

Long Lane Farm: How Student Farmers Reveal the  
Increasing Conflicts Within Liberal Arts

by

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Class of 2015

A thesis submitted to the  
faculty of Wesleyan University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
with Departmental Honors in Sociology

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to dedicate this thesis to all who have helped me along the journey; thank you so much for putting up with my constant whining, snap chatting, and times where I got out of things because I "had to write," only to stare at my computer.

To Professor Mary Anne Clawson, my advisor, who has long understood the scattered place that is my brain: thank you for your constant direction, calming presence, and clear remarks; you have helped me to write linearly.

To Professor Jonathan Cutler: thank you for preventing me from straying from my central argument and for helping me transform what was just a feeling for a long time into an argument.

To these incredible women: Katie, for understanding my brain and challenging it; Miranda, for her logical and clear thoughts that helped to shape this thesis, and also her pee-in-your-pants wit; Hannah, for her tough love and warm hugs; Talia, for her enthusiasm about life and her awesome laugh; Liv, for being my wing woman; Kate, for knowing me so well.

To my sister Meg: I love you. You are my best friend and my soulsister. To my brother, John: I love you too. Thanks for always calling me out, with laughter, on my ridiculous life statements. To little sis Emma: I love you and I promise to help you with all your papers.

To my Dad, who can always calm me down in a crisis.

To my Mom, who always reads my papers and who is always right: you are my idol for hard work, success, and compassion. You truly taught me to "learn for learning's sake"

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*Within the field of learning, there is an age-old tension between the 'theoretical' and the 'practical'. The liberal arts were created as an embodiment of this theoretical learning; "learning for learning's sake." They were meant as an alternative to schooling dedicated to more practical and direct learning. Today, this 'practical' school would bring to mind larger institutions with specific programs such as nursing, nutrition, graphic design, business, and many others that directly feed into careers. As our social and economic values have shifted as a nation, bringing us into a neoliberal period, liberal arts institutions have been losing their popularity. Neoliberalism uses a free-market mentality that has pervaded the social realm, infiltrating the subconscious of the American (and global) psyche and causing a weighing of 'costs' and 'benefits' as lens through which we see life. Therefore, this practical university has become much more popular, and liberal arts schools must argue that they possess their own practicality. In arguing so, they must demonstrate that they are able to teach learning for learning's sake while also adding practical value, and this attempt to incorporate two long-contradicting models causes internal tensions. In order to maintain its theoretical ideology, liberal arts often maintains an 'anti-capital' stance, and yet, it must work within a system that values capital. Furthermore, in order to argue their utility and practicality, liberal arts schools such as Wesleyan University use societal improvement and community outreach as a practical outcome of their institutions. This community work adds a third moving piece of the equation that further complicates tensions. These original conflicts between the practical and theoretical can be seen in the different ideals of farm members at Wesleyan's small student farm, "Long Lane Farm". Different conflicts include how much of the farm should be used for experimental purposes and how much should be dedicated to quantifiable produce that can be sold or exchanged, how to mediate the farm's non-hierarchical structure with the bureaucratic structures they are embedded within, and how to situate their multiple community involvements in relation to these conflicts.*

## INTRODUCTION

The liberal arts model has changed over time, and as the United States (and the world) has changed, it has been imbued with stronger and stronger inner conflicts. Liberal arts schools are constantly fighting internal and external tensions between learning 'practically' and learning for learning's sake. Liberal arts universities have historically asserted their roles as the antithesis of a university giving out specific degrees in the name of feeding students directly into specific jobs; instead, they educate students in a well-rounded manner, teaching them a broad host of topics in

the name of learning for the experience of learning. And yet, it is becoming increasingly difficult for liberal arts universities to uphold certain values while existing in a capitalist (and neoliberal) world. The fluctuations of different economic ideologies throughout the history of this country actually have a strong effect on the popularity of liberal arts, and on the ways in which these institutions must structure themselves. Liberal arts increasingly must show that they are maintaining their original goals of broad and wholesome learning, often pitted against capitalism and bureaucratic learning, while at the same time arguing that they can, in fact, have practical implications which will help students enter the very capitalist world that their ideology opposes. Wesleyan University, for example, ensures prospective students that the theoretical, broad learning they are receiving can be coupled with practical learning, and will lead them on to garner jobs in the world around them. In order to appear practical but also keep its values, Wesleyan uses community building and societal improvement as part of its “utility” argument, saying that Wesleyan teaches students to go out and change the world for the better at the same time as or in addition to improving their own social and economic (although this part is very softly said) standings. There is a need to paste this community improvement, humanitarian utility on top of the other, more capitalist, benefits of practicality, which are often associated with everything liberal arts desires not to focus on or be (financial improvement, acquisition of high paying jobs, etc.).

These conflicts are therefore acted out in the student bodies. Student-run organizations working to merge the practical and hands-on with theoretical and broader learning are an example of the ways in which liberal arts exhibit that they are

site of tensions. The creation of a student farm (Long Lane) at Wesleyan University exemplifies the desires of students to combine these types of learning, and their discourse over the mission of the farm and the ways in which it ought to be run demonstrate tensions between profit and community involvement.

Long Lane also possesses an ideology that is opposed to the values embedded in the broader structure (capitalist and neoliberal society) within which it works. And yet, in order to be legitimized and funded, it must work with and within this structure. Long Lane tries to operate in a non-hierarchical manner, and it values such things as theoretical and philosophical learning about what it means to be a farmer, as well as involvement and friendship with the wider community, as ‘success,’ as opposed to just looking at output, poundage of produce, or profit. This often brings the farm in opposition with bureaucratic structures with which is much engage, including the financial and sustainability offices at Wesleyan. And yet, there are farmers who wish to structure the farm in an organized and more ‘business-like’ manner. These farmers often find themselves seeking a balance between organizational operations, which more closely mirrors the bureaucratic structure Wesleyan’s students are so often opposed to, and the theoretical and experimental goals of the farm. All farmers, however, seem to agree on their involvement in the wider community, and those who believe in a more business-like model will say that it is to better the farm so it can better serve others, while those with more theoretical goals will say that well-rounded philosophical understand helps them to do the same. This community building and societal betterment component of Long Lane springs out of the ways in which liberal arts institutions must display their own special practicality; teaching students to use

their knowledge to help others and create change. Because of historical tensions, “community” and its substitution for “practicality” only furthers tensions between liberal arts and capital and places community in opposition to monetary associations.

The ways in which the liberal arts institution itself, as well as the student body, seems to be experiencing a slight shift in organization and operation might indicate a change in what it means to think of oneself as a liberal arts student and perhaps as a liberal at all.

