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**'Letters Full of Love': Wayne Booth's Theories of the Implied
Author and Reader in Brad Marsh's WWII Correspondence**

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**'Letters full of love':
Wayne Booth's Theories of the Implied Author and Reader
in Brad Marsh's WWII Correspondence**

An Honors Thesis

Josephine A. Just

Submitted to the Texas A&M University-Commerce Honors Committee in partial fulfillment of the Program of Honors Study leading to the degree of Bachelor of Arts in English.

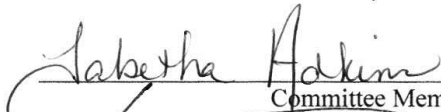
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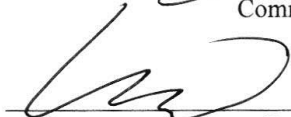
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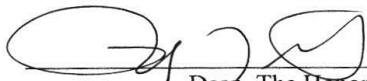
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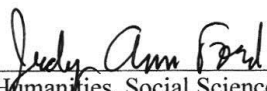
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Thesis

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Spring 2016

“‘Letters full of love’: Wayne Booth’s Theories of the Implied Author and Reader in
Brad Marsh’s WWII Correspondence”

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Introduction

It's only 9:30 a.m. on August 28, 1945 and the day is already hot. Wearing clean cottons and holding a pen and paper, Captain William Bradford "Brad" Marsh stands on the deck of the *DuPage*, a ship carrying United States Army Air Forces personnel towards the Philippines. The Pacific Ocean is tranquil, disturbed only by the convey of ships, and the cloudless sky stretches as far as the eye can see. Brad Marsh looks around him at the other men who are scattered across the deck, sitting, standing, and lying down, all cradling pens and paper and also writing to their loved ones. "I expect we will fill a whole airplane with letters full of love and longing for home..." Marsh writes. This is just one of the sixty-five letters Marsh composed between August and November 1945 that will eventually reach the hands of his beloved wife, Mary Lynn, living in Fort Worth, Texas during Marsh's three-month deployment to the Philippines. Marsh's letters, due to the generous donation of his daughter, Marty Marsh Jacobs, now reside in the Gee Library archives at Texas A&M University-Commerce. In addition to the letters and their envelopes, the collection also includes various photos, newspaper clippings, and other items such as pamphlets and discharge papers. Now preserved in an archive, Marsh's letters are available to scholars such as myself so that we may explore their rich content and the ways that they can add additional insight to our respective fields of study.

This project provides a qualitative analysis of Brad Marsh's WWII correspondence. It will draw from Wayne Booth's theories about the implied author and implied reader and will examine how these theories can enrich our understanding of these letters. It will focus on how Marsh constructs himself as an implied author within his letters and how he creates his implied reader. It will then analyze how readings by a modern, unintended audience are impacted by the relationship between the implied author and implied reader. Ultimately, our understanding of the

author and reader in these documents affects our perceptions of their social, cultural, and historical value, and determines how Marsh's narrative and similar types of correspondence complicate and extend theories about writing and reception.

This project reads Marsh's letters through the critical lens of Wayne Booth's theory of authorship and readership as laid out in his book *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. In his research, Booth posits the idea of an agent separate from the "flesh and blood person," that is, the historical author, who goes about daily life outside of the writing process. This "implied author," Booth argues, is wholly responsible for the written work and "sets himself out with a different air depending on the needs of particular works," and is, therefore, unique to each new novel or other work (*Rhetoric* 71). Booth clarifies his thoughts about the implied author by comparing it to a letter writer whose "letters imply different versions of oneself, depending on the differing relationships with each correspondent and the purpose of each letter" (*Rhetoric* 71). Booth's theory is relevant when analyzing correspondence. The flesh and blood letter writer and the version of himself or herself implied within a letter may be different from one another. Because of his close relationship with Lynn, it would have been difficult for Marsh to imply a version of himself radically different than the one she already knew. However, a letter to a distant relative, an Army official, or his mother might not imply an image of a husband longing for the company of his wife or a man frustrated with his duties, but something entirely different.

As Booth points out, the version of oneself implied in a letter, or another work, depends on and is influenced by the author's audience, whether it be one person or a group of readers.

Marsh, the flesh and blood author, knows the flesh and blood Lynn in real life. However, in his letters, Marsh, the implied author, constructs Lynn as an implied reader to whom he writes. He does this by using his knowledge of the flesh and blood Lynn to determine what sort of things

she might be interested in reading about, what her emotional state might be, and what sort of information is shared in common between them. These factors determine what information the implied author Marsh chooses to include, or what not to, and how he chooses to portray this information, creating a textual image of his wife implied within the letters. For instance, the reader implied within the text of Marsh's letters might be one who recalls perfectly every memory that Marsh writes about. However, the flesh and blood Lynn might not remember the past events Marsh mentions. If Marsh imagines that the flesh and blood Lynn might read his letters in an emotional state of sadness or longing, he might try to create a sense of intimacy in his letters by revealing secret emotions. The flesh and blood Lynn may, in fact, read Marsh's letters in a state of cheerfulness, but the image of Lynn implied within the text would be one of a woman who misses her husband and longs for his swift return. This distinction between the flesh and blood reader and the implied reader is important to explore because it reminds us that the textual construction of a person (or a place) may be very different from the flesh and blood person (or place) in real life.

While Marsh knew Lynn would read his letters, it is unlikely that he imagined his correspondence would be donated to an archive decades later and read by people and scholars who never met him. Because modern readers occupy a tenuous position as an unintended audience, the relationship between the implied author and the implied reader has a profound impact on our understanding of this correspondence. There are many factors related to the implied author and their implied audience which can affect our own reading. While the correspondence of a famous historical figure may be supplemented by outside biographical information, private collections, such as Marsh's, may not include additional information about the author. This presents challenges to modern readers because their understanding of the flesh

and blood author is limited to the image of the implied author—an image which cannot reveal everything about the flesh and blood person. Modern readers also only have the image of the implied reader instead of a full understanding of the flesh and blood person. The number of letters and whether both sides of a correspondence are included also affect the unintended audience's knowledge. The unintended audience's perception of the history, culture, and society in which a particular letter was produced is influenced by the information the implied author does or does not include, how he or she characterizes his or her experiences, and other factors determined by the implied author's construction of the original writer/reader relationship. When using correspondence as a tool for learning more about history or other fields of research, it is essential to recognize the literary techniques evident within the letter. It is especially important to consider the construction of a letter based on the relationship between the flesh and blood author and the flesh and blood reader and the implied author and the implied reader, and to consider the consequences of reading correspondence as an unintended audience.

While historians understand the value correspondence can add to their field by way of details or perspectives not found in other documents, correspondence can also benefit literary scholarship by shedding new light on and providing alternative angles to literary concepts and literary theories. There has been much controversy and confusion regarding Booth's theory on the implied author and reader, and one goal of this project is to analyze his theory through the analysis of correspondence in order to better explore how Booth's theory functions. This project will also seek to provide further insight on a gap in literary scholarship: that of the unintended audience. This project will examine Marsh's correspondence through the critical lens of Booth's theories about the implied author and reader. Through analysis of Marsh's construction of self and his implied reader and examination of the ramifications of reading his correspondence as an

unintended audience, this project hopes to use Booth's concepts to unearth additional layers and significance in Marsh's correspondence.

Methods and Research Questions

This project consists of a qualitative study of the WWII correspondence of Captain Brad Marsh from the collection of letters donated by his daughter on April 26, 2013. I draw from the narrative theory and works of Wayne Booth to examine Marsh's construction of self as an implied author by examining how he presents his experiences and portrays his emotions. I also examine how Marsh constructs his implied self by paying attention to details such as the information he shares with Lynn and how he presents it. I explore the nature of the implied author and reader in the correspondence and also how the relationship between the implied writer and reader influences the understanding of an unintended audience.

As I examined Marsh's correspondence, several questions guided my research:

1. What techniques does Marsh use to construct the implied author and his ideal reader?
2. How does Marsh's implied reader determine the content and structure of his letters?
3. What affect do the theories of the implied author and ideal reader have on modern readers' attempts to understand the correspondence?
4. How can the study correspondence, as a genre, enrich our present understanding of the implied author and ideal audience?

These questions have helped to focus my study of the letters and to conduct more effective research.

Organization

The remainder of this thesis contains three main sections. First, I discuss Booth's theory of the implied author and implied reader, along with the topic of unintended audiences. The next portion of my thesis consists of a close reading of Marsh's letters. I apply Booth's theory of the implied author in my reading of these letters and examine how Marsh constructs himself as an implied author and how he constructs an image of Lynn as the implied reader. In this section I also consider how the theory of the implied author affects reading these letters as an unintended audience. Finally, the conclusion contains my closing remarks and discusses ideas for future research.

Ultimately, this study seeks a better understanding of the nature of Brad Marsh's letters. By analyzing the relationship between the implied author and the implied reader, scholars can also gain an appreciation of the nature of correspondence more generally. Also, this project hopes to analyze the reading experience of an unintended audience and how their perceptions of the letters are shaped through Marsh's construction of self, reader, and society. By acknowledging the literary qualities of correspondence, scholars will have the ability to more fully appreciate and understand the information found, not only in Marsh's letters, but other types of correspondence as well.

An Exploration of Booth's Theories

The Implied Author

Wayne Booth first proposed the theory of the implied author in his book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* in 1961. Since then, his theory has garnered a lot of attention from scholars and has sparked an intense debate among its proponents and critics. Much confusion has stemmed from

Booth's discussion of the implied author, partially from critics who deem his wording vague and cite parts of his discussion that seem to contradict each other. Even Booth's supporters, in an effort to clarify his ideas, have created opposing or flawed definitions and examples, pointed out, of course, by other critics. In this section of my thesis, I present Booth's own words on the implied author, along with commentary and clarification from Dan Shen, whose analysis I find most helpful in understanding the implied author. Along the way, I will point out interpretations from other scholars and will explain how their understanding differs from Booth's and Shen's. This will provide the foundation for my close reading of Brad Marsh's correspondence, which will attempt to draw out the nuances of the implied author.

