opertunety: and so refaringe it to
your good consitheracion I ende
with slepy yes praynge god to send
you helth and good succes in all your
shouteis ~~from castell~~ in haste I ende
with my harty commendacions to your
good selfe from caurse castell the xxj of Iune

[in left hand margin:]

your euer Louinge wife
Ioane Thynne

V.122/3 (Wall 44). Joan to John Thynne. March 5, 1603. Address scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

from my wife to me 1602

[address:]

To the Righte worshipp// my very good
ffrende, John Thynne Esquier
this deliuer

Body text:

Good mr Thynne your kind Leter by nowboryo doth
bynde me etarnally your detor: yett in the truest
senserity of a well desaruinge frend I dare bouldly
say my selfe to be second to non. you haue so infen_
enetly and for so many kindneses: tied me to tha_
nkefullnes: I haue ~~xxxxxx~~ tould gorge and Iohn

halywell what your plesher is: but I feare, the
bokeis, are not so redy as I could wish, ~~yett~~: now
he may haue layser. for Iane is gon. the monday
after you went, from cause: and so shall Ione
nash: shortly, and as many as are vnnesesary.
you write to know, the prise. of befes here. which
is very deare. and dearer the are like to be by re_
porte at easter: and so are sheppe. for I pay now
after ~~xxx~~ viij pound the core: and thre pound xs
for acou: which is but resenabell fatt: and therefore
if you plese. you may by. som for easter: against
which tyme: the will be exsedeinge deare here. the
prises of corne. and mallte: ~~here~~ you shall reseae
here in closed: I am now inforsed to by all my cor_
ne: and all other ~~prouisen~~ prouishen. which is
and will be very chargable. vnto you: but what
spare. may be ^made^ ashure your selfe: I will do my
beste: but by that tyme all detteis are discharged

[folio 122b:]

I feare, there will not be much left: of the. hounded
and xxxj pound, which I reseaued: but what is possibell
to spare: I proteste I will do my, beste, in itt: but for the
discharginge of basit: as yet, I can not spare him, nether
do I know, who to put in his rome: and for gorge halywell
I will ^~~xxx~~^ nether medell, nor sett him: in any offeis: vnles
I sa him. more. carfuller: then he is: and therfore: I most
desir you: to lett baset stay, for a tyme: ~~xxx~~ vnles you
haue a beter to sett in his plase: the fote boy is not well
but rather wors sences his coming hom: and now he is at
moriesis agayne: the meddesen for your ieis with the
knife you shall reseae by this bearer: I am hartly
sory, that you showld ether greffe or be mallancoy for any
case, I hope you will haue more care, of your selfe: for the
good of me. and your pore childern: hounbely desiringe: ~~xxx~~
you, aboue, all thinges, to haue respectt, vnto your helth: and
not to defar: the tyme of takeing ficake: and Lett your grea
test care: be for the preseruacion of your helth. in whose
well doinge consists my only Ioye: and comfort, and there_
fore suett mr Thynne: if you Loue or make acounte of me
haue ~~xxxxxxxx~~ aspeshall: regarde, of itt:, [sic] the contentes of
your to Leteres shall be performed as nere as I may for
my one parte ashuringe: you that I will make what spare
I can but the bages do empty to faste I feare for your ~~xxx~~

[folio 123:]

lykeing: I pray you take it not yell that I opened
your letter I proteste the feare of the ~~xxx~~ sodden. to
here, that ther was ameshenger, com from Long_
Leatte, at that tyme of nite, after my furst
sleepe, did so amase, me and the hast that he m^a^de
to haue them, sent after you, was the cause that
I opened standishis, leter: fearing all hat not
byn well there: but from henseforth, you shall
not haue any such cause. of discontent: and there
fore I crafe parden: at this tyme: and for my loue to

you itt was is and euer shall be and so good mr Thynne
rest ashured: I would desire you att your goinge to mr
hornors to remember my kind saluteis vnto him and to
that good Lady his wife and to speake vnto her to enterta=
yne aIenttell woman if she do want one which I know
is both saruisabell and of good currag whose anser I pray
you lett me know so sone as you can and so with my beste
and derest Loue to your good selfe I rest

cause	euer your ashured louinge
castell	wife
the v of	Ioane Thynne
march.	

XL.6 (Wall 45). Joan Thynne to John Thynne. April 17, 1603. Address in an italic hand like that in V.112, etc.; body text in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by John Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my wife to me 1603

[address:]

To the worshipfull my very louinge
frind mr Iohn Thynne att longe
leate these

Body text:

Good mr Thynn lett me intreate you to here from
you so spedely as you may protestinge that I do think
the tyme exsedeinge longe sences I harde from you
hopinge that now you will efeict that which your
frendes haue longe desired ashuringe my selfe if
you be willinge you may youse as good meanes as
mr foxs and others do which are much your in
fereirs and therefore if euer now or neuer yett
I refer it to your best wisdom desiringe you in all
loue to send som prouishen vnto bath to my good
sister andespeshall [sic] frend mestres broughton with
whome I wish my self to be when she is with you
or you with her and so in haste with my dayly
prayers vnto god for your good helth I rest with
my derest loue to your good selfe causecastell the
xvij of aprell

your euer louinge
wife
Ioane Thynne

your to dafteres
remember there
dutys vnto you I
pray lett my sisters
horses be sent for
to longleatt to be

kepte for her for she wold
do much more for you hopinge you will inuite her

VII.237 (Wall 42). Joan Thynne to Lucy Audley. August 8, 1602. No address, body text and signature in a very well-formed, flourished italic script not unlike that found in the addresses of some of the letters to John earlier (see Fig 5 in the Transcription Policy). The endorsement on the front is slightly more angular, but nonetheless a very neat example of italic, unlike most of Joan's other italic scripts. It would appear that this version was either a copy of what was sent. To preserve the lineation of this letter, it has been reproduced in a smaller font.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

My letter to The Lad: auley

Body text:

Madame, thinke not much that I did not precently answer your letar, for itt is no smale time that I haue indured of discomfartinge grefe, my sone was not longe mine, but rongfully detayned from me before he had ethar yeares or expedience, to Iudge what was fitt in soe wayghty a caus, I confes your Daughters berthe, far aboue my sonnes desertes or degree, but sence you wear pleased not to scorne my sonne to be yours, me thinkes, you shoulde not haue scorned to haue acknowleged me to be his mothar, in respecktinge me as was my due, for beleuee itt madam I held nothinge mor clearly myn then I did him I knewe god had geuen me, and I hoped to my comfarte, and if it proue otherways, I must lay the faulte one your Ladishype, and take itt for a heuie crose in this worlde, I blush not to acknowledge, that I looked to haue binne sought vnto, ether att the first, or longe sence att leaste, therfore blam me not, if I can not att the first concar my oune pacience, which hath binne to much vrged, by lousinge him that once I loued mor then my selfe, but Madame I knowe not whom itt should be, you meane of you nearest in bloud that should ronge you to me by mis reportes, for my parte itt is longe sence, I haue had any spech or conferance with any of you^r kinred, only mr Fardenandoe Clarke exceptet, which I cannot deny, but his nearnes to your Lady shipe, hath mad both mr Thynne and my selfe hould the mor suspicione of, and if itt be he you meane, I know he is abell to answer for him selfe, and soe he shall for me, but this I protest in my hearinge he hath euer excecuted the office of A true frende, and respetcktfull kinsmane to wards you and yours, in the highest degree, still caringe an honorable regarde towards your honored selfe, your Ladishipe sayth you neuer gaue breath to the thought that might sound my disgrace, Good Madam I hoop you could not, I haue only that to be Ioyfull of, and I pray god make me thankfull for itt, that my greatest enimies could neuer tuch my credite indisgracefull manar, nor I hoope neuer shall; Now for mr Thynnes callinge of your honor in question I can not denie but I hau harde ytt, but that my selfe was ether alter or demonstrator, of any such reportes I vttraly deny, I am not soe redy to ronge inferiour parsones, much les an honorable Lady, of your place and reputacione, and so ~~sxxx~~ conseue of me, for soe you shall euer finde me, for your Dafter I can not yett account of her, as you may of my sonne, for that I haue not had the triall of the one, as you haue had of the other, but yf he be not respeckted of you, I can not pittie his ronge, sence he hath hasarded for your loue, and yours, the los of theres that he was borne to honor parpetually, but this I confes, I haue mor reason to respect your honor, then your frenshipe towards me yett, but what may hereafter follow I know not, I haue neuer bin counted so vnsiuell, as to reieckt true frenship, beinge freely a forded, nor will I be so light of belefe, that on letter without triall, shall haue powr holy to ouersway all my intencions, and this in hast, fereinge to robe your honour of your better employed time, I rest.