In this paper, I use “the liberal arts” and “liberal arts institutions” as fairly interchangeable. “The liberal arts,” for my purposes, usually means the collective ideologies of institutions as a whole, or the way this ideology is projected outwardly, both politically and otherwise, to those in the United States and globally. Thus, the liberal arts is a unified body with an overarching ideology, and the institutions within it take certain actions to enact and hold firm their philosophies while working within the current social and economic settings of our world.

For the conduction of my Long Lane research, I attended many of its weekly meetings, which are open to the public as forums. I also reached out to farmers, both present and past, and took advice about who to contact next. I followed a word of mouth trail to my next informant, as well as searched through lists of members and administrative/faculty stakeholders. My research on Long Lane is by no means exhaustive. I have done my best to capture an accurate picture and assembling of different voices and involved persons, but Long Lane has different meanings to its many members and a rich history. This project could be expanded to more meticulously note the farm’s history and address its many members. I hope that my

work will help to expose tensions and places of compromise, and to take what was just a feeling for me about what creates a liberal arts student and the philosophies they struggle with internally and put it into historical and current economic and social contexts.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **Historical Conflict in Liberal Arts: The Entrance of the Economic**

Liberal arts institutions today allow for interdisciplinary learning, and often succeed in offering novel and multi-dimensional, immersive courses. However, the end goal of attending any institution of higher learning has changed as our society's values have changed, with more people attending colleges of any kind, often choosing a school that will help them most directly obtain a job, and with the cost of any education, especially liberal arts, skyrocketing. Even within the liberal arts, what were once centers of imaginative and existential musings have become more structured, with pre-set courses and learning models, leaning increasingly toward being preparatory in purpose instead of solely existing for the sake of knowledge itself. Liberal arts institutions find that they must situate themselves in the learning world as places that teach something more important and lasting than specific undergraduate degree programs while still matching the current economic values of our society by proposing that they can and do have practical implications for students and teach utility in several ways.

Liberal arts universities were meant to counter the rigidity of traditional curricula. Flexibility of courses and teachers were essential for schools like Harvard, Yale, Williams, Amherst, and Wesleyan (Peterson). The mission of the liberal arts

institution was, and in many ways still is, the creation of well rounded learning in which students grasp an idea of all subjects, not just by learning marketable skills in a niche career area, but by instead learning from many different perspectives (i.e. humanities, social sciences, math), and then applying this broader, wider knowledge to the ‘real world’ (Orr).

There is a long tradition of competing schools of thought within education and learning, between oratorical and philosophical (Moore, Valentin), or rather, between practical learning and theoretical learning. One seems to usher in the other, like paradigm shifts, but the two are fairly fluid and not always perfectly separate. There are centuries worth of this kind of back and forth between dominant learning ideological thought, and more recently, they have become tied to political and economic thought. Even though the projected ideology of liberal arts has, for a long time now, been one that values the ‘philosophical,’ or learning for learning’s sake, liberal arts institutions have simultaneously and increasingly “intended to prepare students for advanced and specialized study” (Kimball 7). In his lectures on “The Future of Our Educational Institutions” in 1872, Nietzsche wrote about the difference between the current ways of learning and “culture,” or the exploration of learning for its own sake. He was acutely aware of the changes in education due to the influence of social and economic ideologies even in that time, noting, for example, that students no longer read between the lines but rather for an ending or summation, to reach the final ‘point’ (Nietzsche, 1910).

Therefore, even though the pragmatic and practical and broad and existential forms of learning both have powerful influences and have historically switched back

and forth in dominance, there seems to be an external, societal factor which has influenced universities to become more practically structured over time. Ideas about learning and the way its institutions should be structured have become attached more directly to our forms of monetary policy. Capitalist society, a redefinition of learning in terms of monetary success, and the many changes to access to learning and roles of persons in the workforce in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economic climate have an enormous impact today.

Because liberal arts institutions were meant to be an alternative to colleges focused on practicality, however, their dominant and projected ideology has always aligned with the theoretical, even if below the surface their structure and goals have shifted to meet the economic times. This is where the internal contradiction becomes embedded; no longer are liberal arts simply in conflict with other institutions that learn in a more practical way, but instead, they have conflict within themselves; they operate under a set of values which is the opposite of the system that they live in and must work within order to make money and also, to make sense to ‘consumers’ of education. Liberal arts schools hope to show that they teach well-rounded and interdisciplinary learning, and that students learn to love knowledge and seek knowledge for pleasure. And yet, they must market themselves, because this is so important in capitalist society, and they must structure themselves bureaucratically because this is the way most institutions in our nation are run and respected. Many students, less obligated to act in accordance with the dominant economic structures of our world, especially when they are immersed and encased in the ‘bubble’ of

theoretical learning, find themselves with ‘anti-capitalist’ attitudes, as the dominant economic ideology becomes conflated with the values of practical learning.

Trends in economic values throughout history become very closely tied to the ways in which people desire to learn. Since the Great Depression, the phases of and shifts in economic beliefs have mirrored response to and popularity of liberal arts institutions, and have influenced their dominant ideologies and images. The age of neoliberalism had solidified a new end goal for education and created a space for the political and economic within these historical tensions (Berrett).

Classical liberalism is an ideology that traces back to the history of our nation and views on learning. It places value on the freedom of the individual; including freedom of speech, press, assembly, and markets. “Liberalism” is often a confusing term, because it seems like it would relate to “liberals.” In fact, classical liberalism refers more closely to what we view of a conservative economic and political stance today (Sturgis). Liberalism situates itself between mercantilism at one end of the spectrum and Keynesianism or socialism on the other. Politically, the idea is to “secure freedom, whether this is maximizing liberty or maximizing equality,” with the former being what we think of as conservative, the latter as more ‘liberal’ (Brown 6). This political theory is tied to the development of capitalism because of the emphasis on limited government power and free markets and exchange. Beliefs that emerged during this time linked social and economic policies and beliefs closely to liberal arts. The theories of many major thinkers, including John Locke, Adam Smith, and Thomas Paine, led to Thomas Jefferson’s drafting of the Declaration of Independence and the subsequent foundation of a long-standing ideology of independence and

freedom through a system in which men were mobile and could move upward through social and economic ranks by hard work alone (Sturgis). The idea that, under democracy, “the self-sufficient landowner possessed the ability to cultivate himself and therefore treasure his freedom,” (Sturgis) meant that hard work was linked to social and economic mobility. Jefferson believed that theoretical, ‘liberal-arts-type’ learning was the best way to realize these goals, because a well -rounded and educated population was the way to preserve freedom and give people equal opportunity (Roth).