Wayne Booth was prompted to write about the theory of the implied author in his book *The Rhetoric of Fiction* because he noted that many of his college students were unable to differentiate between narrators, historical authors, and the image of these authors found in a text. He discusses this issue in his article "Resurrection of the Implied Author." In reading *Catcher in the Rye*, students attributed the values of Holden Caulfield as those that Salinger himself held, in spite of clues indicating otherwise ("Resurrection" 76). In addition to concerns about the misreading of his students, Booth also took issue with authorial objectivity. Booth notes that no matter how objective an author may attempt to be, "readers will inevitably construct" a picture of the author and his values (*Rhetoric* 71). The reader's constructed image of the author may or may not authentically reflect the flesh and blood person who wrote the work and their actual beliefs. Even if it is a good reflection, it cannot possibly be a wholly accurate one. H. Porter Abbott in his book *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative* recognizes that flesh and blood authors have "multi-faceted" lives and personalities, which may not be represented or condoned within their work, so the term "author" does not adequately describe the person the audience

infers from the text (Abbott 85). Booth uses the term “implied author” to describe this image constructed both by the flesh and blood author and the flesh and blood reader.

One of the most important, and most misunderstood, characteristics of the theory is that the implied author is related both to the encoding and decoding process. That is, the implied author is both an air assumed by the flesh and blood person when he or she enters into the writing process, and it is also the image of an author that an audience infers while reading a text. Booth writes that “the ‘implied author’ chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read; we infer him as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man” (*Rhetoric* 75). This concept has received harsh criticism from some scholars, who scoff at Booth’s proposal or misinterpret it. However, in the next two sections I use evidence from Booth’s texts, along with commentary from Dan Shen, in order to explain the implied author both as an air or mask and the implied author as a textual inference made by readers.

Wearing the Mask: Historical Authors as Role Players

Walter J. Ong, in his article, “The Writer’s Audience is Always Fiction” writes that “masks are inevitable in all human communication, even oral” (Ong 20). Many of us may don masks under different circumstances: some find it easier to wear the mask of happiness among coworkers rather than reveal the troubles of one’s personal life, while a child may find it easy to wear the mask of being “good” even though their actions apart from parents or other authorities may suggest otherwise. Masking, Booth argues, can be found “in every corner of our lives, whenever we speak or write, we imply a version of our character that we know is quite different from many other selves that are exhibited in our flesh-and-blood world” (“Resurrection” 77). Booth notes that we are adept at wiping “out those selves that we don’t like” or that “seem inappropriate for the moment”—whether that is wiping away the boring or messy parts of our

lives when talking to other people, or performing our jobs with more happiness than we sincerely feel (“Resurrection” 77). Although these masks and roles may not be natural to our flesh and blood persons, Booth observes that they are sometimes necessary. He gives the example of waiters and waitresses at a restaurant playing the role of a gracious hosts even if it conflicts with their life outside of work, and the same for a professor who maintains a professional air even if his or her flesh and blood person did not feel cheerful before entering the classroom (“Resurrection” 77).

According to Booth, authors do the same kind of masking that flesh and blood people do in their everyday life, only their masks are donned within the writing process. Booth writes that “just as one’s personal letters imply different versions of oneself, depending on the differing relationships with each correspondent and the purpose of each letter, so the writer sets himself out with a different air depending on the needs of particular works” (*Rhetoric* 71). I will return to this quote several times as I believe it reveals quite a lot about the nature of the implied author, but for now I will say that the different implied selves found within letters can be considered analogous to the masks donned by a waitress or a professor in Booth’s example. When writing a business letter one might assume an air or mask of professionalism and a demeanor corresponding to one’s relationship with others. Or, one might put on the mask of a grateful recipient when writing a thank you note for an underwhelming gift. For a letter writer like Marsh, masking may have kept him from mentioning some of the difficulties he encountered so as not to worry his wife, and the act would have been easy because, of course, his wife was not physically present to discern the mask. Novelists and writers of all sorts do the same sort of masking as they create their texts. Booth notes the phenomenon whereby some novelists have felt as if “they were discovering or creating themselves as they wrote,” adopting a persona

present throughout their text (*Rhetoric* 71). He insists that it is this discovered persona, this masked self, this implied author who “chooses, consciously or unconsciously, what we read” (*Rhetoric* 74).

Booth’s language of creation and discovery has caused confusion among scholars and critics who misinterpret his words to suggest that the implied author is a secondary creation by the flesh and blood author. William Nelles, in the article “Historical and Implied Authors and Readers,” argues that “each implied author is a critical construct, inferred from the text and with no existence outside that text” and “the implied author may be constructed only on the basis of the literary text being analyzed” (Nelles 26). Dan Shen, in his article “What is the Implied Author?” vigorously refutes this notion. Shen clarifies that “the [implied author] and the [real author] are the same person in two different spheres” and that the “distinction between the implied author and the real author is a simple one between the person in the writing process and this same person in daily life” (Shen 87, 89). Thus, according to Shen, the “implied author is responsible for every word in the text” as the implied author is simply the flesh and blood person who is writing with a particular mindset (Shen 91). This fits into Booth’s example of waiters fulfilling a role at a restaurant. A waiter may don a mask of friendliness and play a role required for their profession that is different from their selves outside of work. The role-playing self, however, is the only one involved in waiting a table: they are their flesh and blood selves (the person they are outside of work) putting on a mask that will be seen by other people.

It is important to note that the flesh and blood writers will assume different airs or personas according to their different works. According to Booth’s example of a letter writer, the inferred image of the implied author will vary from letter to letter “depending on the differing relationships with each correspondent and the purpose of each letter” along with any other

number of factors present in the flesh and blood world such as time, place, or circumstance (*Rhetoric* 71). Readers can observe the evolutionary nature of the implied author within Marsh's correspondence as his adopted air changes depending on his current situation or mood. Just as our own masks and personas may change according to where we are, who we are with, or our personal circumstances, so poets, novelists, essayists or any other sort of writer will also have evolving purposes, emotions, worldviews, circumstances and relationships with their audiences that will inevitably reveal alternate textual images of their implied selves. Although it is nigh impossible for each implied author to be identical, there might be strong similarities between personas adopted by a flesh and blood writer and, thus, similar images of the implied author inferred from differing texts. While these similarities and differences may happen subconsciously for some authors, other authors may actively struggle with the version of their self that they wish to imply. Sylvia Plath is one such example. In his examination of her work, Booth points out her difficulty in choosing between not only the voices of despair and hope, but also "the voice of anger, of physical violence, of revenge, of sexual bliss and disappointment" ("Resurrection" 81). Here Booth's vague choice in vocabulary could equate "voice" with "theme" or "tone" instead of with the implied author, but even if his wording was changed to "tone," for example, the point is still made: a poem with a violent theme may imply a vastly different author than a poem of sexual bliss. Because Plath "herself felt divided about just which of her poems really fit the person she wanted to *appear* to be [emphasis added]" she spent much time editing her collections of poetry ("Resurrection" 80). This editing, which I discuss in relation to Booth's letters, also has an impact on the construction of different personas.

Perceiving the Mask: How Readers Infer an Image of the Author

The term “implied author” has a dual function: it refers not only to the air or stance a flesh and blood person assumes while writing, but also to the image inferred from the text by the flesh and blood reader. Booth asserts that flesh and blood readers will “inevitably construct a picture of the official scribe who writes in this manner” and will “infer [the implied author] as an ideal, literary, created version of the real man” (*Rhetoric* 71, 75). In other words, the flesh and blood author adopts a particular mask during the writing process and, according to Shen, “it is through writing the text that the [implied author] has created his own image in the text”—an image which can then be inferred from the text by a flesh and blood reader (Shen 85).

The concept of inferring the implied author from the text is further complicated because different readers may infer different (and possibly conflicting) images of the implied author. Shen explains that “the implied author does not depend on the reader for existence” as the flesh and blood person in the writing process has adopted the mask of the implied author and this image is within the text whether or not anybody chooses to read the text (Shen 93). However, Maria Stefancescu in her article “Revisiting the Implied Author Yet Again: Why (Still) Bother?” detects a “narratological conundrum” for people who do choose to read a text. She points out that “different readers may/will infer various implied authors from the same literary work” as they bring to each reading their own backgrounds and beliefs and questions whether “various ‘implied authors’” can be “validly inferred/constructed... for each literary work” (Stefancescu 53, 52). Booth himself elucidates this point, commenting that readers in “different time frames and cultural contrasts” can “create versions of the [implied author] that the author would never have dreamt of as he or she created the text” (Booth 86). This conundrum, of course, is not unique to the implied author. Just as readers will bring their own backgrounds and biases to each reading

and may infer different images of the implied author, so they may also infer different themes, symbols, or views of characterization. Each flesh and blood person's background and place in space and time will present a different reading of the same book: a book read in one's twenties may be a completely new experience in one's eighties.

Not only do the individual biases of readers prevent them from inferring the same image as everyone else, but the implied author who wrote the text may or may not have created a cohesive image to be inferred. According to Booth, the flesh and blood author may adopt a particular air "consciously or unconsciously" and, if done consciously, may communicate that air successfully or unsuccessfully (*Rhetoric* 74). Dan Shen illustrates this point, writing that "if a person wrote the former part of a text in one manner and the latter part in another, this person writing in the different manners is the not entirely coherent implied author in the encoding process, and the implied author in the decoding process is the not entirely coherent textual image of this person who wrote in this way" (Shen 93). Again, this phenomenon is not unique to the implied author: an author may attempt to communicate other aspects (themes, characters, morals, etc) within their work and their endeavors may be unsuccessful. Just as authors will edit every other aspect of their work, through editing they will also refine the image of the implied author found within the text. As Booth suggests, as authors edit their works they "either wipe out the parts of their selves that they do not like" or, in the case of poets like Plath who emphasize their darker selves, create an image which communicates, "that's who I really am, the person able to exhibit those values and brilliant strokes" ("Resurrection" 86).

Booth uses commentary on the poetry of Robert Frost to explicate further the difference between the implied author and the flesh and blood person. He analyzes "A Time to Talk" by Frost, first by determining the character of the narrator. The narrator, Booth finds, is admirable:

a diligent farmer who, though he cares for his work, will momentarily pause in order to converse with a friend (“Resurrection” 80). Booth argues that, in this poem, the narrator and the implied author may be nearly “identical” as “the [implied author] obviously intends no ironies against the speaker” and the implied author shares “the virtues of the speaker” (“Resurrection” 80).