your Ladyshipes as tryall shall aproue. Ioane: Thynne

[parallel to closing in lefthand margin:]

course castlle this
viiij of August
1602

VIII.26 (Wall 53). Joan Thynne to Thomas. April 11, 1607. Address, body text and post-script scribal, in a formal secretary script, signature only in Joan's Script 4. Holograph endorsement by Thomas Thynne.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my mother 11th aprell 1607

[address:]

To the *rt worll* my
verie lovinge Sonne
Sr Thomas Thynne knight
at Longleate
dd/

Body text:

Good Sonne. The cause of my slacknes in not writinge to *you* since I recd *yor laste lre* by *ffisher*, was one while sicknes, another while ~ want of a conuenient messengr, and cheiflie a match moconed to be had betweene *mr Whitney's sonne* and *yor Sister Dorothe* not brought to anie head till now; soe that I could not write to *you* what I would; but now I haue thought good hereby to aduertize *you* thereof, and that I haue a good likeing thereto, the rather because it is to a gentleman of a verie annient & *worll* house, and an aliesman to *yor La: wch* to be ~ solemnized & donne might renew a mutuall loue on euerie side to the comforte of many: and besides his estate so great and his proffers soe reasonable & well, (*wch wth* the particuler of his land I haue ~ here inclosed sent *you* to take delibate aduisemt of) I cannot but thinke her fortunes verie happie, and the match verie worthie; and may *you* thinke good now for her advancemt therein, and the augmentacon of *hoble: friendes loues*, to shewe *yor kindenesse* soe farr to her, to graunte her and myselfe *yor prsence forthwith* here, the better to forward this businesse, and to fauor it what *you* maie *wth* *yor loue*; both *yor Sister* shalbe bounde to yelde *you* her continuall thankfulnes and myselfe to acknowledge *yor loue* to her. *Yor Sisters* both remember their loues vnto *you*. And soe hoping *you* will let me be assured of *yor cominge* hether to *Caur*s verie shortlie, whether to myselfe *you* shalbe still most hartielie welcome; *wth* Gods ~ ~ blessinge and myne to *you* and *yors* I rest.

Caur's Castle this
xith of Aprill. 1607

Yor assured lovinge Mother
Joane Thynne

Mr Whitney's great Grandfather
married the daughter of the Lord Audley
from whome this *worll* gent is descended/
aduertizing *you* further, that I crediblie
vnderstand, that all the lands whereof *mr*
Whitney is now seized (*Clifford lop* onely
excepted) was Whitney's lands before the
conquest of England; and that that euer sithence
it hath and doth continue in *ye* name & bloude
of the Whitney's, that althoughe himselfe be but
an Esqr, yet there were .xviij. knights of his name before
the conquest *wch* were lords & owners of the same lands
wch are nowe his.

VIII.28 Joan to Thomas Thynne; October 4, 1608. Address and body text scribal, in an accomplished secretary script, signature only in Joan's Script 4. Endorsement in italic unlike any previous, hand not identified.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

The Case of Cause Castle./

[address:]

To the right worll
my very lovinge sonne
Sr Thomas Thyne
knight giue these/

Body text:

Good sonne. *lres* are come to myselfe (as to others
freeholders of the lands *wch* were the Duke of Buckingham)
from the *lds* and others of his *Mats* most hoble: priuie counsell
whereof th'effect is, That wee must appeare before their honors
the .xxth. daie of this *prsent* to shewe *x* our estates & titles
howe we hold the same lands; And the better to haue the same
made knowne to their *lops* we must repaire to Mr Tipper at
his house in holborne, whoe is appointed by their *lops* for that purpys,
The case is.

The case for the Castle Mannor and boroughe of Caurs *wth* wallop,
The Mannor of Minsterley, minsterley parke, and Aston Rogers
and the forest of hoggestowe.

Termio Pasche Anno. 50.

H. 8. r. 458.

Edward duke of *Buck* suffered a common recoverie of the *prmisses*
(inter alia) By vertue whereof the said Recouerors were seised of the
prmisses to them and their heires to the vse of the said duke & his heires.
130. Maij. Anno. 130. H. 8.

The said duke by *Iudgmt* at the *comon* lawe was attainted of highe
treason for treason by him *comited* .240. Aprilis Anno. 4.H.8. By
wch attainder the *prmisses* were not forfyted to the kinge because the kinge
had no estate therein but th'estate in fee simple thereof ther was and
still remained in the Recoueres and their heires not *wthstandeing* that
attainder.

After kinge H.8. by *lres* patents dated .20. die Septembris Anno. 140. regui sui
graunted the *prmisses* (inter alia) to henrie Lord Stafford & Ursula
his wife and to the heires of their bodies *wch* grannt is voide because
the kinge had no estate therein at the time of his grannt for th'estate
thereof in fee simple then was in the Recouerers and their heires.

After by parliamt holden at westminster vltimo Iulij Anno. 150.H.8.Yt
was enacted that the said duke sholde stande and be convicted and
attainted of highe treason and shold forfyte vnto the kinge and his
heires for ever, All honors Castles Mannors *etc.* whereof the
said duke or anie other person or persons to his vase were seised in fee
simple fee taile or anie estate of inheritaunce the xxiiijth daie
of Aprill in the iiijth yere of his raigne, or anie time sithence,
Or in the *wch* the said duke or anie other seised to his vse had then
or anie time sithence lawfull cause of entrie.

By vertue of *wch* acte the *prmisses* whereof the said Recouerers were ~

seised to the vse of the said duke were given vnto Kinge H 8. and
his heires and from him descended vnto the late Queene Elizabeth
The late Queene Elizabeth, by *lres* pattents dated .28^o. Julij Anno 16^e regui sui
(After recitall of the said voyde graunte in taile made by Kinge H.8.
vnto henrie Lord Stafford & Ursula his wife,) did give graunte & ~
confirme this reuercon of the *prmisses* to dorothe Stafford and to her
heires

[folio 28b:]

wch said graunt made vnto the said dorothe was also voide ~
because it was made of the reuercon vpon recitall of the former
voyde graunte in taile. By reason whereof the kings *Matie*
that now is by lawe maie *prsentlie* seize the *prmisses* into his
hands, [x] and recouer the meane profitts arisinge since the
said acte .Anno. 15.H.8./.

This is the case *wch* was sent to me inclosed in their *lres*.
The *wch* I haue thought good to aduertize yow of. Praieng
when yow are at London to haue recourse to this mr Tipper
or otherwise as the cause shall require for yor owne good aswell
as myne. Such Evidences as I haue or can procure of
friends to defend this case I haue laboured to get and what shalbe
wanting when you maie heare furthr of it at yor beinge at London
I praie you supplie, for I am beholding to friends for moste of
ought that I haue concerning the *premisses*. Soe hoping
yor care accordinglie, *with* my loue vnto yor good Ladie and
gods blessinge and myne to yow and yors I rest.

Yor assured loving Mother
Ioane Thynne

Scarlet hath not
yet paid Edward Morlie
I praie yow write now straightlie
vnto him, that he maie be paid.

Caurs Castle this. 4th
of October .1608.

**VIII.30 (Wall 59). Joan to Thomas Thynne. October 25, 1608. Address and body text scribal,
in a formal secretary script, signature only in Joan's Script 4.**

Address leaf:

[address:]

To the right worll
my lovinge sonne, *Sr*
Thomas Thynne knight
At his howse in Channon
rewe in westminster. London.
dd.

Body text:

Good sonne. A mocon now being accepted by *Sr* Iohn
Windham for a match betweene his sonne and yor sister
dorothe *wch* I hope yow cannot dislike, his liveinge

being verie great and his house of annient time right
worthie and worll. I hartielie praie yow instance this
matter and forward yt by yor countenance and paines ~
what yow maie. And I shall acknowledge it as a great
kindnesse donne to myselfe and yor sister be most ~
thankfull vnto yow for soe doinge, myselfe and yor sister
doe whollie referr the managinge of this businesse to yor
owne best discretion. The *wch* hopeing yow will regard
and further as much as in yow lieth now whilest yow are
at London where *Sr* Iohn or his sonne wilbe of whome
Sr Rbert Yonge can aduertize yow. *with* my best loue ~
vnto yor good Ladie and Gods blessinge and myne to
yow and yors I rest.

Yor assured lovinge Mother

Glaseley this
xxvth of October
1608.