There emerged a close and permanent linking of political systems and economics in this country, as the nation moved toward capitalism. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, classical liberal ideas remained but rapid industrialization had begun, ushering in a new stage of capitalist society that was intensely focused on material goods produced in an efficient manner, often in factories. This led to theoretical critique within classical liberalism. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) noted the materialism that was forming in the American psyche, and the subsequent loss of inquisitiveness and original learning that ensued from a society that was beginning to focus its attentions on step-by-step processes (Sturgis). Emerson’s suggestion for the American Scholar to use “nature, history, and experience to discover truth instead of relying on others’ interpretations” (Sturgis) shows a strong belief in the liberal arts learning that Jefferson had believed was the backbone of true democracy. These changes in the actions of American citizens based around money and goods, and the pushback that occurred in its wake, shows the tensions forming between economy and political ideology. The type of learning that

was thought of as the way to creating true, democratic citizens and social and economic mobility was beginning to come at odds with the way in which society was acting out and structuring themselves around ‘democracy;’ in other words, a move toward capitalist society. Marx argued that the political principles of freedom and equality as they originally existed within democracy end up coming into conflict with the “capitalist order within which they are asserted” (Brown 21); even though one seems, on the surface, to depend on the other (Novak), the original message of opportunity for all ends up clashing with the ways in which capitalism actually plays out in the world. This contradiction has, over time, created an opposition between the materialism of capitalist society and the ways in which this effects the beliefs and actions of Americans and the original type of learning to learning’s sake that was closely associated with the self-made man and his mobility.

Industrialization and its exacerbation of problems like poverty and displacement led to an increase in government involvement in order to help the nation adjust to and keep pace with rapid change. With this growth of government came policies and legislation for economic and social needs (Sturgis). In times of financial crisis or systematic disarray, the United States has turned to different economic ideologies. After the Great Depression, for example, the country turned to Keynesian economic policy, which expanded the role of the government further, in the form of stimulus from the public sector and other fiscal policy actions in order to help stabilize the nation (Brown, Saunders). Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s New Deal package put money into public works programs and other infrastructure. This belief that big government and public opportunities could help create jobs and opportunity

stuck with the nation after the crisis, with a majority of the population displaying pro-government preferences. For example, 76% of those interviewed in 1936/37 in post-election polls believed that the federal government should have been providing free medical care for those who were unable to pay (Allen).

By the time Ronald Reagan became president, however, a shift in the dominant political belief systems had started. Reagan declared that the cause of economic problems was government over-involvement. He cited high taxes as a threat to the economy, and therefore proposed cuts to welfare and other public New-Deal-era programs. Before Reagan, many presidents, including Harry Truman, wanted colleges to realize democracy by promoting international involvement, understanding, and social involvement. And yet, the idea that liberal arts has become a luxury has been growing in power and influence since the Reagan administration. Reagan, as governor, said that there were certain luxuries in the intellectual arena that American citizens didn't need to pay taxes for, such as "intellectual curiosity" (Berrett). While he received much pushback from those who believed that liberal education was vital for gaining a broad set of skills and was the best kind of learning, Reagan thought that "learning for learning's sake might be nice, but the rest of us shouldn't have to pay for it," and that "a higher education should prepare students for jobs" (Berrett). The age-old conflict between practical and theoretical learning fully came into terms as a conflict between liberal arts and more direct learning, this time under the heading of financial stability and efficiency. Instead of two theories on learning coming into conflict with one another, the actual collective of liberal arts institutions and what they were meant to represent (learning for learning's sake) was

coming into conflict with practical learning as it existed in relation to new economic and social desires for and definitions of success in this country.

There are many different definitions and usages of neoliberalism, but generally it is seen as a facet of capitalism, but it can most simply be looked at as “the result of an alliance or natural affinity between the functional requirements and organization of Anglo-American market economics, and the political goals of right-of-center parties in power” (Kitschelt 372), or, in other words, more conservative politics matched with economics borne out of the free market system. Neo-liberalism has its closet ties to classical liberalism, and is where it derives its name. Some see it as a capitalist economic ideology that is creeping farther and farther into the social sphere. In other words, capitalism’s free-market politics that become second nature to citizens and become the ways in which all things in life, not even those directly related to goods and exchange, become defined. One difference between early capitalism and neoliberalism is that the latter believes in a strong state, but believes that it shouldn’t focus energy on broad programs like welfare but instead should focus on “facilitating the operation of the market and securing ability of individuals to operate freely within it” (Saunders 47). The private sector ought to be in charge of welfare, social, education, and other state services like prisons and railways. Places of learning and ideological development, such as schools and universities, become part of the ‘naturalization’ of capitalist neoliberal ideology (Hill 20). This is where liberal arts institutions have been finding increasing conflict and pressure to conform to the economic and political theories it works within.

After the stock market crash and financial crisis in 2009, Barack Obama signed into effect the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, also known as The Recovery Act, which was a large stimulus package—\$787 billion, in fact— in the hopes of restoring the economy not just directly through ‘bailing out’ states in trouble, but by fighting dependence on foreign oil and oil in general, changing health care, looking at the environment, and focusing on education. This time, the return of Keynesian economic behavior was brief, and did not settle in to become the political ideology of the nation (i.e. big government focus); instead, in the wake of the bail out, there seems to be a heightening interest in the principles behind capitalism, and a resurgence and settling-in of neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism encapsulates several theories of social behavior and patterns in the United States, such as Weber’s theory of rationality and Marx’s theories on capital. Weber’s theories explained that the ‘rationalization’ of society is our increasing concern with efficiency, predictability, calculability, and dehumanization (Weber). Marx’s argument is that capital “penetrates and transforms” every aspect of life, and neoliberalism takes this principle and goes even farther (Brown). Capitalism is not just our economic model; it has transformed and infiltrated our social worlds, creating a marketization not just of goods and services but of relationships, culture, and social intuitions (Saunders). Neo-liberal ‘rationality’ “is not just directly economy or market focused; instead, it disseminates the values of these entities and imbues all institutions and social action with a cost and benefit ideology that slips into the subconscious” (Brown 10), and in this way, Weber and Marx’s principles are taken one step further, as focus on efficiency and profit become so deeply imbedded

in society that they cause a much greater level of tension and confusion in the American consciousness.