However, the implied author is also much more “complex man,” according to Booth, one who is “devoted to poetic form, working hard – probably for hours or days – to achieve effective rhymes that obey his rule” and whose character is “weirdly richer” than the narrator’s “though not in shocking contrast” (“Resurrection” 80). Here, Booth has not only distinguished between the narrator or “speaker” of the poem, but has also revealed an image of Frost as the implied author. While readers may find Frost as a narrator and Frost as the implied author to be admirable, the contrast between these and the flesh and blood Frost may be “shocking” (“Resurrection” 80). Biographers, Booth points out, have recently drawn attention to the less-than-loveable characteristics of the flesh and blood Frost, calling him monstrous, cruel, hypocritical, and a “dreadful” family member (“Resurrection” 80). The implied author Frost is “moving in the direction of greatness,” wiping away his faults and weaknesses to discover an image of himself that is either closer to the flesh and blood person he wants to be, or the person he wants others to see him as (“Resurrection” 80).

While it is not possible to recreate a single “valid” image of the implied author from a text, that does not render the implied author obsolete. However, it may be helpful to come up with methods to more accurately infer the implied author. This lack of direction is noted by critics such as Tom Kindt and Hans-Harald Müller who point out that “Booth himself... neither specified the theoretical framework in which the implied author was to be used nor provided a methodology for identifying it in individual cases” (qtd. in Stefanescu 52). Dan Shen also

concedes that there is not a standard technique for analyzing the implied author, and suggests that scholars should shift their attention from “debating on the concept itself” to developing a better understanding of how to use the implied author when examining a text (Shen 96). Both scholars agree that Booth himself did not create a methodology for inferring the implied author, however through further application of the theory to various written works, a methodology may be developed. The creation of such a methodology would assist scholars in applying Booth’s theories to different types of texts, including correspondence such as Marsh’s letters.

The Implied Reader

Perhaps because the intricacies of the implied author have not been fully agreed upon or explored, scholars have paid even less attention to the nature of the implied reader, which Wayne Booth also writes about in *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Booth’s recognition of the importance of the audience prompted him to discuss the implied reader as a counterpart to the implied author. Just as the implied author is both the state of mind that a flesh and blood author enters into during the writing process and also the image of the author who has assumed this air found in the text, so the implied reader is both a role to be played and a textual image. If one accepts that the implied author (the stance assumed by the flesh and blood person during the writing process) is the sole creator of a written work, then the implied reader must be a creation of the implied author. Just as with the implied author, the phrase “implied reader” is a dual role. As suggested by the “implied” half of “implied reader,” it is an image of the reader that can be inferred from the text, and, as indicated by the word “reader,” also an active role that must be fulfilled by a flesh and blood person. Both of these roles are crucial to an understanding of the implied reader.

Creating the Mask: Textual Creation of the Implied Reader

One of Booth's first allusions to the implied reader occurs when he quotes Henry James, who writes that an author "make[s] his reader very much as he makes his characters" (qtd. in *The Rhetoric of Fiction* 49). This reveals two things: that the reader is constructed, just as characters are constructed, and that an image of the reader can be found within the text, just as the qualities of a character can be analyzed in a text. This inferred image of the audience is known to Booth as the implied reader. Booth, again, uses language of creation when discussing the implied reader, writing that "the author creates... an image of himself and another image of his reader; he makes his reader, as he makes his second self" (*Rhetoric* 138). Even scholars whose research is not based on Booth's theories comment on the creative and role-playing aspects of an author's construction of an audience. Walter Ong, in his article "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction," writes that authors imagine their audience "clearly or vaguely" and cast them "in some sort of role" (Ong 12). This imagined or constructed vision of audience will, then, impact the construction of their written work. For instance, a children's author may choose to avoid offensive language or taboo topics, while a scholar may choose to use sophisticated vocabulary. The resulting work will hold an image of the audience within: the audience suggested by a scholarly paper may be one which possesses prior knowledge of a particular topic, while the audience image found in a how-to book might be one of a person who doesn't have a specific skill and wants to learn it. Within Marsh's letters, the image of the reader is one who has intimate knowledge of Marsh and a close relationship with him.

Wearing the Created Mask: Playing the Role of the Implied Reader

Paralleling the implied author, the implied reader is not only an image to be inferred from the text, but also a mask to be worn, an air to be adopted, or a role to be played by a flesh and

blood person. Booth makes a “distinction... between [himself] as reader and the often very different self who goes about paying bills, repairing leaky faucets, and failing in generosity and wisdom. It is only as [he] read[s] that [he] become[s] the self whose beliefs must coincide with the author’s” (*Rhetoric* 137-8). Here, Booth acknowledges the difference between his flesh and blood self, and the person he becomes during the reading process: if the implied author creates an implied reader with particular values, then the flesh and blood person can only discover and adopt those particular values by reading the author’s work. Although the flesh and blood reader and the implied reader found within the text may share certain values or mindsets, they cannot be identical.

Booth’s use of the word “must” indicates an important aspect of the implied reader: the implied reader must be willing to adopt, even if only temporarily during the reading process, the beliefs or values of the implied author. Booth argues that every word the implied author writes “will help to mold the reader into the kind of person suited to appreciate such a character and the book he is writing” and that “the most successful reading is one in which the created selves, author and reader, can find complete agreement” (*Rhetoric* 89, 138). In other words, although a flesh and blood person may enter into the reading process with certain values or beliefs, it is the goal of the implied author to mold an implied reader, that is a mask or an air, which can be adopted by a flesh and blood person. This putting on of beliefs and values extends to other characteristics, such as mood, as well. In the case of Brad Marsh, he could not precisely predict the situation or mood in which Lynn would read his letter, and often had to guess at her current emotional state in order to construct an air or stance which she would agree to adopt. Walter Ong alludes to this process when he notes that a letter writer must “conjecture or confect a mood that [the reader] is likely to be in or can assume when the letter comes” and that, in return, the

reader has “to put on the mood that [the author] has fictionalized for him” (Ong 19). Although it is unlikely that Lynn would refuse to read one of the letters Marsh wrote simply because he assumed she would be happy when, in fact, she was sad, some other readers of other texts might find the implied reader so far removed from themselves that they cannot adopt the air the implied author has constructed for them. Booth says that sometimes it is impossible to read a book or consider it to be a good piece of writing because it may “postulate readers we refuse to become,” readers whose values “we cannot adopt even hypothetically as our own” (*Rhetoric* 138). He defines a bad book as one in which “the implied author asks that we judge according to norms that we cannot accept” (*Rhetoric* 157). Booth’s statements make it clear that, not only is a careful construction of the implied reader by the implied author important, but it is essential that a flesh and blood reader be willing to play the role that the author cast for them, in order to best understand and resonate with the work.

The Unintended Audience

While novelists may have a vision of an ideal audience in their minds, perhaps one who matches the implied reader, they know that people outside of this intended audience may read their novel. Letter writers have a variety of audiences: perhaps they write open letters, letters for a specific group of people, or personal letters to a specific person. In the case of personal letters, the letter writer may not imagine anyone outside of their specific reader or readers opening their letter and perusing their words. Readers who do so are an unintended audience.

The unintended audience is an important topic to discuss in my analysis of Marsh’s letters because it is the role that I occupy in reading his letters. Lynn was Brad Marsh’s intended audience and she most likely closely identified with the image of the implied reader found within

his letters. There is the possibility of a secondary audience, which I will discuss later, but ultimately it was Lynn whom Brad addressed. Seventy years later, I read his letters. With no personal connection to the Marsh family and no prior knowledge of either Brad or Lynn, the only way I can know either person is through the textual image of the implied author and the implied reader within the correspondence. I also can only have an image of the society and world in which they lived, an image which may or may not be accurate and which can never reveal the richness of real life. For this reason, recognizing the limited understanding of the unintended audience is essential to a thorough examination of Marsh's correspondence.

Application of Booth's Theories to Marsh's Correspondence

A Synopsis of Marsh's Letters

Although particular parts of Marsh's correspondence and individual letters will be discussed in depth, I feel it would be helpful to give a brief overview of the narrative formed by Marsh's letters in order to better contextualize the details I discuss.

Brad Marsh was born on February 25, 1921 in Arkansas. In 1939, following high school, Marsh enrolled in Texas A&M University at College Station, where he majored in Electrical Engineering. During his last year of college, Marsh met Mary Lynn Gibbs, whom he married following his graduation in June 1942. That same month, Marsh entered into the U.S. Coast Artillery and was stationed in California. Lynn stayed in California with Marsh, giving birth to their son, Skip, two years after they were married. She returned to Fort Worth, Texas to live with her parents and brother upon Marsh's deployment.

On August 12, 1945 Brad Marsh set sail for the Philippines on the *DuPage*. Crowded conditions and boredom made the trip miserable. During Marsh's voyage, the Japanese

officially surrendered to the Allies, ending the war in the Pacific. In early September 1945, Marsh landed in San Pedro Bay in the Philippines. Exploring the capital of Tacloban, Marsh was confronted with extreme poverty and squalor, not to mention the black market and prostitution rings. For several weeks, Marsh and the other men waited for their assignments. They diffused their boredom by watching movies, gambling, and, of course, writing letters to their loved ones.

Finally, on September 22, Marsh received his orders: processing people at Base K Redeployment Camp. A week later Marsh was assigned to work in the S.3 section of the Base K Headquarters as an Army unit inspector. Marsh's job included driving around the island of Leyte in a jeep and filling out paperwork on each unit, a process which took about half a day for each location. Even though his assignment distracted Marsh and alleviated the boredom, he found himself physically and mentally drained. Compounded with his long separation from Lynn, Marsh found himself losing the will and energy to work.

Marsh's breaking point came when he was put in charge of organizing a parade honoring General Douglas MacArthur, a Pacific war hero who helped the Filipino people achieve independence. Marsh felt as if his contributions were useless and couldn't understand why he and other men were being kept on the payroll. He wrote Lynn and told her that, after the parade on October 20th, he would try to find a way out. Three days following the parade, Marsh wrote a letter requesting discharge. He also made a medical appointment because of the headaches he had been suffering. They recommended hospitalization. Although he assured Lynn that he was not in bad shape, Marsh hoped that his headaches might help him with the discharge process.

On November 6th at 2 p.m., Marsh presented his case to the Board and, after asking him only two questions, the Board dismissed him, telling Marsh that he could go home on the next ship. The next ship, however, would take some time to get to the Philippines. Hospitalized in

the amebic dysentery ward and the only patient not bedridden, Marsh waited for his ship. Marsh looked forward to his return home and dreamed of his future life with Lynn, planning for things like buying a home and having another child. Boredom and frustration set in, and Marsh was unable to sleep at night, lamenting that the only thing keeping him from Lynn was a ship. On Saturday September 17th, a ship, scheduled to leave that Monday made port and Marsh learned that he did not have orders to board it. The last line Marsh wrote was, “Darling I am so tired of it all I just can’t write anymore am too miserable.” Letters ceased after this point: Marsh made the voyage home. Following his return, Marsh joined the Army Reserves and remained stationed in Amarillo, TX until his retirement in the 1970s.