Ioane Thynne

VIII.34 (Wall 66). Joan to Thomas Thynne. August 25, 1611. Address and body text scribal, in a clear, bold secretary script, signature only in Joan's Script 4.

Address leaf:

[address:]

To the right worshipfull
my very loving Sonne
Sr Thom^as Thynne knight
At Longleate.
d

Body text:

Good Sonne. fforasmuch as the day of paiement of yor sister dorothes
mony draweth ~~xxx~~ nere *wch* is vpon the first daie of October next (she
accomplishing her full age of .xxj. yeres vpon the xvjth daie of Aprill Laste)
and yow not yet come hether to me according to yor promise, when I might
haue signified soe much in *person* to yow, I thought good haueing this fitt
oppurtunity to acquainte yow therewith; because I wold not any vnkindnesse
shold be taken for not giveng yow notice thereof: desyryng that at the
time aforesaid the mony may be ready for her to be put forth for her
best proffit as I haue already taken a corse to doe, vnles yow yorselfe thinke
good to keepe it: 6: moneths longer and paie her interest for the same as
she is willinge soe to let yow haue it yf yow please. Either of *wch* shall
best like yow I desire to knowe *with* speede, to the end I maie take order
for the receiuing thereof yf yow will paie it, or send to take yor new
bond for the same *with* the vse thereof as is requisite yf yow desire to
keepe it./ This bearer yor kinsman craueing to be accepted in yor
fauor, Yf yow maie vouchsafe him yor countenance the rather at my request
he will acknowledg himselfe much bounde vnto yow for the same./
Yor sonne God be thanked is in good health. Soe *with* ~~my best love~~
Gods blessinge and mine to yow and yors I rest

Yor very loving Mother.

Caurs Castle this
xxvth of August.
1611

Ioane Thynne

VIII.36 (Wall 67). Joan to Thomas Thynne. September 24, 1611. No address, body text scribal, in the same hand as letter VIII.34, signature only in Joan' Script 4.

Body text:

Good Sonne. These bearers by aucthority from yor Sister are comeing vnto yow to receiue her mony which I hope yow will care to make ~ them paiement of; I marvaile much that yow wold not perform yor promise in comeing to me nor yet send me some aunswere of my late sent *lres* I conceaue yor great businesses wch yow haue there daylie staied yor comeing but yet me thinkes yow might haue sent some messenger wth aunswere vnto them as I wold haue donne to yow yf yow had writ to me touching matters of like ymportauce./ with much a doe I intreated Mr Chelmecke to staie his triall and perswaded Mr Gough because of yor request; and promise to come vnto me: but seeing yow come not I am yll thought of, and yow much condemned; I pray yow in regard of yor worth make some speedy end wth them, that the mouthes of clamorous people in this Country may be stopped and yor owne reputacon carefully preserued./ Yor litle Sonne God be thanked is in good health; and yor sister dorotheie kindelie remembreth her best loue vnto yow./ And soe wth Gods ~ ~ blessing and myne to yow and yors, I rest

Caurs Castle this
24th of September .1611.

Yor very loving mother.

Ioane Thynne

VIII.37 (Wall 68). Joan to Thomas Thynne. October or November, 1611. Address scribal, body text in Joan's Script 4.

Address leaf:

[address:]

To the Right wor
shipfull my Loving
Sonne Sir
thomas thin Long
Let gve this
wth speed

Body text:

Good sonn your Leter was expeicited Longe be fore
I hard from you. which made me doutfull.
what couse your sister ~~xxx~~ should take for
her mony ~~xxxx~~ seinge you cam not acording
to your promys ^whch^ gaue both her and my selfe
much discontentment: where apon she hath
made her atornes to reseau ~~her~~ the mony
to her youse: yett neuer the less. if you
will haue the hole som. all to gether for
thre weakes or ^a month^ Longer. if you please. geu=
inge her what she and you shall agree a=
pon * at your and her nexst meteinge ~~xxxx~~
geuinge her atornes good secureite for
the hole thosen pondes. to be pade vnto her
at London or other wise * ^where^ she shall apount

Maria Thynne's Letters, c. 1601-1610

VIII.1 (Wall 47). Maria to Thomas Thynne. Sometime between 1604-6. Body text in Maria's Script. No address. The signature has been partially cut from this letter, presumably in binding.

Body text:

That I so often trouble you, assure yr Selfe ytt is butt the effectes of a very much disquyetted minde, for I cannot greeve a lyttle to finde that I, *wch* haue binn a wyllinge Companion & partaker in yr harde fortunes, should now be made so greate a stranger to yr proceedings in yr better estate, butt I ~~xxxx~~ ^see^ my hopes to finde ytt other wayes then ytt is, wer builde vpon a very weake fowndation, when thay wer grownded butt vpon my Conseayt of yr good oppinion & loue towards me, / well mr Thynne beleue I am both Sory & ashamed that any Creature should see that you hold such a Contempte of my poore wyttes, that beinge yr wyfe, & you should not thinke me of discreation to order (accordinge to yr apoyntment) yr affayers in yr absince, butt ~~xxxxxxx~~ ^yf you^ be perswaded that ytt is most for yr Crea= dytte to Leaue me lyke an Inocent ~~xx~~ foole ~~att~~ here, I wyll the more Contentedlye beare the ~~disgrase~~ disgrace, / others (exceptinge yr Cownsellors) Can wonder (as thay well maye) that my aduise & Consent (beinge in ryght to be *mr's* ther) should in no Cawse be taken, no not so much as in Chuse inge of Servants / butt yf this Course best please, or that you wyll be better pleased to haue my lykeing pleased in no= thinge, the truth is, that the Care is already taken yf I never come ther/ & for my owne parte I wyshe you should send some one hether, ~~that~~ to discharge this bussines heer, that you better truste, *etc* Yf you intend not to see me before yr goeing to lundon, then I praye you Spare yr man wylliams that hee maye knowe how to dispatch sume bussines I haue

[in the left-hand margin:]

in london, I praye take Sume present order for a bed to be heer for the mayds, for thers is to [line 2:] be Caryed *wth* owte fayle this weeke, & so god Send ^you^ well / yr loueing wyfe, howsoever, [. . .]

VIII.2 (Wall 48). Maria to Thomas Thynne. After August, 1604. Address and body text in Maria's Script.

Address leaf:

To my Loueing husband Sr Thomas
Thynne knighte giue
Thess

Body text:

Myne owne Sweete Thomken: I haue no longer agou then the very laste nighte wryghten Such a large vollume in prayse of thy kindes to me thy doggs thy hawkes the hars & the foxes, & allso in Commendation of thy greate Care of thy bussinesses in the Countrye, that I thinke I need

not amplefye anye more on that texte, for I haue Crowned ^thee^ for an
 admirable good husband *with* poettycall Lawrell, & admirred the vnexspres
 able Singularitye of thy loue in the Cogitations of piamature, I can
 Saye no more butt that in waye of gratuitye, the doggs shall *with* ow
 intervption expell ther excrementall Coruption in the best roome (*wch*
 ys thy bed) whensoever full feedinge makes ther Bellyes Ake, & for
 my owne parte Since you haue in all *yr* letters giuen me authoritye to
 Care inoughe, I wyll promyse to be inferyor to none of my deuerll neighbors
 in playeing the good huswyfe, thoughe thay styre tyll thay stinke, now
 yf for my better incouragement, & in requyttall thow wylte att my
 erniste intreatye butt for thys tyme Spare diggrye, I Shall be So much
 Bownde, that nothinge butt a stronge purgation Can lose me / for yf
 you wyll beleeeve me in Sober Sadnes, my Cosin stantor hath vpon speech
with me, made ytt appeer that hee hath disgested manye vncivell & vn
 beco[m]inge woords from 3 of *yr* Servants, hee doth not desyere you to
 remite diggries faulte, butt to dispence *with* hys apparance for hys Sake
 this tyme, becawse ytt Conscerns hym in hys profytt, & when you Come
 in to the Countrie my Cosin wyll Come & throughlye Satysfye all
 matters in Contraversye between you / I wyll not intreate to ernist=
 lye becawse I know thow arte Chollrike *with* me ever in thess Cases, butt
 though thow doste manye tymes Call me foole for yeeldinge to ~~the~~
 intysing ~~of~~ fayer woords, yett yf you marke ytt, I haue never yett
 Craved anye thinge of Such greate Importance as hath ever binn pre=
 iudicill to *yr* reputation or profitt, yf So; (As ytt ys to true ytt ys
 So) Name me anye man that hath a wyfe of that rare temper, No in
 good fayth thys age wyll not helpe you to an equall, I meane for a
 wyfe, alas I Sitt att home & lett thy doggs eate parte *with* me, & weare
 Clothes ~~xxxxxx~~ that haue worne owte ther prentysshipe a yeere &
 half Sithence, when my Sisters wyllbe in lundon att ther pleasure,
 I am talkeinge of foxes & rudder Beasts att home / wyll doo butt
 make hast home & make much of thy Mall when thow doste Come
 home, I wyll not be Mallenchollye, but *with* good Courage Spend my life
 & waste my Sperits in anye Course to please thee, excepte fightinge,
 & in thys bussines Satysfye my request as you thinke I deserve, & doo not
 be angrye *with* me for Importuninge you, but aske all the husbands in
 Lundon, or aske the questyon in the lower howse, what requests thay
 grante ther wives, & then good husband thinke vpon *yr* foole att
 home as ther ys Cawse/ Thine
 Marya Thynne