Neoliberalism's infiltration into the social psyche means that even students are finding conflict not just between themselves and the university, but within themselves; what they believe in and are taught at school but also how they are raised to think about life. This means that the institutions themselves are increasingly influenced by the very capitalist mentalities that they originally pitted themselves against with theoretical learning. Therefore, schools like Wesleyan must increasingly argue within the neoliberal framework that has simply become our way of thinking. They must claim that they are practical in their own way. What we have today is a liberal arts culture that outwardly is informed by the theoretical learning component, while simultaneously working in the practical realm.

### **Pressure for "Utility" Maximizes Conflict**

The effects of this heightened pressure can be seen in the politics surrounding education today. Governor Scott Rick, a Republican from Florida, has previously stated that if taxpayer money is going to be put toward education, then education ought to provide majors or specific schools (i.e. business or nursing undergrad programs) that will lead directly to specified jobs. There are many other conservative-identifying politicians who have shared this viewpoint. And yet, in a time when a college degree is required for most jobs and more and more Americans want and therefore need a college education, Obama has found his goals much informed by

neoliberal desires. When it comes to education, he might be seen as trying to achieve liberal goals in a way that was once viewed as conservative (Jaschik).

Recently, President Obama addressed access to education in a manner that was previously thought of as more conservative, echoing Reagan-era politics. In a recent speech on his new job training and management programs, Obama proposed that perhaps liberal arts schools were no longer the clear way to democracy, social improvement, and the manufacturing of jobs. His 2011 State of the Union address called for increased expenditure on research, education, and teachers of mathematics and science: he did not mention the humanities (Miller).

The Obama administration is looking to create a ratings system for colleges based on a multitude of factors that relate to access; how well do they provide scholarships, how frequently does that school lead to an immediate job, how much does that job pay (evaluated based on standard salaries for different jobs and acknowledging that salary overall is not necessarily a determinant of success).

The report states:

“In today’s world, college is not a luxury that only some Americans can afford to enjoy; it is an economic and social necessity for *all* Americans. Expanding opportunity for more students to enroll and succeed in college, especially low-income and underrepresented students, is vital to building a strong economy with a thriving middle class and critical to ensuring a strong democracy” (“Department of Education” 1).

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan has also supported these goals, saying that, “as a nation, we have to make college more accessible and affordable and ensure that all students graduate with a quality education of real value” (“Department of Education” 2). In response, the liberal arts argument has been that the jobs that come from a learning of routinized utility are “yesterday’s jobs,” and that those who are

educated through liberal arts will create new systems and types of occupations, and will reshape and improve the workforce instead of just fitting into it. The purported value of liberal arts is having life-long skills that can be applied to a multitude of situations, a response recently articulated by Wesleyan University's president, Michael Roth, in his recent exploration of liberal arts: Beyond the University: Why Liberal Education Matters. There he argues that liberal arts schools are the sole vehicle for preventing reification of social and economic inequality (Roth). Roth notes that even liberal arts have in some ways shifted to an education model meant to be accomplished task by task, uniformly, a "carefully maintained blend of institutional vagueness and corporate prowess" (Catano 424), until the goal of a degree is reached; he strives to keep liberal arts off this path. Rather, liberal learning should inspire learning for learning's sake as it once did, because it is pragmatic and utilitarian in its own ways.

Liberal arts institutions, in this neoliberal climate, must make an argument that they are worldly, and instruments for social change, not just an escape from reality. This is not necessarily conscious, and yet there is heightening pressure in a world where understanding is, often unknowingly, based around the weighing of cost and benefits. The elitism of liberal arts schools is justified by an argument from institutions like Roth's at Wesleyan, saying that these are places of experimentation and preparatory learning, so that students can emerge into the world ready to make change. Liberal arts schools often tend to gloss over the idea of access, making it seem as though they provide opportunity for all those who 'try hard enough.' Roth therefore argues that there are types of "utility" that liberal arts impart, in an effort to

recast utilitarianism and thereby offer a place for the liberal arts in the neoliberal regime.

Roth's utilitarian strand explores several facets of what it means to be learning for practical use at a liberal arts school. In many ways, external to his argument, these come into conflict with one another and also set up new oppositions where they might not originally exist. Within Roth's utility argument, there are two paths. Liberal arts learning creates practical options both by allowing one to further his or her own financial and social standing, and also by teaching the tools and information to help one change and improve society and its problems. Roth refers to these as co-existing strands, without recognizing the tensions they cause on one another. To use one's education to enhance one's economic and social standing would imply a neoliberal mentality of hard work and education for the purpose of mobility, a goal of success that closely ties in to the liberal arts message, while humanitarian efforts, also closely involved in the mission of these institutions would imply working and learning for the sake of others. Both are ways in which learning can be used and applied practically, but are very different.

Roth's idea of utility as improving one's financial status or social standing is interesting, because he does not explicitly state that this is more useful to those coming from poorer or more underprivileged and backgrounds: those who are often underrepresented on college campuses. He does, in a chapter called "pragmatism," refer to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and the efforts of influential black public figures to gain mobility for African Americans. Economic advancement, which Booker T. Washington believed could be achieved through learning practical skills, was not

enough in the views of critics; a liberal arts, well rounded learning would guarantee citizenship for those who did not have it in its creation of full thinkers with an understanding of society. Another group, led by W.E.B. DuBois, believed, in the original vein of Jefferson's democracy, that liberal arts learning was the best way to achieve autonomy, as well as citizenship: *specifically* for those black men who lacked it (Roth). Roth's examples of those using their learning in this way are all of those who were, historically, in a group that caused them to lack mobility in these ways. It is seemingly implied that in this version of utility, the passing on of this social and financial 'betterment' would presumably benefit those who came from a place *without* these structures in their favor, as opposed to his second example of utilitarianism. This enables him to argue for liberal education as an important way to alleviate social inequalities and yet, when they fail in actuality to move people up through the economic ladder, or when elite education is not statistically as accessible as schools would like to purport it to be (Liu), Roth and other liberal educators must argue that utility is two-fold.

The idea of access for "all" (as Roth points out in his book, just white males at this point) through government-provided, tax-funded schooling was an early idea traced back to Jefferson. According to Roth, Jefferson wanted to create an "equality of access or opportunity, not an equality in which everyone wins," (Roth 26), which furthers Roth's agenda in making it seem as though liberal arts are not based on idealistic versions of equality of access, but true access based on hard work and merit, another self-made man ideology. He does, however, at some points, try to address these problems, but never quite follows through.