A lot of material about Marsh’s life and character can be gleaned from an initial reading of his letters. They are fascinating to peruse and have seemingly endless bits of interesting information. However, a deeper analysis using Booth’s theories has drawn out the nuances and complexities that I otherwise might not have noticed. In the rest of this thesis I apply the theory of the implied author and reader to a portion of Marsh’s letters with a variety of different focuses. In the next section I concentrate on how time changes not only Marsh as a flesh and blood person, but also how it alters the air he adopts as an implied author.

Time and the Implied Author

One of the many factors which influences the implied author, especially over the course of a correspondence, is time. While novelists have the ability to edit in order to maintain a cohesive textual image, even if their work is written over the course of months or years, the dialogical nature of letters means that they are written and then mailed, and the letter writer does not have the opportunity to edit past letters to create a cohesive image of the implied author.

Because of this, the evolution of an implied author is evident not only over the course of a correspondence, but from letter to letter. It is not just the implied author, however, that changes but also the image of the implied reader as the relationship between the implied author and reader develops. Liz Stanley, in her article “The Epistolarium: On Theorizing Letters and Correspondences,” calls this change over time the “perspectival” nature of letters (Stanley 202). She observes that the “structure and content [of letters] changes according to the particular recipient and the passing of time” and writes that “letters fascinatingly take on the perspective of the ‘moment’ as this develops within a letter or a sequence of letters” (Stanley 203). This quality of letters being written in a particular point in time, according to Stanley, “influences their content, even if not explicitly” (Stanley 208). Her statements are especially relevant to personal letter writing; one of the traits and charms of a letter is that it gives a glimpse into a particular point in time of the writer’s life—their family situation, the weather, their current environment, or any other number of other momentary factors. This perspectival nature of letters inevitably influences the implied author, both as an image in the text and a stance adopted by the flesh and blood person.

The contrast between Marsh’s earliest letters written home to Lynn and those written later in his deployment exemplify the perspectival nature of letter writing and how it effects the implied author. First, time bequeathed Marsh with new experiences, emotions, and beliefs, all of which shaped the air he adopted when writing home to Lynn. This is especially evident in Marsh’s attitude toward working for the Army. As the flesh and blood Marsh changed with the passing of time, so did his flesh and blood wife Lynn and, subsequently, the relationship between their implied selves. As days and weeks became months, the flesh and blood couple became separated by more and more time, and they were forced to rely on the implied versions of

themselves in order to construct and maintain a healthy relationship. Both of these examples show how time and perceptivity effects the implied author. In the next sections I discuss how time changes Marsh's attitudes, the purpose of his letters, and his relationship with Lynn, and how it creates an implied author who evolves through the course of the correspondence.

"A tragic mistake": Marsh and the Army

One of the most obvious transitions is found in Marsh's changing attitude towards the Army. Early on, the implied author Marsh is excited about his work. In a letter dated August 6, 1945, Marsh writes to Lynn about all of the work he and the other men were doing with equipment. He tells her that "it is all wonderful stuff though and is all brand new." It is difficult to tell whether Marsh means to say that the equipment is wonderful and brand new, or whether the work they are doing was wonderful and brand new but, either way, the textual image of Marsh is one that shows a man who is eager to begin work. In the same letter Marsh mentions how the Army organizes everything alphabetically and writes, "they have accomplished miracles. Boy oh boy never realized so much could be done in so short a time." Here, Marsh is proud of the efficiency of the Army, admiring how quickly everything got done.

Marsh's attitude begins to change after his arrival in the Philippines. He and the other men find themselves with an abundance of free time because the Army had yet to assign them jobs or tasks. This leads Marsh to write in a letter dated September 12, 1945: "I think this shipment was a tragic mistake by the War Department cause now that we are here no one wants us or know what to do with us either." Marsh spent the first several weeks of his time in the Philippines feeling useless until he was finally assigned to Base K on September 22, 1945. In charge of inspecting all of the Army units at Base K, Marsh found himself excited at the prospect of having something to keep him from boredom and to take his mind off missing Lynn. On September

28th he writes, “This may be a fine assignment darling and will I know make things easier for me if I can work. It eases the hurt in my heart when I am busy and makes the time go by faster. No matter what happens darling I am not really happy and I miss you more than ever.” Even though Marsh is excited to work, his mindset had shifted from eagerness to work for the Army, to using his busy-ness as a distraction from missing Lynn. The implied image of Marsh is that of a man who knows that working will only take his mind off the symptoms of his sadness and will not cure the source (being away from his beloved Lynn).

A month later, Marsh’s frustration with his work for the Army reached a peak. On October 20, 1945 he finished organizing a parade honoring General George MacArthur and found himself drained. On October 22, 1945 he typed:

I am so tired of it all and there is nothing that I can do. I don’t know what I want anymore except to come home it is all I think about. It seems funny to me that something that I used to like I now hate with all my heart and the will to do and take that which was inevitable now I fight and try to think oda way to get out from under . I guess that I have just had enough and am through with it all I know that if I ever do get home I will never think of the army again. I guess that I am not the only one but bet that I hate it worse than most. There are still those round here that want to stay in and make a career of the army but not enough to release those of us who do not. [sic]

This shows how, over time, the experiences of the flesh and blood Marsh’s work shaped his attitude towards the Army and, thus, the he air adopted while writing. Because of the highly personal nature of these letters, the flesh and blood Marsh may have felt very comfortable adopting an air of vulnerability and openness regarding his opinions about the Army, whereas he may have curbed these emotions if writing to a person other than his wife.

“I am so tired of it all”: The Implied Author in the First and Last Letter

Not only did Marsh’s opinions about his work change over the course of his deployment, but his relationship with his wife also evolved. As geographical distance and temporal space separated the two lovers, their relationship was maintained through the writing of letters. Of

course, each could only know the self the other implied within the text of their letter. Thus, with only a memory of their flesh and blood partner, each came to know the other's implied self and constructed a relationship with that implied self. This idea, even apart from the implied author, is argued by Liz Stanley, who maintains that correspondents "construct, not just reflect, a relationship" (Stanley 211). The perspectival nature of Marsh's letters and the changing relationship with his wife is revealed by examining the similarities and differences between the textual image of the implied author found in the first letter he wrote to Lynn, and his last.

The first letter in Marsh's collection is dated August 4, 1945 and is only one and a half pages long. This in itself is somewhat of an anomaly as his letters tend to average between five and seven pages. Marsh wrote the letter having "just gotten back to the barracks after phoning." He does not specify who he phoned, but because of the brevity of the letter and the fact that he *doesn't* specify, a reasonable assumption is that he had just gotten off the phone with Lynn. Marsh recognizes that Lynn will be "anxious to hear much that I can't tell you because I don't know." Even though his details about where and when he will be going are virtually non-existent, he still tells Lynn what little he does know or imagines might happen. This implies an author who realizes that his wife will be concerned about his well-being, and he cares enough to attempt to reassure her, even if he doesn't actually have any information that will do so. Most of the letter seems to the point and almost business like. Reassuring her again near the end of the first page, he writes: "I am fine and had a swell trip out." This comment is not particularly intimate or romantic and feels like something Marsh would write to anyone who wanted to know about his well-being. He talks about being unable to take out bonds, asks Lynn to write to mother not to expect the bonds, and tells Lynn that he will send her any extra money he has by check. He informs her that, if her family happens to move, they will need to write a particular

address and give them his name and serial number and tell them their new address. The author implied by the contents of this letter is one who seems more focused on housekeeping details than the emotional needs of his reader. It is likely that this is because Brad and Lynn's flesh and blood selves had recently said a heartfelt goodbye and the flesh and blood Marsh either doesn't feel it necessary to repeat what has already been said or, possibly, doesn't want to dwell on the recent separation because he thinks it might hurt too much. Even the closing of his letter is more impersonal than the future letters he will write. It reads: "guess I had better get busy my angel have much work to do. Will write again soon. I love you dearest with all my heart. Brad." Although the implied author in this letter seems terse to an unintended audience, because of their recent parting the flesh and blood Lynn may not have been offended by her husband's direct manner. This first letter is vastly different from the last one he sent.

The last letter in Marsh's collection was written on November 17th and, like his first letter, is shorter than usual, at three and a half pages, and has significantly larger handwriting than many of his other letters. During the week leading up to this final letter, the hospitalized Marsh had been anticipating the arrival of a ship to take him home. The letter begins: "Am I burned up. The ship came in and leaves Monday and it looks like I am not going to make it." He then explains that another ship may be on its way and informs her of the process that will take place in order for him to become a civilian. Like the first letter, this section is business-like and informative, but that all changes half way into the first page when Marsh writes: "Damn + Double Damn + etc am so damn disappointed tonight for had counted so on making this ship. Have been waiting so long now." Here the emotions of the flesh and blood Marsh break through. I do not and cannot know whether Marsh cursed often in real life, but in his letters he rarely curses. This instance of cursing is one of only a few and, thus, speaks to his frustration

about the situation. His expletives imply an author who is comfortable enough with his reader that he is not embarrassed to curse or, perhaps, a person who is so overwhelmed with emotion that they cannot help but let slip a few expletives. Marsh also reveals his bitterness about the situation, writing: “Fellows are on it that haven’t been waiting nearly as long as I have. Just can’t understand this army way of doing things.” While in many of his letters, Marsh is careful to meet his wife’s emotional needs by writing about happy memories and how much he misses and loves her, in this letter he is absorbed by his own emotional trauma. Perhaps the person implied by this letter would appear whiney or self-absorbed to someone who hasn’t read the entirety of Marsh’s correspondence and can’t recognize the difference between the implied Marsh in previous letters and his implied self in this one. Marsh closes his letter by writing: “Darling I am so tired of it all I just can’t write anymore am too miserable.” These last lines, although not pleasant, are far more intimate and vulnerable than the closing used in his first letter. It shows how Marsh’s physical living conditions, emotional tumult, and temporal and spatial separation from his wife have drained him so much that he cannot even express his emotions, not even through letter writing which, in the past had been an outlet for his fears, frustrations, and hopes.