[written in lefthand margin:]

I wyll Saye nothinge of anye bussines, for I haue thys last nighte wryghten you a whole sheet of
 paper & [line 2:] giuenev [sic] you knowledge accordinge to *yr* apoyntmente of all *yr* affayers, yf
yr leasure wyll not Serve good Sweet Cawse [line 3:] exall to wryghte in hys owne Name ~~no more~~
 butt this & this [sic] ys my mrs pleasure & ytt Shall Serve the turne for [line 4:] I knowe *yr* troble
 in matters of more waighte ther ys greate & I leek not hys wryghtinge in *yr* Name for ytt [line 5:]
 ys as though thow worte angrye god in heauen Send thee well and Speedilye home

VIII.4 (Wall 51). Maria to Thomas Thynne. 1607?. Address and body text in Maria's Script. In the post-script, Maria includes a mark that Wall suggests means 'iota', which fits the sense.

Address leaf:

To my Loueing husband Sr
 Thomas Thynne knyghte
 giue

Thess

att his howse in Cannon

Rowe : /

Body text:

My fayer Tomken : I haue nothinge to Saye butt how dost thou, and that I hope to See thee well Shortly, as thou louest me be exceedinge Carefull of cominge in to any shoppes, for ther ys the greatest danger, I haue Since thy goeing lerned an aproved medicen for the plauge yf ytt be vsed in tyme *etc* take dragon watter a good draughte, and mingle ther *with* as much treacle or mettridatt in quantatye as an ordinarye wallnutte, and add to thess, so much readdinge pownded as a greate hassell nutt, sture all this together and drinke ytt, yf you doo butt never So lyttle Suspect yr Selfe, I know thou wylte laughe to heer me ~~xx~~ preach phisike so long before hand, butt consydere meadicen comes to late when the deaseas is past Cure, good Sweet be not *with* owt Sume thinge to take in an instaint, in good fayth I assure you this hath binn tryed by manye, yf you coulde indure to ~~xxx~~ eate in a morninge butt 3 or fower leaues of rue putt in to Sume reasons of the Sonne, you would fynd ytt *with* gods helpe a good preservative against infection, good Thomken remember wee are bownd in Conciencie to main tayne lyfe as long as ys possible, and though gods power can worke mericles, ytt wee ~~xxx~~ cannot builde vpon ytt that be cawse he can, he wyll, for then he wolde not Saye he made herb for the vse of man : / I much feare Brownwints libbertye maye breed danger, I can Saye no more being in exeeding hast, butt that I wyll be a Carefull officer in yr absince, & Even So god in heaven preserve thy health, as long as I live, and Cantynew thy loue So to me, as I maye haue Cawse to loue thee ^no less^ then I doo, *wch* ys ^yett^ as my own Soule

Thyne

heer is not So much as halfe an [iota]

[x] of bussines to aquaynt yo *with* all

Marya Thynne

[marginalia, next to the line that begins ‘wallnutte’:]

such readinge as is giuen piggs for the murrine

VIII.6 (Wall 52). Maria to Thomas Thynne. ND. Address and body text in Maria’s Script.

Address leaf:

To my Loueing husband Sr
Thomas Thynne knight att
his howse in Chanon Row
giue
Thess

Body text:

My best beloued Thomkine, & my best leetle Sirra, knowe that I haue not, nor wyll not forgett how you made my modest bloud flush vp into my bashfull Cheeks att yr last letter, thou threatnest Sownde payement, & I Sownd repayment, So as when wee meete, ther wyll be paye, & repaye, *wch* wyll pass & repass, allgiges vltes fregnan tolles, thou knowest my minde

[continued in the lefthand margin:]

[folio 6b:]

VIII. 8/9 (Wall 63). Maria to Thomas Thynne. Early 1610? Address and body text in Maria's Script.

Address leaf:

To my Loueinge husband
Sr Thomas Thynne knighte
att his howse in Channon
Rowe give

Thess

Body text:

My best Thomken: I know thow wylte Saye (receivinge 2 letters in a daye from me) that I haue tryed the vertue of Aspen Leaues vnder my tounge, *wch* makes me prattle So much, butt Consyder that all is bussines, for of my owne naturall dispossession, I assure thee ther ys not a more Sillent wooman Liueing then my Selfe, / butt to the porpose; you must vn=derstand that I received this daye beinge Sundaye my grandfathers letter to mr Sampford, & dyd forthwith Sende halliwell a waye *with* ytt to hym, So as what maye be don in reason besyds Shall not be neglected / Smith of deverll Sent to me for mony to discharge the kinges rente, hee sayeth the rent of deverell wyll not discharge ytt, butt I haue apoynted hym to bringe in the rent & lett the other allone for that I vnderstood by you, *yr* Selfe would discharge ytt wher by you mighte the better be allowed *yr* fathers fee & *yr* owne, yf I haue not done in ytt as I Should, then lerne not to place a foole in an office: / Salisbury hath binn heer *with* his fyne & hath offryed 5£ to my vncle Thomas more then is dew So he wyll not take the forfytture of his bond, butt what So ever become of ^ytt^ he wyll not give one peny more, my vncle desyers to knowe *yr* pleasur Speedy lie for he feareth lest vpon ther goeing to my vncle hary he wyll receive ther monye & give a release & So loose the 5£ to, becawse he made the bargin, all the means hath binn made that maye be to gett hym leaue the miles, & take his bonds agayne, but Shore wyll not, the lawe Shall take ytt from them er thay wyll leaue ytt now, I pray lett vs know whether you wyll take the forfyttur or no, for yf

[folio 8b:]

you doo not, the Sooner wee haue the mony the better / Curtyse of deverll was heer *with* his *mr* butt not a worde of Shutte tyll I begane, he Sayeth you haue lett ytt for a yeer to one that husbands ytt very yll, So as he cannot enter vpon ytt to his profyte, & to keep his mony tyll the tyme be exspyered that he cannot neyther: he wyll not give one peny more then – 370£ & for any thinge I See hee is now very Careles of ytt, for those respects affore sayed, I never hard that you had So much bydden for ytt by any other: lett me knowe what you wyll doo, for on Saterdaye next I Shall know whether ever hee wyll deale in ytt agayne, butt

yf he doo, he wyll looke the tenant now in ytt Shall be
 his tenante: yr tronke is Sent, & ther *with* a letter from
 me, also 60£ *wch* marchant, (Cogswells Sonne) is to paye
 from me, & this I thinke wyll be all woodlands & I shall
 helpe you to tyll allhollantyd, yf Salsburys Shall be
 received, then Shall you presently haue that to, *with* as
 much els as maye be gathred, remember I praye thee
 to paye as many [x] debts as is possible, & then wylte thow
 lett Idle expences allone tyll heerafter: I hard thee
 talke of Cuttinge downe [x] Sume parte of the Copes in
 long leat parke my vncle Thomas Sayeth yf he mighte
 aduise you ther Should be as much as maye haue vtterance
 be Sould, & this is his advise, to haue the Sale Cryed in
 the markets, & none to be Cutt, butt as ther Shall Come
 fyrst a Chepman to bye ytt, & then when the bargin is
 made (the wood standing) lett [x] his aker that hath
 bought be apoynted owt lettinge the rest stand tyll more
 Chepmen come by *wch* means you Shall be Sure to haue

[folio 9:]

no Spoyle nor waste, for what wyll not be Sould Shall
 growe, yr pleasure must be knowne in this for hallhollane
 tyd is the best tyme, he thinketh yf you please ther wyll
 be lyttle left by midsummer / I thinke I haue given
 thyne eyes a Surfytt *with* a letter by this tyme, wherfore
 I wyll now end, wysHINGE thy life [x] hapynes & Content=
 ment maye never end, tyll thy loue to me hath end /

In any wyse Sweet lett	Thyne
Sume body receive my other	Marya Th[xxx]
letter of the Caryer for ytt is	
all bussines to /	

VIII.10 (Wall 49). Maria to Joan Thynne. 1605? No address. Body text in Maria's Script.