For example, Roth begins by explaining that he has modified one of his courses, the Modern and the Postmodern, to fit a “MOOC” style: an online course in which he had thousands of students. This was different because “at Wesleyan, we embrace the label ‘Diversity University,’ but we are highly selective and admit a small percentage” (Roth 16). He therefore created this course so that *anyone* who wanted the knowledge (purely for the sake of having it) and experience could join this MOOC. He explains that while at first skeptical, he now believes that new technological platforms, which are making education more accessible to all and are creating less incentive or need for a more formal education and especially to pay the high cost for a liberal education, can be incorporated into liberal arts and used to advance liberal education. He goes on to explain the diversity, geographically and otherwise, of his students, and their responses to and reasoning for taking the course, which helped “them in the process of self-discovery while bringing them into a more thoughtful conversation with the world around them,” and helping them recognize or engage their love of learning for learning’s sake (Roth).

Roth embraces the ideal of the “self-made man,” one deeply ingrained in American history. The belief in the idea that any person of any background or walk of life can make her way to the top in a free-market, democratic society shows not only the way in which we equate success and mobility purely with hard work, but also the ways in which a person’s moral character becomes tied to her success.

Benjamin Franklin was quite possibly the original self-made man, rising through the social and economic hierarchy. He was the embodiment of economic mobility, and likeable because the way in which he did it was so admirable, and yet

the focus was not on his economic achievements, but on the bettering of his mind through hard work. He journeyed through his own hard work and likeable spirit from a candle-maker's son to a famous scientist, a patriot, and a wealthy man. The very first story from his *Autobiography* is meant to display his industry, his eagerness to learn, his thrift, his temperance, and his diplomacy. He was a likeable character known for these strong values. Franklin never went to college; instead criticizing the pretention of the institutions around him, and hoping to creating a distinctly American university which would allow the middle-class man to achieve success and dismantle the "unnatural" aristocracy, as Jefferson put it, where those with money controlled political and social power (Roth). At the beginning of this ideal, men were self-made primarily in that they were seeking knowledge and self-realization, working to enhance their minds. And yet, as society moved into industrialization and capitalism, and, as Weber writes in "The Protestant Ethic", the loss of religion led to a society that began to value money as a means to itself, the end goal of success changed, while the moral value judgments remained.

Thus, Americans began to see not just success vs. failure, but to truly attach morality to money. Corporate and capitalist America, beginning with monopolies and business tycoons such as Andrew Carnegie (a poor Scottish immigrant who rose to become a steel magnate), started to become and have stayed as our more modern, capitalist self-made men (Catano). Bill Gates, creator of Microsoft and billionaire, is a good modern day example. He is often portrayed as a man who made his way up through the ranks without finishing college, through smarts and hard work. While this is true, Gates was born to an upper-middle class family, went to private schools all his

life, and certainly had a supportive foundation: in other words, a good education and a well-off family if his innovations were to fail ("Bill Gates Biography").

There were reverse implications of these ideals. When person who experienced failure or could not achieve mobility, there was a subconscious stigma (usually associated today with a conservative mentality) that asked, ‘did they work hard enough?’ This myth of the self-made man clearly “overlooks the social exchange and institutional monitoring that actually have a hand in producing personal development” (Catano 1990), and today, most liberal arts students are increasingly aware of this. And yet, neo-liberalism still “figures individuals as rational, calculating creatures whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for “self-care”—the ability to provide for their own needs and service their own ambitions,” continuing to equate ‘responsibility’ as a moral character with rational action in the free market, and “it relieves the discrepancy between economic and moral behavior by configuring morality entirely as a matter of rational deliberation about costs, benefits, and consequences” (Brown 15).

President Obama’s State of the Union address on January 20, 2015, still rested upon these principles. A passage is as follows:

“Will we accept an economy where only a few of us do spectacularly well? Or will we commit ourselves to an economy that generates rising incomes and changes for everyone who makes the effort?...Will we allow ourselves to be sorted into factions and turned against one another—or will we recapture the sense of common purpose that has always propelled America forward?”

The President proceeds to tell the story of Rebekah and Ben Erler of Minneapolis, noting: “she waited tables. He worked construction.” This clearly points

out their working class status, and the story goes on to express their difficulties as the economy crisis led to a loss of business for Ben. Rebekah put herself through community college and began a new career, and, very slowly, the President notes, in an almost ‘brick-by-brick’ fashion, their lives begin to come together again; they buy “their first home. They ha[ve] a second son, Henry. Rebekah g[ets] a better job, and then a raise. Ben is back in construction—and home for dinner every night.”

The perseverance of this couple, going back to school and focusing on their good family values, is what made them succeed. The careful language of “everyone who makes the effort” implies that anyone who takes the proper, hardworking steps can find a job and be home in time for dinner. The emphasis here on the financial status of this family shows a “rags to riches” story in which the good moral values and the pull of a good education and desire to learn did away with the negative effects of unemployment and allowed for this family to excel. This age-old message reinforces the connections between morality and money. Liberal arts ends up

When Roth explains that Wesleyan is a highly selective university, he again says it in a way that implies that Wesleyan is solely selective based on academic merit, and that financial background has no implications whatsoever for accessing a school like Wesleyan. This denies the simple truth and fact that so many people do not have access to the resources that would allow them to score better on the SAT, know how to write well for an application, have the money to afford to record a song and send it in as a special talent, or even attend school in the first place. In contrast, Liu argues that today, a liberal arts education really is for the 1% (Berrett). Net tuition (after student aid) is a 3 times greater proportion of family income for low income

students than it is for high income students because of the wealth disparity and wealth distributions in this country (Neely). In fact, “a re-stratification of American higher education may be under way” (*The Choice-Income Squeeze*, 1998), the exact opposite of what Roth desires for liberal arts. The glossing over of income disparities and the fundamental problem this plays in liberal arts is very real in discourse over the benefits of such an institution. Thus, he moves quickly from his applied historical social mobility argument, to his ideas of community and social understanding and betterment.

It is widely believed that liberal arts universities, especially Wesleyan, foster passionate, well-informed, politically and socially active students. While I personally believe that today’s focus on current affairs and world problems leads to some beautiful and altering change and influence, the purposeful and conscious addition of this as a liberal arts value is important. Within this addition, as part of Roth’s “utility” argument, comes a level of contradiction that has become embedded in the way students learn and the ways in which they feel about their actions.