As time changes our everyday flesh and blood selves, we change the air we choose to adopt during the writing process and, subsequently, the self we imply within written texts. While some authors may have the privilege of refining the image of the implied author through the process of editing, making it more consistent across a variety of written works, other authors do not have this opportunity. Personal letter writers, especially, cannot edit their previous works and, over the course of a correspondence, give readers a glimpse into their changing self. Another factor which changes according to time and, in the case of personal letters, may not be

edited out is that of mood. In the next section I discuss how Marsh's fluctuating mood helps and hinders the construction of his implied self.

The Implied Author and Mood

Because the "implied author" is simply an air or stance adopted by the flesh and blood person as he or she enter into the writing process, this adopted air is highly susceptible to the flesh and blood person's current mood. Authors of long works created over weeks or years may seek to adopt a similar air each time they write by distancing themselves from the circumstances of their personal lives. This allows them to create a more unified text and, if done successfully, a cohesive image of the implied author (an image which, of course, can be further refined through editing). However, the genre of personal letters often relies upon creating a personal connection between two or more flesh and blood correspondents, and this is sometimes achieved by allowing the mood of the flesh and blood person to effect the implied author. Depending on the objective of the letter writer, mood may help or hinder the construction of a letter and may create a positive or negative textual image of the implied author. Because many personal letter writers do not have the opportunity to edit their works, mood can be a factor that determines the overall composition of the letter and can even be a reason for a person to delay writing a letter.

Brad Marsh's letters are often influenced by his mood. At times they are imbued with a sense of depression or frustration because of his separation from Lynn and dissatisfaction with the Army. Other times they fluctuate between joy and boredom, depending on Marsh's day-to-day experiences. His mood often leads him to reveal secret emotions and thoughts, creating a stronger bond between himself and Lynn. First I discuss instances where Marsh's mood

prompted him not to write to Lynn, and then I examine a letter which was strongly affected by his mood.

“To the Most Beautiful Woman in the World”: The Choice Not to Write

Because of Marsh’s difficult circumstances, he was often affected by negative feelings. These negative emotions then crept into his musings to Lynn. Occasionally, he chose not to write at all instead of allowing his mood to impact his letters. One such example is from Saturday, August 18th, when Marsh tells Lynn that he is going to go get a cup of coffee and closes his letter on a melancholy note by writing, “Darling I only hope you have not been as lonely as I have been nor missed me as much as I am missing you. Never again will anything ever separate [*sic*] us this way... will continue in a little while.” Marsh does not continue “in a little while” and instead begins a new letter the next morning. He explains the situation to Lynn, telling her that, “somehow couldn’t get in a good mood again yesterday so decided to wait until this morning.” This sentiment is repeated in an October 20th letter when Marsh writes, “I don’t seem to be in the right mood to be writing a letter to the most beautiful woman in the world...” Marsh was aware of how his mood influences the construction of his letters and seemed concerned about the consequences of writing while in a negative mood. He may have perceived the letters he wrote while in a poor mood to be inferior and inadequate reading material for his beloved wife. However, he might have realized that writing a letter when he was stressed, worried, or depressed tended to exacerbate these emotions and color the way he portrayed his circumstances and self. Choosing not to write during times of heightened depression or worry may have been a way to keep Lynn from worrying about his flesh and blood self. Of course, if Marsh had chosen not to write every time he was experiencing negative emotions, his collection

of sixty-five letters might be significantly smaller. Next, I discuss how Marsh's mood influenced the letters he did decide to write.

"This Separation is Terrible": The Effect of Mood in a September 1st Letter

Of course, even though Marsh chose not to write letters at particular times due to his mood, escaping the influence of mood entirely was impossible. On September 1st, Marsh opens his letter by writing, "My darling today I will continue my letter to you. Was sorry that I did not write any thing [*sic*] yesterday but was in a poor mood to be writing a letter to someone that I love as I do you. So spent the day feeling miserable and lonely." Although Marsh initially tried to avoid writing to Lynn while in a "poor mood," the effects of his emotions were unavoidable, as shown in the next pages of his letter. He tells her that, after feeling miserable the day before, he went ashore with two of his buddies. Today, he explains, he doesn't have "the energy to fight my way into one of the small boats and mingle with the crowd that I know will be there." The implied image of Marsh suggests a man who is listless and perhaps burnt out from being surrounded by people all the time. He describes the dawn sun as a "ball of fire" and the day hot enough to "fry a steak on the steel deck." Marsh comments that "you can't begin to sit on anything exposed to the sun" and that, while writing the letter, he sits on a coil of rope "practically stripped" of his clothing with sweat "running off in big streams much worse than in Ft. Worth." As in my discussion about the temporal and spatial complexities of correspondence, here Marsh's geographical location (on the ship, under the hot sun) influences the mood of his flesh and blood self. In this case, the air he adopts might, in part, be one of annoyance or dissatisfaction about his physical surroundings. Marsh continues his letter by explaining that the reason for his bad mood the previous day was an 8 a.m. debarkation drill that made the men "completely miserable for about 3 hours." He then recognizes the negative tone of the first page

and a half of his letter and writes: “Suppose I am sounding foolish again and don’t know why I love you this way but want to write you good letters—then when I sit down to do it can only think of the unpleasantrys [*sic*] aboard ship—Guess I had better begin again.” The implied author Marsh believes that a “good” letter is one that does not focus on the negative aspects of his daily life. Although Marsh attempts to “reset” his mood and begin again, the rest of his letter reveals the difficulty Marsh encountered in altering his air as the implied author in the middle of the writing process.

The letter continues, jumping back and forth between positivity and negativity, revealing the inner conflict of a man who wants to write “good letters” to the love of his life, but whose flesh and blood person is plagued by frustration and worry. This swinging between implied selves reveals Marsh’s struggle to wipe out the parts of his character that he doesn’t want to reveal to Lynn (“Resurrection” 77). Dan She notes that a person can write a text in two different manners and the result would be a textual image that is not static (Shen 93). Because of Marsh’s struggle to maintain one mood, he creates an implied author whose textual image fluctuates. Had Marsh had the ability to edit his works, his concern for his mood may not have been revealed as he would have had the ability to edit it out later. Instead, he constantly tries to correct his mood through the rest of the letter. As he “begins again,” Marsh describes a “wonderful book” he read and suggests Lynn read it. Immediately after this he slips back into the air of frustration by describing his eagerness to get back on shore because he and all the other men are “fed up” with the ship. Then he writes how pleased he is that the news regarding the war “sounds better every day” and how he “got quite a thrill to hear that the US Flag now flies high over Tokoyo [*sic*]” and reveals his hope that “maybe it will all end very soon.” A bit later he jumps back to lamenting about the weather. In the end, Marsh seems to give up talking about

things that are happening on the ship, perhaps knowing that he cannot reconcile the letter he wants to write with the version of himself that he is implying within the letters. Instead, he decides to focus on his love for Lynn. He recounts the previous night when he laid in bed and looked at pictures Lynn had sent him, noting that he has handled them so much that “they seem to be getting worn.” He tells her how thankful he is that he has the photographs, writing that they are “something that holds you and Skipper close to me dear so close that even the ocean seems small.” His mood then leads him to admit something he didn’t want to. He writes:

“Darling to me this separation is terrible I didn’t want to say it but I must for I miss you so much. I am going to finish now before I say any more. Will write again soon. I love you my darling.”

Here the implied author reveals a little part of his flesh and blood self that he had attempted to keep hidden: his feelings about being separated from Lynn. He does not give his reason for not wanting to tell her how terrible he considered the separation but the reasons could be many.

Perhaps Marsh did not want to bring up the separation if possible in order to create the illusion of an in-person recollection of his day, or maybe he believed that he would not distress Lynn if he didn’t reveal his own emotions about the situation. As an unintended audience, we cannot know for sure the reasons behind Marsh’s words, but we can analyze the image his words create. In the last few lines of Marsh’s September 1st letter, my image of him is altered. During most of the letter, the implied image I get of Marsh is that of a man who is troubled with the physical conditions of a crowded ship and unbearable heat who is attempting to hide his frustration by adopting a more cheerful air—and failing miserably. With his last lines, the implied image becomes that of a man who is already haunted by his separation from his wife and whose despair seeps into every other aspect of his life.

Even though the closing lines of Marsh's September 1st letter are heart wrenching, they do serve to create a close bond between himself and Lynn. Through his words, she can see his vulnerability and his honesty. Although editing might have made the writing process easier for Marsh and given him the opportunity to create a more cohesive implied author, the reader's ability to see him working through his emotions might have been lost and it is precisely this perspectival nature, this ability to see into the fleeting psyche of another person, that makes personal letters so captivating.

Handwriting

One of the reasons that editing is often inconvenient for personal letter writers is because they write their letters by hand. This hand-written quality of letters also provides unique insight into the implied author and implied reader. Unlike a published manuscript whose typeface remains consistent throughout the text, the handwriting within a series of letters, or even a single letter, evolves according to a variety of conditions. It also cannot be edited after it is written. Although a person's handwriting may always have a consistent style, its form may change according to purpose or other factors. For instance, someone may use incredibly neat or elegant handwriting when writing a thank-you note to a potential employer, more relaxed handwriting when writing a birthday note for a friend, and incredibly messy handwriting when jotting down an idea in a journal. There is likely to be a consistent style across all the instances of writing, but the form may change depending on the relationship to the reader or the reasons for writing. Handwriting thus reveals a textual image of the implied author and the implied reader. By paying attention to the implied author's style and form of handwriting, one might be able to discern facets of the implied author's character. For instance, a potential employer who reads a

neatly written note for a prospective employee might see that the implied author is someone who is neat, organized, and pays attention to detail, perhaps reinforcing characteristics the prospective employee tried to highlight in their interview. Handwriting also reveals characteristics of the implied reader. For example, a nearly indecipherable entry written in one's own journal might suggest that the implied reader (in this case, the flesh and blood author at a later date) knows the implied author so well that they will be able to successfully interpret the implied author's written message. With regards to Marsh's letters, I will first discuss particular instances where Marsh's handwriting reveals a particular insight into his physical environment or mental and emotional state. Next, I will examine the textual image of the reader implied revealed by Marsh's handwriting and the ramifications this has for an unintended audience.