Body text:

Good La: owt of my Care to yr health lett me intreate you to temper yr
 Chollor, esspecialye Consyderinge you Cannot Comphorte yr Selfe *with* hope
 that mr Thynne wyll greeve much att ytt: for my parte (respectinge yr
 alliance *with* hym) I wyll not *withowt* leaue tell you that yf you gave
 anye fee to a Cownceller to indighte yr letter, ytt was bestowed to
 lyttle purpose, for ther Should haue binn Consyderation that mr Thynne
 lookes in to waste & Spoyle on yr Ioynter, as to a tennante for terme
 of lyfe, & So yr Scribe Can proove no nessecarye Consiquence for you
 to wryghte disgracefullye or Contemptuouslye in bussines *wch* Concerns
 you not, indeed yf you or yr heyers haue an exspectation in reversion
 of Longleate howse or garden, ther wer reason yr Speak Should passe
 Currante *withowt* offence or exception, butt the case beinge as ytt ys,
 meethinkes you Should not vnkindlye intermedle, more then mr
 Thynne doth *with* all yr lande of inherytance / I confes (*withowt* Sham)
 ytt ys true my garden ys to ruinous, & yett to make you more mer=
 rye ~~I wyll make~~ you ^shall be^ of my Cowncell, that my intente ys before ytt
 be better, to make ytt worse; for findinge that greates expence Coulede
 never alter ytt from beinge lyke a poridg pote, nor never by reporte
 was lyke other ^I^ intend to plowe ytt up & Sowe all varitye of frute
 att a fytt Seazon, I beseech you laughe, & So wyll I att yr Captious=

nes/ now wheras you wryghte yr grownd putt to Bassest vses ys better
~~then~~ manurde then my garden, Surelye yf ytt wer a gandmoother [sic] of
 my owne ~~Should~~ & equall to my Selfe by bearth, I Should answare that
 oddious Comparison *with* tell^{^inge^} you I beleeeve So Corpulent a La: Cannot
 butt doo much yr selfe towards the Soyllinge of lande, & I thinke that
 hath binn, & wyll ^{^be^} all the good you intend to leaue behinde you att Cors=
 lye / you Saye mr Thynne ys starke blinde in hys owne faults, butt
 truelye I take ytt ther wanted Spectacles on Sume bodyes nose when they
 Could not see a more becomeinge Ciuill Course (then [sic] ys yr phrase) to be
 practyzed amongste freinds of equall woorth: you talke to much of
 mallice and revendge, yr wyll to Shew mallice maye be as greate as
 please you, butt yr power to revendge ys a bugg Beare that one that
 knowes hys owne strength no better then mr Thynne doth, wyll never be
 affrayde of, how farr yr bounteous lyberalitye hath extended towards
 hym in former tymes I know not, butt I haue Called my memmorye to
 a stricte accompte, & Cannot finde anye obligacion of debte recorded ther
 that hath not binne Substancillye Canceled, for yr well wysshings (*wch* are
 all the benifyts I am accessarye to) hath ever binn requyted *with* the lyke
 both in quantatye & quallitye, So all thinges Consydered lett the insuffi
 ciencye of Seince you Speake of rest dew on yr owne parte, beinge a re=
 proch allotted by you to the vnthankfull; to Conclude good La: haueing
 vowed to fullfyll the Scripture in thys poynte of runinge from father &
 moother for my husbande, Surely I wyll forsake all my grandmoothers

[in the lefthand margin:]

yf thay affoord me more ~~respekte~~ ^{^loue^} then thay are wyllinge he Should partake of, & therfore
 Maddam yf yr intent be [line 2:] to yeeld hym no dew respecte, I praye know my desyer ys in that
 as in other woorse fortunes, to be a partner *with* hym [line 3:] in yr displeasure/ ~~✕~~ butt I doo wyssh
 you Should remember yr owne Childrens estymacion & Creadite, for yf mr Thynne [line 4:]
 deserve butt Slender accompte, thay must exspecte rate after rate, he beinge the best flower in ther
 garland / & So [line 5:] he that made you Save you, & I wyll rest yr daughter &
 assured frinde yf you please

Marya Thynne

VIII.12 (Wall 31). Maria to Joan Thynne. September 15, 1601. Address and body text in Maria's Script. It seems very unlikely that what Wall has described as a lock of Maria's hair under the seal of this letter is anything more than red silk ribbon used to fasten the letter originally: the material is far too thin and fibrous to be human hair and is of a red that probably could only be achieved by artificial means.

Address leaf:

To the Ryghte worshypfull my
 deare mother *mr^{is}* Thinne giue
 Thess

Body text:

Yf I dyd knowe that my thoughtes had euer intertayned any vnreuerent
 conseyte of you (my ([sic] good mother) I shoulde be much ashamed so Impudintlye
 to Importune yr good oppinion as I haue dune by manye intreatinge lynes,
 butt haueinge binne euer Imboldned *wt* the knowledg of my vnspotted ~~xxxxx~~
 Inocencye, I coude not be so greate an enemye to my owne hapynes, as to
 wante yr fauor, for wante of desyeringe ytt / I must confesse that yf I
 hade not dyuers and sundrye wayes had greate exsperyence of gods power=
 full workeinge, I shoulde longe since haue binne dyscouraged from prosecuting
 my sute, haueinge often intreated, yett coude neuer obtayne ytt, butt knowe=

inge there is in god both a power, and a wyll, I cannot butt hope he wyll
exersyse that power, to the turninge of yr harte towards me; so as one
daye you wyll saye; that I haue vndeservedlye borne the punishment of yr
dyspleasure / I haue latelye wrytten more att large to this effecte, wher=
fore I holde ytt needles to trouble you any farther att thys present, onlye
giue me leaue my deare mother to conclude wt thys assurance that
yf euer ytt be my greate good fortune to ~~xxx~~ gayne yr fauor,
there shall neuer wante a wyll in me to desearue the contynu=
ance of ytt wt my greatest affection, and best servyse, wt thys
resollution and Infinite well wysheinges I rest now and euer

Yr very loueing and
obedyent daughter

Marya: Thinne

Stalbrydge thys 15th of Sept

1601

VIII.14 (Wall 33). Maria to Joan Thynne. February 24, 1601/2. Address and body text in Maria's Script.

Address leaf:

To the Ryghte worshypfull my
very good mooother mris Ione
thnne giue
thess

Body text:

My good mooother, yf you dyd butt knowe att how highe a rate I woulde estymate
yr fauor, and how much I woulde Indeuor to deserue the contynuanee therof; the
reuerent conseyte I holde of yr vertuous dyspossession makes me rest assured, that
you woulde wyllinglye bestowe ytt, wher ytt shoulde be receiued *wth* so gratefull
an acknoledgment of yr goodnes, and be requytted *wth* so large a measure of zealous
affection,: [sic] butt ytt maye be that you wyll saye; what a vnequall Satysfaction
ys heer promysed, Iustlye maye you take exceptions to ytt, for I confess that
requyttall maye neuer compare *wth* desearte, butt deere mooother, I beseeche you
~~Consyder~~ Impute the insufficyenci therof; not to my wyll to haue ytt so, butt
to my Crose fortune, *wch* yeelds me no meanes to performe any matter of gret
merrytt towards you: I can saye no more, butt that I haue a wyll to ~~be come~~
doe you any Seruise, and you haue power freelye to dispose therof att your
pleasure / Euen so in sume hast I leaue ^you^ to the protection of the highest,
wth as manye wyshees for the increase of yr happynes, as yr selfe can desyer /

Compton Bassett thys 24th of
february /1601/

Yr Loueing daughter
att Commaund

Marya : Thynne

VIII.16 (Wall 39). Maria to Joan Thynne. June 13, 1602. Address and body text in Maria's Script.