Roth’s argument about the role of liberal arts in social change and community outreach is exemplified by his account of Jane Addams. Addams was initially told she could not go to school, and was begrudgingly was allowed to attend college close to home, even though she desired to go to Smith. And yet, once she had been surrounded by and indoctrinated with philosophical learning, she felt that she could no longer produce a “basic response to human suffering” because her mind was full of the ‘fluff’ of literature. She felt that learning instead should be applied to working with the most vulnerable of citizens. She felt that “education should be wedded to

social engagement” as opposed to self-discovery, or what she considered to be vanity (Roth). She is considered by many to be the founder of social work in our country, mostly for her creation settlement houses. Volunteering middle-class women lived in these homes, which were situated in the middle of poor urban areas, and try to educate those around them, providing daycare and healthcare and hoping to alleviate poverty. It is here that one can draw a line between practical learning and community work; in Jane Addams’ eyes, her theoretical learning was meaningless unless it had implications for the greater good, similar to the ways in which neoliberal values believe that theoretical learning is meaningless because it holds no firm and clear attainable end goal financially.

Catherine Liu, author of The American Idyll: Academic Antielitism as Cultural Critique, reveals the ideological underpinnings of Roth’s utility argument. She speaks extensively on the goals of liberal arts and the missions and appearances they wish to set forward, touching upon the following:

“No matter how humble their family backgrounds, students identified as gifted and talented would be awarded entry into the nation’s top universities. After their course of study, they would choose to enter government and public service in order to pay back the social system that had allowed them to gain access to the inner sanctum that had once been reserved for America’s ruling classes. This sort of top-down reform anticipated the rewards of scientific philanthropy while discreetly covering up the uglier aspects of its intellectual and cultural inheritance” (Liu 45).

This shows the connection between the idea of the self-made man and community outreach. The humanitarianism we associate with liberal arts today actually seems to be an example of utilitarianism similar to this nations “trickle-down” theory, which translates into community building and humanitarianism or

activism. Trickle-down economics is most often associated with more conservative points of view, and it is interesting that such a system has become rooted in a more liberal institutional legacy. This perhaps contributes to some of the conflicts within the student body, which looks to engage in social change efforts but is also politically and often morally opposed to the actual theories of what they are perhaps accidentally practicing. Students hope that they can use their knowledge to help change the world, but it is hard to see a model for this that does not mirror the top-down theory so frequently associated with neoliberal politics (Berrett). Long Lane Farmers, as will be addressed, hope that knowledge from Long Lane can lead to bottom-up social change, but it is unclear if this is feasible.

Roth brings the utilitarian strands together by saying that overall, education should “result not in the snare of preparation, but in a turning of the individual toward public engagement in support of social progress,” and yet his position ends up being a contradictory one. Roth is faced with explaining that liberal arts is pragmatic while also being more, and in doing so, gives strong weight to community outreach in place of the practical, leading community to be held in contrast to capital.

### **Utility Model Leads to (mostly) Constructed ‘Capital vs. Community’**

The Protestant Ethic played a large role in the beginning of the self-made man myth. One must be honorable, hard working, and humble in order to guarantee a place in heaven, and to do so you had to have the utmost ‘level’ of morality; in other words, doing good works. Somehow, the rise of the middle class and the “spread of affluence due to modernization and industrialization came to be seen as the antithesis

of community building and maintenance” (Gagné 284), putting the moral in conflict with economic-focused mobility, thus created a fundamental and deeply embedded contradiction within the self-made man, and within, in a way, the American Dream. For example, this country is experiencing a widening wealth gap, with the “formation of a new American elite whose view of the world [is] increasingly estranged from the problems of ordinary Americans” (Liu 31), at the same time as these liberal institutions, increasingly made up of these elite, aimed further and further to improve the social problems of the ‘ordinary’ (Liu).

Part of the history within liberal arts well-rounded learning was the idea of learning from all ‘perspectives.’ This is meant to impart a lifelong ability to critically think and learn, and allows its students to go into the world and make change. Roth explains that liberal arts instills “virtues such as kindness, thoroughness, and thrift rather than mere intellectual skills” (Roth, 9), using moral values (“virtues) like ‘thrift’ to exemplify a better version of or alternative to the capitalist, money-focused version of practicality.

The example of Jane Addams shows the long history of humanitarianism and community building in the liberal arts tradition. Addams wanted to immerse herself in the lives of those she was helping, and this is where the lines between learning one another’s experiences from a distance and believing that because of this you completely understand another person experience begin to break down. Philanthropic efforts today are often used not just to do good but also to impress others, as a marketable skill of its own, and instead of using education just to assist the other, there is a culture of temporarily wanting to appear *like* the other. This probably

stemmed from the idea that it was imposing to enter a low-income community as a middle-class woman who knew nothing of the poor's circumstances. In many ways this is true, and has a lot to do with 'hipster' culture; it may be an attempt to appear less imposing or condescending. But in a way, it actually might worsen the situation.

Roth uses William James to further his points made through Addams and her philanthropy by understanding those she was helping, and yet, even though James was a big fan of Addams, it is possible that his views on understanding those who are different from us and learning from one another might not be possible in quite the same way as Addams. James notes that we are only capable of incorrectly interpreting and translating the experiences of others when we try to put them into our words through our own inevitable lenses, and that "if we cannot gain much positive insight into one another, cannot we at least use our sense of our blindness to make us more cautious in going over the dark places?" (Roth 92). This blindness is an expression for not being able to understand someone else's experiences or life paths and situations; James is mostly referring to 'blindness' from the side of those with certain kind of privileges who cannot possibly claim to understand the lives of those with poor access to and fewer resources, and lower socioeconomic statuses. Roth states that James understands learning as the way to *overcome* blindness, but it seems that James actually thinks the way to learn is more to acknowledge blindness, and that perhaps it never can be overcome. The difference between James and Addams is that the former purports that blindness cannot be overcome, but only situated, while Addams believes that she can overcome blindness, and in many ways becomes like those she is trying to help. There are therefore some paternalistic implications within

the ‘Jane Addams type’ of community outreach that liberal arts students often desire to partake in. These paternalistic implications expose a fear of association with privilege that has come to have a prominent place in the liberal arts ideology.

Anthropology and sociology have looked at the differences between theoretical models belonging to Marcel Mauss (1925) and Karl Marx (1976) in order to understand the relations surrounding exchange (Gagné). Mauss’ theories focus on the *social* relations surrounding ‘the gift,’ and the ways in which more informal exchange can actually bring people together, and often means more than just the exchange of goods, but also of ideas, morality, and spirituality. Marx’s theory reflects on the market relations in existence within capitalism, and claims that these monetary relations are inflexible and inescapable; everyone must labor to live (Howe 2014). Mauss is referring to ‘ancient’ communities, while Marx argues that once a society has become developed and has adopted capitalism, it switches permanently to a market form of relations. The desire to ‘return’ to social relations surrounding exchange is, in a way, offensive to those societies who still use this method of exchange. It also romanticizes an experience that, realistically, is hard to mirror, because these groups still exist within a capital-based society, and are, in fact, kept afloat by it.