Handwriting and the Implied Author

Physical environment. Just as the flesh and blood Marsh's physical environment may affect his mood and, thus, the stance or air he adopts as the implied author, so his physical environment also affects the quality of his handwriting, and the image of the author implied within the text. At times, Marsh explicitly comments on the toll the physical environment has on his handwriting. In a letter sent on August 21st, Marsh writes from the *DuPage* as he sails to the Philippines, and he tells Lynn that she might "have a little trouble reading this" as the water is rolling a lot which "makes it a little hard to write." Marsh's physical location on a ship often made it difficult to write. The next day Marsh wrote while sitting half way up a steel stairway and told Lynn that "the vibration this far down keeps my paper in constant motion." Marsh's handwriting in this set of letters is cramped and somewhat messy, often with lots of little mistakes such as letters scratched out. The textual image communicated by his handwriting not only corroborates the idea of the flesh and blood person writing in an uncomfortable

environment, but also suggests traits of the flesh and blood person's character. The image of the implied author is one of a man who is comfortable enough with his implied reader that he will write in less than desirable circumstances just so he can communicate with her. That Marsh is willing to write in cramped and uncomfortable conditions also suggests that he might be experiencing some boredom and uses letter writing to distract himself or pass time.

This image of the implied author can be compared with a letter sent a month later, on September 27th. This letter begins on a positive note as Marsh has "good reason to believe that I may be out of here and assigned to my unit very soon." Through the rest of the letter Marsh is very romantic, wishing that Lynn was there to watch the moon rise out of the ocean with him, remembering their first kiss in the rain, and assuring her that as long as he lives his "heart will be full of love for you." Marsh's handwriting in this letter is very neat, with medium sized letters and consistent line spacing. In the beginning of his letter, Marsh reveals information about his physical location, telling Lynn that he is "sitting down at the club drinking an ice cold strawberry soda (minus ice cream) and thinking of you." His handwriting remains fairly neat throughout the letter, although it does become messier and more cramped at parts as he becomes more absorbed in the writing process. His handwriting in this letter implies an author who has found a physical environment (the club) that is conducive to letter writing, not only because of the comfortable setting and the flat surface of the table, but also because it allows his flesh and blood person to relax and enjoy his leisure time, perhaps giving him more time and energy to write a neat, romantic, and thoughtful letter.

Emotions. It is not only Marsh's physical environment that affects his handwriting, but also his emotional and mental state. The influence of emotions on handwriting is displayed in a six-page letter written on September 13th, which, in addition to the generally messy handwriting,

shows many instances where Marsh crossed out entire words. At the end of the letter, Marsh comments on his handwriting, saying, “Darling my script is awful today. Don’t know why may be a little nervous.” Marsh had spent most of his letter replying to Lynn’s letters and had not mentioned anything in particular that might make him nervous. Perhaps Marsh himself didn’t know he was nervous about anything until he noticed his handwriting and all the mistakes he had scratched out within his letter. Readers familiar with the rest of Marsh’s letters might have attributed his “awful” script to an uncomfortable writing environment and may not even think about other reasons for Marsh’s messy handwriting, but perhaps Marsh feared that his implied reader, as the entity who understands all things within his letter, would also take his handwriting into account and worry about Marsh’s emotions. It is also possible that the flesh and blood Marsh did in fact know what he was nervous about, but chose not to share details with his implied reader so as not to worry her. Had Marsh not commented on his own handwriting, most readers may not have noticed anything out of the ordinary and might have assumed that Marsh was writing in an uncomfortable environment or was, perhaps, simply being more careless than usual. Marsh’s words change the textual image of the implied author and, re-examining the handwriting, flesh and blood readers might agree that Marsh was, indeed, nervous about something.

The impact of Marsh’s emotions becomes even more obvious when reading the series of letters he wrote to Lynn during his hospital stay near the end of his deployment. While Marsh’s handwriting in previous letters tends to be small, messy, and sometimes cramped, during his hospitalization his script becomes huge and sprawls across the page. The change in handwriting could imply several different things about the author of the text. One of the most obvious implications is that Marsh was incredibly bored. In a letter written November 6th, only a couple

of days after being admitted to the hospital and placed in a ward where everyone except him is bedridden, Marsh writes, “I had thought that time was passing slowly before but this morning has been like a month.” This monotony is more severe than the boredom Marsh experienced earlier in his deployment. Although Marsh often wrote of boredom in previous letters, he usually had activities to help pass time, whether that was playing cards, watching movies, or drinking with his buddies. In the hospital, it seems that Marsh did not just experience boredom but a total lack of stimulation. On November 11th Marsh begins a letter by saying he wanted to wait until evening to write, “hoping that I would have some news to tell or a letter to answer but neither developed.” It seems that although letter writing is one of the few options that Marsh has to pass the time, he doesn’t have much to write about. The author implied by the large script is one who cares about his wife and still wants to write her lengthy letters but doesn’t have much to say. His large handwriting might be a conscious or subconscious attempt to make his letters appear longer than they really are. In the few letters he wrote from the hospital, where he does have a lot to talk about—such as a letter from November 8th where he describes what he wants to eat at his first meal home—his handwriting becomes smaller to fit in everything he wants to say. Marsh’s changes in handwriting while in the hospital, paired with his comments, implies a man who fights boredom but is willing to write to his wife and assure her he still cares, even if he struggles with finding topics to expound upon.

Handwriting and the Implied Reader

Handwriting not only reveals traits of the implied author, it also indicates characteristics of the implied reader. The reader implied within the text is one who is assumed to be capable of deciphering the implied author’s handwriting—for the implied reader to exist they must, of course, be able to read the text. Just as the implied reader is assumed to be able to read and

understand the language the letter is written in (whether that's English or Korean or a secret code), they are also expected to read and understand the implied reader's handwriting. In Marsh's letters, even when he apologizes for his bad handwriting, the implied reader is expected to be able to decipher his apology. This illustrates some of the differences between the image of Lynn implied within the text and the flesh and blood Lynn. Lynn, as the person who most closely matches the reader implied within the text, likely had the best success at deciphering Marsh's handwriting. It is likely that she had read his handwriting enough that the style of his letters, the spacing of his words, and other little characteristics were very familiar. The implied reader Lynn is expected to be so familiar with Marsh's handwriting that she will be able to read everything. The implied reader Lynn would also be able to read Marsh's emotional and mental state through subtle changes in his handwriting, such as in the September 13th letter where Marsh reveals he might be nervous. However, the flesh and blood Lynn may have had trouble making out some words or phrases and she may not have picked up on emotions such as nervousness or boredom.

Handwriting and the Unintended Audience

Because the implied reader is expected to understand the handwriting, even when it is messy, this can present a problem for the unintended audience. When considering a collection of letters or other handwritten texts as a potential primary source for researchers, the decipherability of the handwriting may significantly impact the value researchers attribute to the text. If the flesh and blood readers cannot easily read the text or if there are enough spelling or grammatical mistakes so as to make it unintelligible, the value of such a primary source may be significantly reduced. In my own reading of Marsh's letters, I always notice that it takes me several minutes of reading Marsh's correspondence to get reacquainted with his handwriting before I regain the

ability to read comfortably and naturally. His handwriting has a particular style that, for me as an unintended audience, cannot always be understood at first glance. Furthermore, there are portions of his letters that I simply cannot decipher and, as I read the collection, I noted many instances of this. My understanding of the text of a whole was usually not hindered because I could not make out only a word or two within any give letter. However, this inability to understand everything could introduce potential problems, especially if I chose to type out a quote with indecipherable words in it. Different readers, of course, might have varying levels of success in deciphering Marsh's handwriting. For instance, I am not a WWII scholar, so when Marsh first wrote about taking atabrine pills to combat malaria, I had never even encountered the word atabrine and, thus, could not even properly decipher the individual letters Marsh used to spell the word. It took some online research, typing various versions of what I thought the letters might spell, along with information from the rest of Marsh's sentence, in order to understand what he had written. A WWII scholar might not have had the same issue, but might have had difficulties understanding another part. One solution that would solve the problem of readability, especially for future generations, would be to transcribe all of Marsh's letters so that they have a uniform font and can be easily understood. Of course, implementing this "solution" would mean that future readers would lose the information discussed above about the various ways that handwriting can also provide a textual image of the author. There are no easy answers regarding this issue; however, it is obvious that handwriting can not only hinder researchers, but also help them to understand the implied author in different ways.

Memory and the Implied Reader

While most of the previous sections have focused on the implied author, weaving in the implied reader as appropriate, the next part of my discussion centers on the implied reader. Although many scholars have debated the intricacies and worth of Booth's theory of the implied author, some have neglected to adequately address the idea of its counterpart, the implied reader, within their discourse. The two concepts naturally complement each other, and both are necessary and valuable for fully understanding a text. As explained in the second section of my thesis, the implied reader has two forms: that of an image which can be inferred from an analysis of the text, and that of an air or stance which can be adopted by a flesh and blood reader. The image of Lynn that Marsh constructs within his correspondence may or may not be in agreement with Lynn's flesh and blood self. Marsh uses his intimate knowledge of his wife's flesh and blood self to shape the image of her that he creates within the text. However, the textual image of Lynn within the letters may exhibit emotions, traits, or knowledge that the flesh and blood Lynn does not possess. In order to read the letters most successfully, Lynn must adopt the mask that Marsh bequeaths unto her, even if this assumption contradicts some of her flesh and blood emotions, traits, or knowledge. It is important for scholars to recognize this difference between the flesh and blood reader and their textual image as constructed by the author because it will enrich their understanding of the entire correspondence. For this reason, I discuss some particular constructions of the implied reader found within Marsh's text, and also some of the challenges this presents for an unintended audience—beginning with the function of memory in Marsh's letters and how they characterize the implied reader.

Throughout Marsh's letters, he often wrote of memories shared between himself and his wife. The concept of memory and how it is tied to Booth's theory of the implied author can

improve our own understanding of Marsh's correspondence and its value to a scholarly audience.

The presence of memories in Marsh's letters helps to accentuate the difference between the implied reader and the flesh and blood reader. The implied reader within the text is someone who is expected to recall every memory that Marsh writes about and to remember it in the same way that he does. However, the flesh and blood reader may have trouble recollecting the things Marsh writes about or not recall them at all, or they may have a different interpretation of the memory. In the following paragraphs I examine how memory constructs an implied reader within Marsh's text and how memory impacts the understanding of the unintended audience.