Address leaf:

To the Ryghte worshypfull my
very good Moother in Lawe
*mr**s* Thynne giue
thess

Body text:

My good moother: haueinge so good an aduocate as *yr* owne Sonne to
pleade for me, I thinke ytt needles att thys present to trouble you *with* a
Longe petytion for *yr* fauor, for yf hys presence maye butt preuayle so
farr, as fyrste to obtayne a pardon for hym selfe, I wyll not doubte
butt afterwards for hys sake, ytt wyll please you to thinke well of me,
who beinge hys; am made as much yours in ~~xxxxxxxx~~ vnfeayned
Loue, as thay that are neerer in bloude to you then my selfe: all
that I desyer, ys butt to be blest *with* *yr* better Conseyte, so shoulde
I haue Iuste cawse, not only to esteeme of you as my deere moo=
ther, butt also indeuor by all possible means to carye my selfe so to=
wards you, as best becomes

Yr most Loueinge and
obedyent daughter

Marya Thinne

Compton bassett this 13th of Iune
/1602/

VIII.18 (Wall 41). Maria to Joan Thynne. July 27, 1602. Address and body text in Maria's Script.

Address leaf:

To the Ryghte worshypfull my
my [sic] very good Moother in Lawe
*mr**s* Thinne give
Thess

Body text:

Good moother thinke not that ytt proceedes of any Carelesnes of *yr* fauor, or for=
gettfullnes of the dewtye I now owe you, yf henceforth I omitte wryghtinge
vnto you, ~~fr~~ for many Letters of myne can well testefye, that most ernistlye
I haue desyered *yr* fauor, *with* promyse to performe any kindnes that mighte
deserve ytt, and god who knowes the harte; beste knowes that my desyer
in that respecte ys as greate as euer butt so much am I discouraged to
finde that no intreatyes of myne Can prevayle to the obtayninge of ytt,
that I am determind henceforth, to Cease troublinge you, beleeuinge that
my Letters doo butt vrge the memmorye of one, who ys nothings plea=
sing vnto you, butt yett, not dispayeringe in godes goodnes, I wyll be=
take me to my prayers to hym, with thys hope; that he who hath
wroughte sume as ~~xxx~~ greate myracles as thys, wyll in tyme inclyne
yr harte to pyttye and pardon *yr* Sonne, and me for hys sake; vntyll
wch tyme, and euer, I beseech the Allmightye to shew you more

mercye when you craue ytt: and so *with* my best well wyshinges, and
Loueinge Sallutations, I end my Laste fare well, wysHINGe you
maye Longe fare well /

Since the wryghtinge heerof, ther
came a letter of *yrs* to my vew,
sent from *yr* selfe to my Cosin
Clarke, *wch* now the messengers
hast wyll not giue me leaue to
answere, /

Yr Loueinge and
obedyent Daughter
Marya: Thynne

Compton Bassett thys 27th of Iullye
/1602/

VIII.20 (Wall 43). Maria to Joan Thynne. December 11, 1602. Address and body text in Maria's Script. The endorsement is in a script similar to that used in the address to Joan's letter V.112 and in her letter to Lucy Audley (VII.237).

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

my daughter
to me

[address:]

To the Ryghte worshypfull my
very good moothe in Lawe
Mris Ione Thinne giue
Thess

Body text:

My good moothe, I assure you ytt is not any desyer I haue to offend you
with my Importunatie, *wch* maketh me so often trouble you *with* the testymonis
of my greeued minde, butt as longe as I haue any hope to better *yr* conseyte
of me, giue me Leaue I beseech you *with* owt offence, to craue your fauore
and good oppinnion, not onlye for my selfe, butt also for *mr* thinne, who ys
now the better parte of my selfe / Cheeflye for hym doe I desyer pardone,
for thoughe I must confess *yr* [^]fauor[^] woulde giue a greate increase to my happynes,
yett becawse I haue binne the only occation of hys faultynes, I cannot butt
bestowe all my intreatyes in hys behalfe, vowinge yf ytt please god
to grante any contynewance to my Lyfe, ytt shall be wholye Imployde
to giue you Iuste cawse to saye (what for the performance of my dewty
towardses you, and the large measure of my loue towards hym) that
you haue a respectyue daughter, and he a loueinge wyfe, *with* thys
resollution, and the remembrance of my very kindest Sallutations to
you my deere moothe, I take my Leaue, Leaueinge you to be protected
by the highest ///

Yr very Loueinge and
obedyent dawghter

Marya: Thinne

Compton bassett thys 11th of december
1602

VIII.22 (Wall 46). Maria to Joan Thynne. May 14, 1603. Part of the address has been obscured. Address and body text in Maria's Script. The endorsement is in the same hand as letter VIII.20.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

The Ladey Thin
to me

[address:]

To the Ryghte worshypfull
my very good moothe in Lawe
Mris Thynne giue
[. . .]

Body text:

To you my Dearlye Loued moothe are thess Lynes Sent, from her that hath vowed to make her Selfe as worthy, as her best Seruise can make her, of so kinde a moothe as *yr* Selfe: all my desyer is; that you shoulde not wronge me so much, as to holde the senceryte of my affection Suspected, especiallye since ther is not any pollityke respectes to cawse desimulation, for I Crave nothinge butt *yr* good oppinion, *wch* I wyll be as thankefull for, as thay ~~xxx~~ be, whose neernes in bloude makes *yr* owne: butt because the best prooffe Comes by tryall, trye me as you please, and yf you finde my words and actions differ, Lett me be punished *wth* the loss of my creaditt both *wth* you, and the worlde, *wch* god best knowes woulde be no Smalle greefe vnto me / now for *yr* Letter, thoughe I wer vnwellinge ^to Leaue^ so greate a Com=
phorte, so longe Labored for, and so hardlye obtayned, yett knowinge obedienc to be the best Sacryfize, I made a redeliuery therof to *mr* Daunte, who I founde was well pleased to See that *yr* selfe beinge a woman, dyd dowbte of Secrecye in *yr* owne Sex, / though I haue trobled *wth* a tedious discours, yett should I not ~~yett~~ Leaue talkinge ~~xx~~ to you, yf ernist ocations dyd not force an end, wherefore I must now *wth* a multytude of well wysshinges ~~xxxxxx~~ for this tyme take my Leaue, Leauinge you to be pro=
tected by the highest /

Yr very Loueing and
obedyent daughter

Marya Thynne

fownthyll thys 14th of may
/1603/

Lucy Audley's Letter to Joan Thynne, 1602

VII. 232 (Wall 38). Lucy Audley to Joan Thynne. June, 8 1602. Address and body text in Lucy's neat italic script. Endorsement in an italic script like that found in the endorsement on letter V.112 (and those that follow), similar to the script in VII.237 below, probably Joan's own.

Address leaf:

[endorsement:]

The Ladey Audley

[address:]

To the Ryghte worshipfull
my suposed freend Mrs
Thynn at her house
at Cause Castell
thease //

Body text:

Notwthstanding the doubte Long sins conceyued, how anny Letters of myne myghte finde a gratefull acceptation of your Selfe (many reasons Inducing a mystrust) I haue yet, ~~forearmed~~ owte of an assured hope, buylte as well vppon myne owne knowledg, as vppon the gennerall reporte of your vertu and curtesi, adventured the censuring / wheare fore good Mrs. thynn, lett not Mee, be wronged in thease Lynes, by a harde construction,: for I pretest that seruill feare, and base flattery, my harte ys not acquaynted *wth* all: yf I desier your loue, or seeke to Imbrase your freendship (as vnfaynedly in all treuthe I do) and wyshe yt long since) beleuee yt to proceed from suche a mynde, as wyllingly makes offer of the owner, for performance of the freendlyest effectes, that her kyndenes and abylyti may discharge / yt ys not a matter vnlykely (thoughe very vnnaturall) that som, euen neer to mee, in bloud, the better to establyshe theyr awne creddyte *wth* you, hathe wronged mee by mysreporting: So haue I heard, and so do I confidentelye beleuee, but myne awne concense who ys my best wyttnes, can not accuse mee of giuing breathe to anny thoughte, *wch* myghte euer sound your leaste disgrace no not when myne awne honnor, was tuched in the hyghest degree, by a scandalus reporte of your, husbands; whear fore, since the offence I haue comytted agaynst you concerning your sonn, rested more in manner, then matter, and that all, *wch* I may Iustely be charged *wth* all, : I wyll hope betwen your good disposition and myne awne good deserte (the band being Indisoluble that shulde tie *or* affections togither, and *wth* all the reason so vnlyke reason, that shulde deuide wheare cawse hathe so neerly loyned) you wyll the rather be pleased to acepte of thes lynes, *wch* are the trew wyttinesses of a harte, most wyllingly studeing to becom yours/ lastely, since your sonn ys myne, and so beloued as my deerest owne, lett me obtayne thys request