To use an example that will segue into an exploration of Long Lane, the “back to the land” movement (i.e. eating well, looking at natural foods, knowing where one’s food comes from, being involved, usually briefly, in farming,) is still an imitation of a lifestyle. For many people, there is no “back” to the land; they never left it. Farming is the livelihood of millions, not just in the US but around the globe.

There is much literature written on paternalism and the ways in which it manifests itself in community work, but I mean to address it mainly to expose internal conflict which has been created that causes liberal arts and its students to feel the need to become and emulate the 'other' as opposed to just understanding them from a distance.

Similarly, there is a desire to downplay economic desires and interactions, because liberal arts desires to maintain its anti-capital ideology while working within its framework. To bring this particular analysis closer to farms before delving into Long Lane, I'd like to look at an analysis of farmer's markets as a place where the social and community aspects become a way for those of a certain means to feel that their exchanges in a market place are more than just monetary. Nana Okura Gagné, an anthropologist at Waseda University, conducted an anthropological study on the type of exchange which occurs at urban farmers markets. She argues that those participating in the market; sellers (farmers) and especially buyers (purchasers) desire to create something out of the exchange space that is more than just buying and selling. To do this, she notes that often, there is a desire to subvert the economic interactions; farmers will give 'personalized' discounts to regulars, there is occasionally an informal trading/bartering system, and customers feel that they can interact and form personal bonds with the farmers. Low income members just outside the immediate neighborhood in which the market is located often come with food coupons from children's hospitals, which farmers will accept even though they gain minimal profits, and sometimes will give unofficial discounts (Gagné).

And yet, the farm is situated where it is because, while farmers say they wanted to give low-income neighborhoods access, ‘farmers also need to make money,’ and thus, they landed in a more affluent neighborhood. When these low-income members enter the farmers market community, they enact different behaviors than those with higher incomes in the immediate area. They have stricter limits for what they can purchase, and they seem less comfortable walking around and chatting with farmers or sampling produce. In a way the ‘community’ aspect of the farmer’s market is a privilege. The community outreach that liberal arts promotes as its utility might actually similarly just be an extension of the luxury liberal arts students have of people able to focus on experimentation and outreach. This does not necessarily mean it is not a certain type of skill learning, but that it comes into conflict with other aspects of utility and practicality, and this type of skill learning is due to the ability to experiment, whereas most people do not have the leeway. This behavior mirrors the behavior of liberal arts student farmers at Wesleyan’s Long Lane Farm, who believe that their community interactions are a large part of what they do on the farm. At the Middletown Farmers market, Long Lane farmers must actually make sure not to undersell, because they might take away from those other farmers who need the money (King\*). Gagné notes that, in actuality, the farmers at her farmer’s market actually must think of the market in much more business-like terms, and that they “feel constrained by the powerful role played by the local idea(1) of this market as a space of renegotiation that can incorporate seemingly antithetical domains of business and sociality,” and that they don’t always have the time to engage in conversation or the ability to lower prices.

This construction of a conflict between community and capital is one of the most important implications of the pressure liberal arts are feeling and the impact it has on students. This, therefore, brings me to Long Lane farm as a case study of historical tensions between practicality and theory, and more modern tensions between neoliberalism and liberal arts and, consequently, capital and community.

## CHAPTER TWO

Long Lane is the student run farm on Wesleyan University's campus. In 2000, Wesleyan bought 152 acres of land, the old campus of the Long Lane School, from the State of Connecticut. Long Lane Farm was founded on 2 acres of this land in 2005 ("Existing and Resisting"). Long Lane was an offshoot of the Community Gardening Club, which had a piece of land on Washington Street, and also helped out with several community gardens that they shared with Middletown, including one in Travis Square and one at the Senior Citizen's Center. This club wanted to expand, and in 2003, some students decided to write a proposal to the university to start a campus farm. The two different clubs (farm and community gardening) seemed to morph into one (Rast). The farm began in the spring of 2003, due to the hard work and negotiations of its original founders and members. It has since held a complicated history full of different phases in which varying goals and ideologies have been dominant.

### **The Farm's History and Structure: Overview**

The farm has had ups and downs and different mentalities throughout its

history. Long Lane began after many meetings with administration and faculty and a submission of several budgetary proposals along with extensive written reviews of student farms. They got their start with funding from the WSA (Wesleyan Student Assembly), which has continued today and is carried on by the SBC (Student Budget Committee). They also did a lot of networking with NOFA (Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut), a group that organizes farmer's markets in different CT counties, and applied for multiple grants (Rast). They received a grant from the Middlesex County Community Fund to fund a student internship program that would assist with summer maintenance, and Barry Chernoff, Professor of Environmental Studies and, later, the founder of the College of the Environment, created a full-time summer internship under the Environmental Studies Program. They also received a grant from the Rockfall Foundation (LLF 2005 Report). Long Lane still works with many of these organizations today. They also found ways to get a lot of things donated at their start; for example, Buildings and Grounds donated the shed and leaves, they found a local farmer to plow the land for free, and several sources donated seeds (Rast).

Originally, Long Lane was run by just a few passionate students. They worked tirelessly to create healthy soil and learn about starting a farm. According to Rast, their intentions were to stay organized and proficient so that they would not lose the responsibility and land they had been given and could live up to expectations. The farmers have had many similar ideology and intentions throughout its history, but originally, the farm's vision for structure and management was slightly different than it is today. They planned to have a full-salaried manager, mainly because at its

inception in 2005, Long Lane was able to get support from the university by comparing its goals to small farms on campuses such as Vassar and Dartmouth, who had farms with full time staff, and salaried farm workers who also taught courses (Rast). The 2005 Farm Report expressed the farmer's desires to form a firm partnership with the university. The relationship of students to administration has since been a continuous balance between keeping good terms with the university while still enacting the type of structures and efforts that the farmers see fit.

After this initial startup, a new mentality emerged on the farm in which students believed that Long Lane's primary function was to be an important space for experimentation, and in order to truly learn and be in charge of their own affairs (autonomous to a degree), they needed to avoid having oversight. However, because students were opposed to anything that might seem to mirror bureaucratic structure (which was seen in opposition to experimentation), they were not adamant about working through the administration to promote the farm or to gain tools that might have helped them with their work. As it stood, there were very few workers for a lot of work. The farm almost lost its footing during this time and was at risk for falling apart in many senses; in productivity, in membership, in organization, and in morale (Chernoff).