"Do you remember": Marsh's October 27th Memories

Marsh's use of memory is especially apparent in a letter written on October 27th. Here, he talks about missing Lynn and also all the memories they share:

Darling I can never tell you how much I have and am still missing you. I never dreamed this last separation would be so hard to take... Bayb I have tried everything g that I know to keep me from missing you so much and nothing that I have done has helped at all. It is getting so I hate to dream for it brings back all of the happiness that we have had and that I am now missing and when I wake it is like a sudden return to life without hope or happiness. Do you remember the days in Vallejo and the first move that we made and loaded the car three times full of our things and how tired we were and how much fun we had in our apartment, the parties and that first Christmas that we had together and what a poor shopper and selector of presents for you I turned out to be... Remember that party where Dick and I mixed the punch according to Si ds recipe and a little of our own and how tight Pete got on the dregs. Remember the Birds of Paradise that we had. Darling that was paradise and no fooling... Sometimes I dream of the picnics out at the park on Bene cia road and how beautiful you were when you were having fun and happy. I wonder dear if those things that we had then are possible now. It is hard to even think that they can be when I am so lonely and so far away from them and you. I thought that it would help to put down the things that I think about but I don't think now that it has it is just another way of saying that I love you and miss you honey and that is all that I have to say when I write to you anyway. [sic]

The reader implied within Marsh's letters is one who recalls every memory that Marsh writes about. The implied reader has a shared past with Marsh and is someone who is called to remember the first apartment, various parties, the first Christmas, and picnics. Because Marsh

assumes that his intended audience does indeed remember these past events, he does not find it necessary to elaborate on them or explain them in detail. Marsh constructs his implied reader as someone who only needs to hear the words “first christmas” or “picnics out at the park” in order to remember all of the details that go along with that, with no additional prompting. However, the flesh and blood Lynn who reads Marsh’s letters may not recall the memories that he mentions, or may have a different interpretation of the events. The flesh and blood Lynn may not recall the particular party where Marsh and his friend, Dick, mixed a punch and “how tight Pete got on the dregs.” However, she likely knows the people that Marsh refers to, so it would not be difficult for her to imagine the situation. There is also the possibility that the flesh and blood Lynn had a different recollection of the events; perhaps in her memory it was a different person who mixed the punch with Marsh. The flesh and blood Lynn may have held some emotion other than happiness in her heart during the picnics with her husband. Even if the flesh and blood Lynn did find herself in complete agreement with the implied reader upon her first reading of the letters, there is always the possibility that the flesh and blood Lynn forty or sixty years down the road lost the memories that Marsh wrote about, and, upon this later reading, might assume that that the memories Marsh writes must be true even though she herself can’t recall them.

Memory and the Unintended Audience

Marsh’s construction of the implied reader as someone who has complete recollection of the memories can be problematic for scholars intending to use the letters for research. As an unintended audience, they do not share the same memories that the flesh and blood Marsh and Lynn did, nor the same common knowledge and experiences. While the implied reader is assumed to know who Dick and Pete are, to know where Vallejo is, and to know what Birds of

Paradise and Christmas are, an unintended audience may not know about all or any of these things. The knowledge of the unintended audience may depend on how well-versed they are in Marsh's correspondence (knowing whether he has talked about his friends before) or the culture they grew up in (people in Western nations will likely be familiar with Christmas, other cultures may not.) Some of the information from these memories, like Christmas or Vallejo, may be researchable, but other information, such as particular friends, may not. Memories discussed by the implied author in a vague way may be deemed less valuable to researchers because they do not contain enough unique details to assist the researcher in their particular topic. For instance, if the implied author wrote about a particular historical event to a reader assumed to have intimate knowledge of that event, then they might choose to discuss it in a vague manner and leave out many details, assuming that their reader will recall the information on their own. However, if they wrote to another audience, one unfamiliar with the event, the information they included might be different. Perhaps if Marsh wrote a letter about some of his favorite memories with Lynn to his own mother, or perhaps to his son later in life, he might include more details to help his audience better understand the event. This inclusion of differing material is not unusual according to Mary Jo Maynes, Jennifer L. Pierce, and Barbara Laslett who, in their book *Telling Stories*, note that the construction of life stories depends on the usual literary devices, including "ideas of what is interesting or important to readers and listeners," which "inevitably shape the structure of an account" (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 70, 71). In other words, the relationship between the flesh and blood writer and the flesh and blood reader, and subsequently the creation of the implied author and reader, has a significant impact on the construction of a text, as it is this relationship that determines what might be "interesting or important" or even relevant to readers. This relationship then impacts the value that scholars assign a text. Correspondence

mostly consisting of vague allusions to past memories shared between the implied author and reader may not aid some researchers as much as another, more detailed letter, would.

Understanding the ways that a relationship affects the construction of correspondence will help scholars find the material that is best suited to their particular type of research.

The Secondary Audience

One of the difficulties in examining Marsh's letters, as well as any text, is that things are not always as simple as they appear. In a letter sent September 7th, Marsh indicates that a secondary audience may be reading his letter. A secondary audience is a person or a group of people who may have some characteristics or interests in common with the intended reader of a text. For instance, children are the intended readers of children's books, while their parents or teachers would be secondary audiences. While Marsh positions Lynn as his intended or primary reader by addressing his letters to her, referring to her by nickname throughout his letters, and also expressing knowledge intended only for her, a secondary audience could include people who are linked to Marsh and Lynn by blood (family) or a common interest in Marsh's well-being (friends). Below, I discuss Marsh's indication of a secondary audience and how it complicates not only Booth's theory, but also how it impacts my own understanding of Marsh's letters.

In a September 7th letter, written shortly after landing on Leyte Island in the Philippines, Marsh describes the island and his new home. He tells Lynn, "The natives live sometimes several families in a tent or one room hut and make their money in many ways. Darling you better read the rest of this to yourself before reading it aloud if you are as some of it you may not want to pass on... The native families made their money mostly by prostitution. They seem to have a big trade with the negro troops and had with the Japs." A page later he mentions how

Red Cross field workers are also engaged in prostitution. This portion of the letter suggests several different traits of the implied author and the implied reader. It suggests that both the implied author and implied reader agree that prostitution is not something to be talked about in polite company. By declaring this, whether Lynn reads that portion of the letter aloud or not, whoever reads or hears his words (whether that's her or a secondary audience) will understand that the implied author does not condone prostitution and is not being intentionally crass or indelicate by mentioning them. His warning to Lynn would also, theoretically, save her from embarrassment by reading a "taboo" topic aloud to a group of people, thus constructing the implied author as someone who is conscientious about his wife's emotional well-being.

Another secondary audience to Marsh's correspondence could be censors who monitored the mail, even though none of his letters have black marks or portions cut out. While Marsh sails on the *Dupage*, he keeps some information secret from Lynn. On August 30th he writes about dropping anchor in an "undisclosed harbor" and on the 30th he mentions visiting a recreation island marked with a sign that read "Welcome to -- the Paradise Island of the Pacific." It isn't until September 7th that Marsh reveals the name of the ship he sailed on and tells her the names of the places he visited. Marsh never mentions censors, so it is difficult to know whether or not they played a role in the construction of his letters. Perhaps because the war was over, censors played a smaller role in monitoring correspondence. Or it is possible that Marsh knew the rules very well and self-censored his letters that way they would not be damaged by the censors. If this is true, the implied image of Marsh is that of a man who not only values the safety of his country, but also of a man who wants his wife to only read the nicest letters. Obviously, the possibility of a secondary audience (whether that was censors or the possibility of an "enemy" reading his letters) shaped his correspondence, even if just slightly, by withholding information

from Lynn. It is impossible to know whether or not they significantly affected Marsh's writing in other ways as he did not directly write about them.

The presence of a secondary audience is complicated because Marsh himself seems unsure about their presence, at least with regards to family and friends. He tells Lynn, "Darling you better read the rest of this to yourself before reading it aloud *if you are* as some of it you may not want to pass on" (my emphasis). This "if you are" reveals Marsh's uncertainty regarding who his audience might be. Although dismissing the secondary audience would certainly lead to an easier analysis of Marsh's correspondence, that would undermine the complexity of these letters. It is apparent that his secondary audience has influenced his letter, even if that is simply through the addition of a single line referring to their presence. This also complicates the idea of the implied reader. Is the implied reader confined to a textual image of Lynn, or does it also include other readers? Does the fact that Lynn may read Marsh's letters, or parts of them, to other people shape how he talks about certain events or whether he reveals certain emotions or not? Obviously it did affect his discussion of prostitution, but is that true in other places as well? These are difficult questions to answer because Marsh himself appeared to be unsure of a secondary audience's presence.

According to the authors of *Telling Stories*, accurate use of letters in a scholarly discourse must include recognition of what letters do and do not tell modern readers (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 83). Because of Marsh's uncertainty, my analysis of his letters has focused primarily on the relationship between the implied author and the implied reader. Even though my primary focus has been on the implied author and ideal reader, I cannot discount the possibility of a secondary audience and must acknowledge that their presence, albeit *seemingly* mostly invisible, also shapes his correspondence in some ways, even small ones. It is my responsibility to

acknowledge both the things that are and are not written, and not to discount something simply because it complicates my own understanding. Thorough analysis of letters, Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett insist, must include an explanation of the processes used in reading the texts so scholars don't "miss the nuances and complexity of the sources upon which they draw" (Maynes, Pierce, and Laslett 71). Acknowledging the presence of a secondary audience, even if it is not the primary focus on my project, is important because it illustrates that these letters can never be completely understood, but only interpreted. My analysis and interpretation will, of course, be colored by my own knowledge (or lack thereof), ideologies, and biases. By recognizing the presence of a secondary audience, even if this complicates my own discussion, I am also recognizing that there is an extraordinary amount of information within these letters and a variety of interpretations and that what I do and do not choose to write about affects my own understanding of Marsh's correspondence and the construction of this thesis.

Complications for the Unintended Audience

Although some letter writers intend their epistles to be distributed amongst a particular group of people or open for anyone to read, this is not always the case. In fact, many letter writers intend their correspondence to be private, using it to keep in contact with a person or persons much like the way e-mail, Facebook, or texting assists modern people with communication. Unlike most technological communications, letters are often kept by the recipients far into the future. According to Minna Nevala and Minna Palander-Collin, authors of "Letters and Letter Writing: Introduction," these "private writings may become public either intentionally or unintentionally" (Nevala & Palander-Collin 5). Because these letters have a particular intended audience, they also have a particular implied reader, one that may be difficult

for an unintended audience to understand. If the implied reader and implied author understand each other completely, with the intended reader being the flesh and blood audience best suited to understand the implied author, then the implied author may not find it necessary to elaborate or explain things that their intended reader already understands. For modern readers who may be far removed from the original writer or audience, either because they live in a different time or culture, this may mean they cannot understand some of the information within the text.

Depending on the intimacy of the implied author and reader, some correspondence may be considered “useless” in certain fields of research because the content is so vague. Understanding the relationship between the implied author and implied reader will help scholars discern how best to use the correspondence in their research if they choose to do so. In this section I explore how the implied reader within a text affects the understanding of an unintended audience by discussing how Marsh’s letters exhibit a social world that is not delineated in detail. I also discuss the ramifications of having only one side of the correspondence.