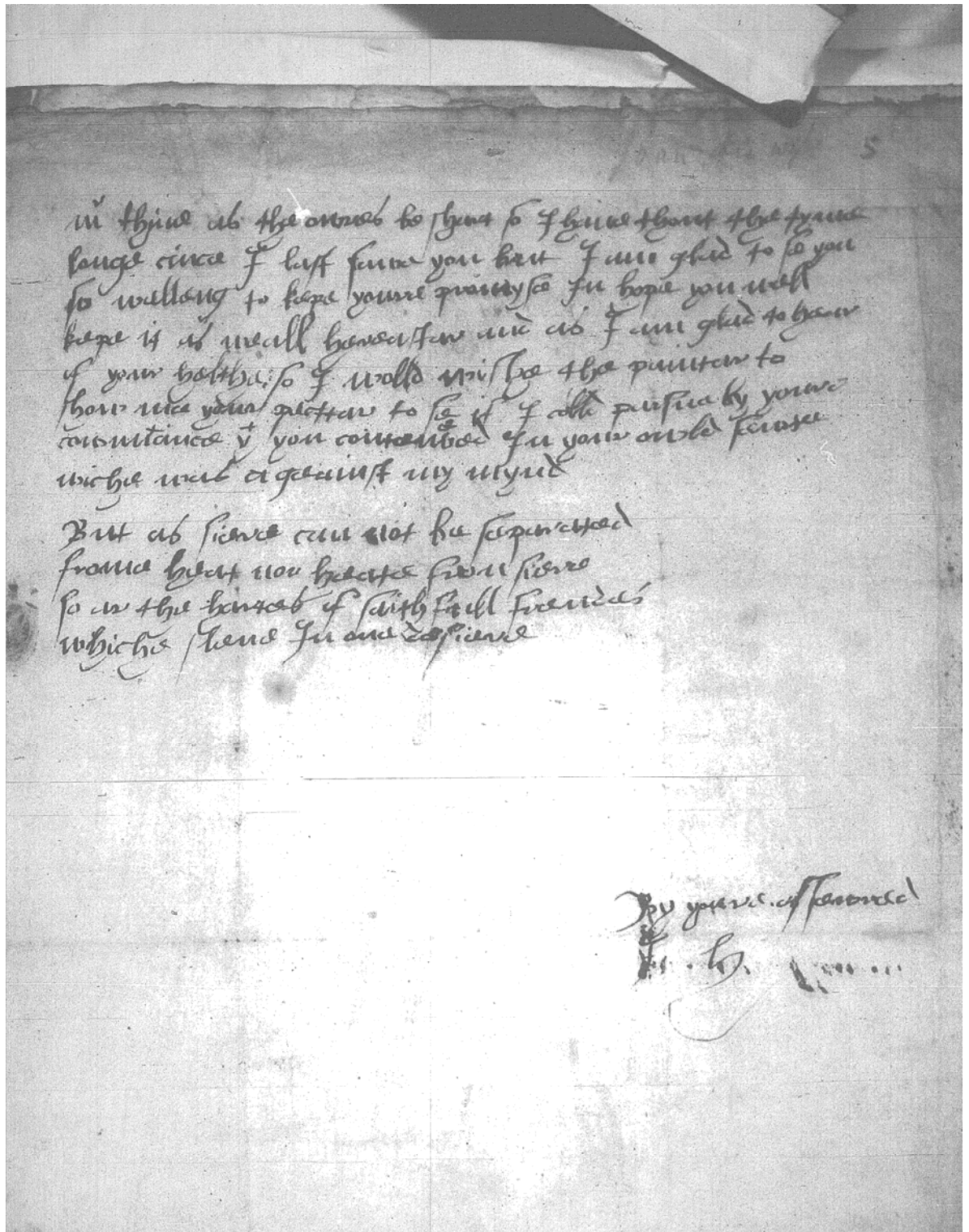
my Daughter may bee yours, but acordingly as to her merryts
for did I not know that she wold carye bothe a louing
and Dutifull regarde to you as her husbands moother,
yt shulde bee far from my wyll to engage my credyte for her.
So I rest I bothe your eyes, and my hands, remayninge, your
assured freend LUCY AUDELAY

[parallel to the txt in the bottom lefthand margin:]

stalbrydg
Iune 10th/.

Appendix 2: Three Selected Facsimile Reproductions

Image 1. V.5 (Wall 2). Joan Hayward to John Thynne. Written after October 10, 1575. Address and body text in Joan's Script 1.



And Commo. Atrasimuz as the day of payment of y^e s^t after Vrathe
 money draweth ~~was~~ now is upon the first daie of October next for
 accomplishing her full age of xxij yeres upon the xxij daie of October last
 and y^e not yet come hether to me according to y^e promise w^{ch} I might
 have signified somwhat in y^eson to y^e I thought good, havinge this fit
 opportunity to acquainte y^e hereto, because I wold not any doubtlesse
 hold be taken for not givinge y^e notice therof. Wherfore I sit at the
 tyme aforesaid the money may be ready for y^e to be put forth for y^e
 best profit as I have already taken a lease to doe, w^{ch} y^e selfe shal
 good to keepe it: & mouetee longer and paie for interest for the same as
 Ie is willinge for to let y^e have it yf y^e please. Eith^r of w^{ch} I shall
 best like y^e & desire to knowe w^{ch} please, to the end I maye take order
 for the returninge therof yf y^e will paie it, or send to take y^e now
 bond for the same w^{ch} the use therof as is agreed yf y^e desire to
 keepe it. / This becometh y^e kinsman writinge to be accepted in y^e
 fauor, Ie y^e maie vouchsafe Ie y^e countenace the rather at my request
 Ie will acknowledge Ie selfe much bounde unto y^e for the same.
 Y^e sonne Ie be thanked is in good health. God w^{ch} I praye
 to bestow blessinge and mine to y^e and y^e of rest

Caues Castle this
 xxijth of August.
 1611

Henry Idung Morgan.
 Anne Thynn

Image 3. VIII.4 (Wall 51). Maria to Thomas Thynne. 1607.

My fayer Tomken : I haue nothinge to saye but how doo thou, and that
 I hope to see thee well shortly, as thou loudest me be exceedinge Carefull
 if cominge in to any shoper, for thou ys the greatest danger, I haue
 since thy goeing learned an aproved medice for the plague, if yt be
 fely in tyme it take dragon water a good draughte, and mingle
 ther wth as much treacle or meadricke in quantite as an ordinarie
 wallnute, and add to thess, So much readinge powdered as a greene
 hassell nutt, stawe all this together and drinke yt, if you doo but
 neuer so lytle suspectt G^d Selfe, I know thou wyll laughe to
 hear me ~~for~~ breack thislike so long before hand, but confyden^{ce} meadricke
 comes to late when the disease is past Cure, good Sweet be not to
 ouer some thinge to take in an instant, in good fayth I assure you
 this hath bin tryed by manye, if you coude indure to ~~eat~~ eat in
 a morninge but 3 or fouer leaues of rue put in to some reason of
 the some, you woulde fynd yt to gods helpe a good preseruatione against
 infection, god Tomken remember wee are bound in Conscience to main-
 tayne life as long as ys possible, and though gods power can worke
 meracles, yt wee ~~can~~ cannot bide upon yt that he cause he can, he wyll
 for then he woulde not saye he made herb for the vse of man :
 I much feare Brownwintes libertye maye breed danger, I can saye
 no more being in exceeding hast, but that I wyll be a Carefull officer
 in G^d absence, & I am forgod in heauen preserue thy healt, as
 long as I live, and ^{no less} continew thy loue so to me, as I maye haue
 cause to loue thee, then I doe, wh^{er} yt as my own Soule

Thyne

how is not so much as halfe an d^{ay}
 of busines to aquaynt you wth all

Appendix 3: A Summary of Brown and Levinson's Politeness Theory

One of the most widely applied offshoots of pragmatics is *politeness theory*, particularly that described by Penelope Brown and Stephen C. Levinson in *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (1987). While this theory is given the most emphasis in Chapter 6, its recurrence throughout the thesis makes it worthwhile providing an outline of key terms and concepts rather than repeating these within the various thesis chapters.

Although a detailed listing of politeness strategies takes up most of Brown and Levinson's study, central to its theoretical framework is the notion of *face*, originally proposed by the sociologist Erving Goffman. According to Goffman, face is defined as:

the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact. Face is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes – albeit an image that others may share, as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself.

One's face, then, is a sacred thing, and the expressive order required to sustain it is therefore a ritual one.¹

A 'line' here is a mixture of verbal and non-verbal expressions that communicate to others how one participant views a situation, including the other people involved, and, crucially, him or herself. That one's face is determined by these verbal and non-verbal acts is an expression of the 'patterns' or conventionalized understandings of social interaction in any one social group or (sub)culture. The ritualization of acts (essentially analogous with the concept of social conventions) serves to make it possible for individuals to interpret what is happening in an exchange with regard to other people's perception of them.

Brown and Levinson's work takes the notion of cooperation in face-work as its departure point, starting by stating (in reference to Goffman) that 'in general, people cooperate (and assume each other's cooperation) in maintaining face in interaction'.² In building on Goffman's sociological framework, Brown and Levinson greatly elaborate the notion of face and facework, succeeding in describing different types of face and the specific linguistic strategies for performing facework as documented in several otherwise scarcely related languages – English, Tzeltal (a Mayan language) and Tamil (spoken in parts of southern India and Sri Lanka). As the title of their study suggests, the objective here is to locate and describe (linguistically) cross-cultural regularities in politeness: 'We can show this by deriving linguistic strategies as *means* satisfying communicative and

¹ E. Goffman *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior* (New York, 1967), pp. 5 and 19 (respectively).

² P. Brown and S. P. Levinson, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 66.

face-orientated *ends*, in a strictly formal system of rational “practical reasoning”, and ‘By face we mean something quite specific again: our MP [Model Person] is endowed with two particular wants – roughly, the want to be unimpeded and the want to be approved of in certain respects’.³ The former of these wants, to be free in one’s actions and have their personal space respected, is described as *negative face*, while the latter, the desire to be approved of and liked by others, refers to *positive face*.

It is Brown and Levinson’s claim that the two aspects of either interactant’s face are highly influential in the choice of language used in social interaction due to the fact that interaction necessarily contains potentially ‘face-threatening acts’ (FTAs). It is furthermore assumed that it is in the interest of a speaker to maintain and provide for their own face wants as well as those of their addressee. And therefore, unless a speaker’s need or desire to communicate their message efficiently or bluntly outweighs their interest in preserving face (their own or the hearer’s), linguistic strategies will be employed to help avoid or minimize the threat involved in communication. This sort of ameliorative facework is described as ‘redressive’, of which there are four types. The first occurs when someone goes ‘on record’, addressing the hearer’s positive or negative face (i.e. positive or negative politeness). Another, slightly more complicated method of minimizing an FTA is by going ‘off record’. The last option is to simply not do the FTA at all, which, of course, also sacrifices the message itself. Furthermore, we must also consider the fact that the Thynne women may not have been sufficiently motivated to use redressive strategies and indirect language, in which case we will consider Brown and Levinson’s account of going ‘bald on record’.

In instances of on record redressive action, there are two possible approaches for a speaker to take: positive or negative politeness. Positive politeness may be characterized by creating camaraderie between interactants, by reassuring the hearer that the speaker shares an interest in the hearer’s wants, and that the speaker does in fact ‘like’ the hearer. This is generally accomplished by using in-group terminology and fostering intimacy and familiarity between interactants by using the appropriate language. A possible option for employing positive politeness in Joan and Lucy’s period was the use of either *th-* or *y-* forms in early modern English second person pronouns. Forms such as *thow* and *thine* came to communicate intimacy and a closeness between interactants, as is witnessed in the usage of Maria Thynne, who frequently addresses Thomas using *th-* forms, but uses *y-* forms with her mother-in-law, Joan (as she was attempting to appease Joan’s hard feelings by humbly submitting to her as an authority figure, the positive politeness of *th-*forms

³ Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, p. 63.

would have been an inappropriate and counter-productive strategy). Negative politeness, on the other hand, maintains the 'polite distance' in accounting for a hearer's negative face wants, or their need for personal space and freedom of action. Here Brown and Levinson point out the fact that there is a common tension in negative politeness strategies between wanting to go on record as a 'prerequisite to being seen to pay face', and the desire to go off record to not seem imposing, which often results in 'conventionalized indirectness'. Modern instances of this may be seen in requests such as 'do you have the time?', where in everyday use this question has no other possible interpretation than as a request to be told what time it is.

A speaker also has the option of going off record in order to deal with an FTA. This strategy is usually a way of implying something without making it so explicit that one might be held responsible for it. Brown and Levinson list several linguistic attributes which commonly accompany off record politeness strategies: 'metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, all kinds of hints as to what a speaker wants or means to communicate, without doing so directly, so that meaning is to some degree negotiable'.⁴ An example of an off record request would be if someone bemoaned the fact that 'I don't know how I'm going to get to town tomorrow', when they actually want and expect the person to whom they are speaking to offer them a ride in response.

Finally, if redressive action is thwarted, going on record baldly implies that the FTA is explicitly referred to without considerations of saving either the speaker's or hearer's face. This type of strategy (or lack thereof) is associated in Brown and Levinson with three possible circumstances. One of these takes place when there is some sort of understanding between the interactants that the urgency of the message is greater than worries about either one's face wants. One can easily imagine this sort of understanding developing in cases of medical emergency, where someone in a position of authority is barking out orders to others without taking extra time to worry much about making things sound polite. This is of course more difficult to justify in letter-writing practice; however, the 'hast' under which many early modern letter-writers claimed to compose their letters and the oftentimes unforeseen arrival and departure of messengers or other potential letter carriers could have produced such urgency. This might also have been true in cases where much rested on a messages being written, delivered and received within a short period of time; and in such cases it is reasonable to assume that some amount of politeness may have been overlooked. The second reason a speaker may choose to go baldly on record is in cases where the risk of offense is very slight, or the request is in the hearer's best interest.

⁴ Brown and Levinson, *Politeness*, p. 74.

Instances of this occur quite commonly in conventionalized requests to do with hospitality, as in ‘help yourself!’ or ‘take a load off’. In modern letter-writing, we might close a letter by saying ‘take care’, which, although in the imperative, is seen as a kind way of wishing someone well; and certainly does not imply any face loss on the part of the addressee. The third reason for not using a redressive strategy is perhaps the most relevant to the current discussion as it has to do with power relations. Brown and Levinson describe how when a speaker is greatly superior to the person they are addressing, or they feel that they can enlist outside (i.e. third person) support to maintain their own face, they may just proceed without much regard for their addressee’s face wants.

In extension to Brown and Levinson’s original model for politeness, a model for *self-politeness* has also been developed. In his proposal for a theory of self-politeness, Cheng (2001) makes the point that ‘just as there are speech acts that threaten other-face, there are speech acts that threaten self-face’.⁵ Of course, the issue of self-politeness is implied by the work of Brown and Levinson; however, what Chen does is to formulate a series of strategies specific to the maintenance of a speaker’s own face. The superstrategies of self-politeness are derived directly from Brown and Levinson’s original model – i.e. 1) Baldly, 2) With redress, 3) Off record, or 4) Withhold the SFTA (self-threatening act). Instead of describing the detailed output strategies for each superstrategy of politeness/self-politeness theory here, I leave them to the individual examples in which I employ them in the thesis.

It should also be noted that although the paradigm developed by Brown and Levinson has been used almost ubiquitously in historical pragmatic accounts of politeness, it has also received significant criticism. Watts (2003) in particular provides a critical survey of the varying perspectives on linguistic politeness, with particular attention paid to Brown and Levinson. One of the main criticisms of Brown and Levinson’s theory has been its claims to universality, and considering their study focuses on only three (albeit seemingly unrelated) languages, this criticism seems fair.⁶ Particularly from the perspective of pragmatics – which emphasizes the contextual specificity of language use – claims to ‘universals’ should always be approached with suspicion. Historical work in English using Brown and Levinson’s model, however, has up to this point found notions of positive and negative politeness useful in describing early modern English sociability (e.g. Fitzmaurice 2002, Magnusson 1999, Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 1995, among others). Furthermore, Watts’ fundamental concern with Brown and Levinson’s theory is not that it is false – or even that he provides a ‘better’ theory – but that it is more a theory

⁵ R. Cheng, ‘Self-Politeness: A Proposal’, *Journal of Pragmatics* 33 (2001), pp. 87-106 (p. 89).

⁶ R. J. Watts, *Politeness* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 95-8.

of *face* than a theory of politeness.⁷ In this way, a large part of the debate is more to do with what we mean by politeness and what exactly each theory is really addressing. Watts' suggestion for a new way of accounting for politeness need not be seen as a replacement for Brown and Levinson, but as a method of studying something different. Therefore, although I agree that there are different types of politeness, that 'universals' is an overgeneralization, and that Brown and Levinson's theory may better be characterized as studying face than politeness, my use of *politeness* throughout this thesis corresponds with the latter two authors' use of the term.

⁷ Watts, *Politeness*, p. 262.

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