“I have returned”: Common Knowledge

According to Liz Stanley, letter writers communicate within “a social world known in common that is not delineated in detail and largely taken for granted” (Stanley 212). This communication centered around common knowledge presents difficulties to modern audiences reading correspondence from the past. Common knowledge, Stanley observes, can result in “highly elliptical” content that can confuse modern researchers due to its lack of details that are now lost to time (Stanley 215). This “highly elliptical” content includes vague details and references to the people and places in the letter writer’s life, information that makes sense to an intended reader but not to an unintended audience. Ultimately, Stanley argues that letter writers do not write about the “world as it is” but as they choose to represent it (Stanley 214). This

makes it difficult for modern researchers who choose to use letters as historical evidence, because letter writers may represent the world around them, including people and culture, in a way that assumes the reader has the same information as they do.

This trait of communicating within a world that is “largely taken for granted” is exemplified in a letter written by Marsh on September 7, 1945. In the beginning of this letter, Marsh describes landing in the Philippines, writing “we landed on the evening of 5 Sept on the beach MacArthur landed on and said ‘I have returned’ ...” Here, Marsh refers to an event which, during this time of war, would have been common knowledge. It is hard to know if Lynn would have called the name of the island to her memory (perhaps, or perhaps Marsh knew that a description of what occurred there would be more informative than a name), but she certainly would have recognized MacArthur’s name and perhaps his famous statement. This bit of information, however, shows how an unintended audience can also be an uninformed audience. While the figure of General Douglas MacArthur and his profound influence on the outcome of WWII in the Pacific theater has certainly not been lost to the ravages of time, modern audiences may not be acquainted with his person and actions, and a full understanding of Marsh’s statement may require further research into the background of the war in the Pacific. The unintended audience’s understanding, and possible position as an uninformed audience, is determined by readers’ knowledge of the events and outcome of WWII. Lynn, as Marsh’s implied reader, does not require additional information about the war as she is living it, and, so Marsh does not include it.

In addition to common knowledge shared by a particular culture or a people in a particular time, the implied author can also refer to common knowledge shared between author and implied readers. This is obvious in Marsh’s correspondence when he refers to specific

events from the couple's past and to people they both know, and when he replies to Lynn's letters, which, of course, the unintended audience does not have access to. Although the common knowledge from a particular place or time can often be understood through research, common knowledge shared between an implied author and reader may not always be accessible, or at least not easily so. How common knowledge is handled highlights how the implied reader shapes the implied author's work: if there is common knowledge shared between both parties and the implied author does not intend another audience to read his or her work, then there is little reason to expound upon the matter. However, if the implied author anticipates another audience will read the work, then he or she may choose to add additional details clarifying the common knowledge. Marsh's letters do not often show signs of being written for a secondary audience, so Marsh often refers to common knowledge shared between himself and Lynn. This is problematic for the unintended audience as its knowledge is limited to whatever Marsh includes on the page.

Marsh's replies to Lynn's letters are often vague and seemingly cryptic. In a letter dated September 13th, he writes:

Darling I am glad you went to Dallas and know grandmother was pleased—hope you enjoyed the visit but know it wasn't too pleasant. Am sorry to hear that they were not so good but know they are better now. Sure glad to hear that Kitty made it home, somehow was sure she wouldn't be able to get out of California—know she is glad to get home. Bet you had a really swell time. Wish they could have made it up to see us.

The unintended audience's understanding of this portion of Marsh's letter is hindered by the fact that, not only does Marsh write about common knowledge shared between the implied author and implied reader (the contents of Lynn's letters), but he also writes about common knowledge specific to their relationship: common acquaintances, situations, and background information about these people. Marsh is privileged to know information about Lynn's trip to Dallas and does not have to elaborate on why it might not have been "too pleasant" for her. Having

commented on the topic, Marsh does not even need to name the “they” he writes of in his second sentence, as Lynn would likely know to whom he refers. Because Marsh does not use paragraph breaks in his letters, his ideas often flow into one another, sometimes with a precise beginning and end point for each topic, and other times naturally seguing into one another. In this case, the implied reader would have an upper hand as she reads Marsh’s reply to her letter—Lynn would know whether the comment about Kitty and her having a “swell time” is related to her trip to Dallas, or whether Marsh is replying to another portion of her letter. This illuminates how common knowledge, or the assumption of common knowledge, between the implied author and the ideal reader can impact the construction of the work. In Marsh’s letters, the implied author assumes that their implied reader will recall the details of previous letters and, so, eliminates additional descriptors. Of course, there is always the possibility that the flesh and blood person *does not* recall these details and must either think back to previous letters they had penned or else try to determine the implied authors meaning using the information he gives. Regardless, the implied author writes to an implied version of their reader; in this case, Marsh constructs the implied reader as someone who will recall knowledge common to both correspondents, even if his flesh and blood audience (Lynn) does not. Without Lynn’s letters to better explain Marsh’s letters, some of this “highly elliptical” content may not be useful to modern researchers.

“You tell me hear!”: A Single Side of the Story

One of the difficulties of working with Marsh’s correspondence is that modern readers only have access to one half of the story. While Marsh’s letters were saved, his wife’s were not. This situation, according to Liz Stanley, is not unusual:

Most published collections of letters, indeed most archived letters, will have originated as part of a correspondence, but with one side remaining: because of the presumed importance of one of the letter writers (because a public figure or having personal significance for either the addressee or the person who kept the letters); or perhaps

because of the content of these letters (such as concerning a momentous time in someone's life, or the circumstances of writing, for example, wartime or emigration). In all cases, the loss of the 'other side' of the correspondence influences readers' understanding of the remaining letters, for these were part of something, and not the whole. However, the 'other side' is not always seen as interesting... (211)

Although some audiences may consider Marsh's experience of being overseas in a particular place at the end of the war to be more interesting or useful than Lynn's experience of staying at home, waiting for her husband's return, Lynn's letters are not without value. Even if Lynn's letters would not provide researchers with the particular historical details they are looking for (life on the island of Leyte, emotional or psychological stress and trauma associated with the war) they would offer a more complete understanding of the man she writes to. In reading Marsh's letters we can only know the self that Marsh constructed and the implied image of Lynn he created within the text. If we had access to Lynn's letters, we would be able to examine the differences between the way Marsh constructed himself as an implied author and the way Lynn constructed him as an implied reader. The same would be true vice versa: we could compare how Lynn constructed herself as an author and how Marsh constructed her as a reader. Her letters might give modern researchers clues to things within Marsh's letters they cannot understand. Information from her letters could more fully explicate the common knowledge shared between the couple and further illuminate the relationship between the implied author and implied reader.

Early on in Marsh's letters, he mentions some health concerns that Lynn had. On August 21st he writes, "Hope your visit to the doctor was good. Be sure [unintelligible mark] let me know soon I can't help worrying about it." On the 29th he writes, "Darling have you been to the Dr. Am so very very anxious to hear the outcome. Can't help but worry a little." Even though the unintended audience is unsure of what Lynn's medical concerns were, the implied image of Marsh is one of a husband who cares about his wife's health and, perhaps, worries just as much

about her as she does about him. On September 13, Marsh replies to one of Lynn's letters, writing:

Darling, thank God that you are all right. Have had it on my mind every minute since I left. I am sorry but can't help worrying about you when I know something is wrong. I love you so dear. Doggone you, you never tell me much though. What caused it. Why does it come back. Are we doing something to cause it? How can we avoid making you sick. How many treatments and are you completely well now? You tell me hear!

This is the last mention makes of Lynn's health for the rest of the letters, so without Lynn's responses it is impossible to know for sure what ailed Lynn. An unintended audience can only guess at what the problem might have been. Because Marsh uses "we" to ask Lynn what they've been doing wrong and how to fix it, it makes me wonder if the couple had been experiencing troubles in their sexual life. If so, the image of Lynn implied within the text is one of a wife who wrote enough to assure her husband that she was alright but did not elaborate on the details, perhaps out of embarrassment. Even though Marsh chides her for this, he himself does not say outright what afflicts Lynn, and it is difficult to tell whether this is out of embarrassment or simply because Lynn already knows what he is talking about. The implied author Marsh requests that Lynn fill him in, but because we do not have Lynn's side of the correspondence we cannot know whether she answered Marsh's questions or avoided them. Having the "other side" of Marsh's letters would give us a better understanding, not only of the implied author and reader in this particular example, but of the couple throughout the correspondence.

Conclusion

Booth's theories should continue to be explored and discussed. Much work has already been done in applying them to literature but, as shown in this thesis, applying them to other types of texts will help not only help readers gain a deeper understanding of the content, but may also draw out new facets and aspects of the implied author and reader. In order to apply Booth's

ideas to different types of texts, focus needs to shift from debating whether Booth's theories are even valuable to the scholarly community, to discerning more efficient ways to apply them to any given text. This will allow other scholars to more easily read documents through the lens of the implied author and reader and will help the theory to be more commonly taught in classrooms and implemented in other literary conversations.

Of the sixty-five letters that Marsh penned, I only had the ability to write about a fraction of them. Even this small portion has astounded me with their depth and complexity. The rest remain, waiting to illuminate scholars, researchers, and all who care to take the time to explore their contents. Although future research into the various other aspects of the letters would likely be fruitful, application of the theories of the implied author and reader to this collection has not been exhausted. Not only are there letters which have not been mentioned in this thesis, other readers may read the same letters I have analyzed and come away with alternate images of the implied author and reader.

Although I believe that a scholarly examination of these letters would be beneficial to other researchers, it is not only the analysis which has been valuable. Martin Andrews put it best in his essay "The Importance of Ephemera" when he wrote that letters and other types of ephemera "provide us with a very particular kind of evidence. They offer an opportunity for scholarly analysis as well as a more subjective quality, an almost emotional and tactile response to worn and fingered material, directly handled by the people whose concerns and activities we are trying to understand, material that, against the odds, has survived and come down to us, often in a fragile state" (Andrews 436). As I read Marsh's letters and feel the paper beneath my fingers, it is difficult not to feel a bond with the man who had penned the words sitting on the deck of the *Dupage* or in a tent in the Philippines and also with the woman who caressed his

messages at night and kissed them with her lips and own tears. In reading these letters through the lens of Booth's theories I came to better understand Marsh and his wife, both their flesh and blood selves and implied selves and, in this understanding, felt that enchanted connection grow stronger.

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