After this period, a few new students decided to take control of the farm before it completely disbanded, including Eric Green\* and Billy Rind\*, who have been interviewed for this piece. This group of farmers decided to involve the university in more fluidly in their pursuits, in order to enhance support for the farm and publicize its efforts. Around this time, in the summer of 2012, Gillian

Goslinga, assistant professor of anthropology at Wesleyan, took on the role of the farm's faculty advisor. The farm had not had a faculty advisor for years although it had had a longstanding benefactor and mentor, its founder, Barry Chernoff, who asked Goslinga to join him in working with the student farmers that summer.

Goslinga had no experience with farming but saw an opportunity to bring her training in cultural anthropology and her background in marketing to help the farmers steer their collective as well as realize their plans for creating a fully working community farm. Goslinga saw her role as helping to facilitate the internal dynamics of the collective as well as to create the infrastructure of the farm and its public presence on campus and in the larger community. She was also committed to this group of students' vision of horizontal organization and self-management through consensus. When she came on, there were five students, with little farming experience, who still were very involved in revitalizing the farm. Goslinga helped them network with local farm supporters, as well, coaching them on how to present both the farm and its produce. Before securing a tent at the North End Farmers Market, student farmers sold their produce in front of Neon Deli. Next Goslinga suggested that the students needed to get clear about their vision and mission for the farm. Without a clearly stated mission and vision (an agenda and structure) that was agreeable to everyone, the farmers wouldn't be able to make wise and purposeful decisions because they would have no standard around which to evaluate them. Goslinga also worked with them closely on the practical dynamics of what it meant to work collectively and in an alternative way. She asked them to think about what kinds of meetings would they hold, what kinds of infrastructure

would they create for themselves in terms of logistical operations and recording practices, and, most importantly, how would they ensure the farm's continuity from generation to generation of graduating students. She suggested that they recruit freshman and sophomores every fall, even with the possibility of working with the admissions office to advertise and put out the message about the farm to incoming and prospective students. Students set up the Saturday community work mornings, advertising to the campus. They worked on the aesthetic presentation of the farm, and placed new value on systematizing information in as organized a manner as possible because it was integral to creating a precedent for how the farm would be run and organized in years to come by future generations of students (Goslinga). This period of the farm saw many tensions, as they had to deal with larger problems that intimately involved legal and public relation problems. They were adamant about their 'alternative-ness' in terms of structure and consensus (non-hierarchical organization), but also wanted to and had to form new relationships that required, as Goslinga puts it, a more 'working' farm; in other words, a farm that participated in exchange of goods and began to structure their goals in a way that would make them visible and more 'legitimate' in terms of the systems it is situated within.

Thus, historically, the farm began with a more comprehensive plan for salaried positions, easing into a non-hierarchical system that kept very few records, and today, returning to a more structured record-keeping system (, the 2014 Farm Report is the first in many years in the farms 11 year history,) while still intending to retain the non-hierarchical structure and certain accompanying values. It is the situating of ideologies and values, similar to those of liberal arts in general, that

exposes the tensions within the farm and in its external interactions.

The farm today usually informally refers to itself as Long Lane or “the farm.” More recently, it has called itself the Long Lane Collective. Today, the farm still looks for and is funded by all different kinds of grants, both internal and external to Wesleyan, to fund members and/or students to stay on for the summer. The farm is primarily funded by the SBC, which means that it is funded like other student clubs. In order to use their allotted money, farmers must either submit receipts in order to be reimbursed (usually for smaller purchases), or apply for what are usually larger projects or more expensive tools and wait to receive the money. For a few years only three people were funded in the summer, but eventually the Green Fund was able to get involved, and since then the program has expanded. Wesleyan’s Green Fund was created in the Spring of 2010 and manages about \$85,000 a year, made possible by an ‘opt out’ \$15 sustainability fee which is part of student tuition. The Green Fund allocates this money to different proposals submitted by students, faculty, and staff to “increase the University’s use of renewable energy sources, decrease the University’s carbon footprint, and decrease waste,” and they often accept proposals from Long Lane (“Wesleyan Green Fund”). The Green Fund is therefore another key resource for the farm; they fund several summer farm intern positions, helped Long Lane obtain its greenhouses, and have funded other big projects (Brand).

Long Lane also works closely with Bon Appétit Management Company, Wesleyan’s dining service. Currently, Bon App works with Long Lane in a type of informal exchange system. Michael Strumph, Bon Appétit’s Resident District Manager, explained that the company has arrangements with farms at other schools,

but that his was specific to Wesleyan's farm. During the farm's short period after inception in which it wanted no oversight, Strumph had offered a similar arrangement to the one that is in place now, but students were not interested. Strumph says that after this, there was a renewed interest in the revitalizing the farm and committing to giving produce to Bon App in exchange for two 40 hour a week positions (probably around 2012 when Goslinga got involved). The company is willing to take whatever produce happens to emerge from the farm, meaning that farmers do need to commit solely or fully to a structure prioritizing output and production. However, the intentions of Bon App were to help the farm get itself off the ground in a more 'organized' manner. At the beginning of a season, Bon App will sit down with the farmers and talk to them about what they plan on growing, what the company might be able to use or would prefer, and other details about the exchange (Strumph). From there on, it is a fairly easy relationship; the farm emails what produce they will be delivering and brings it to Bon Appetite's kitchens. The 80 hours a week paid labor is technically based on an eight dollars per pound price, but farmer and senior Bridget King\* says that this is inflated, as this is the price that greens would go for, but not other produce, like tomatoes, which might be about two dollars a pound.

Long Lane considers itself to be an alternative farm, one that values small and sustainable agriculture, and looks to unconventional methods of farming such as permaculture, which tries to simulate what a 'natural' ecosystem would be like without management, either by leaving a piece of land completely alone, or by at least making an effort to work with natural systems and manipulating them as minimally as possible (Mollison).

Long Lane is run according to non-hierarchical principles and uses consensus decision-making (both mentioned by Goslinga, above). Within each meeting, one person is selected at random to facilitate that particular session, to allow for different members to get a chance in this role. Someone else volunteers to take notes, and someone to keep time of the meeting. Then a list, made prior to the meeting by a farm member who is elected collectively at the beginning of the semester. This person includes several points on a Google Document, and then other members of the list serve can add their own points and agenda items. During the meeting, the list and is addressed item by item (“LLF Annual Report 2014”). Some items are more technical (what is physically planted where), some more logistical (how to get new Long Lane T-shirts printed for Pumpkin Fest), and some more business-like (what to communicate to Bon App, the school dining service, about how much produce they will receive from Long Lane on a particular week). Also, during the meeting, if there are suggestions for how to address the agenda items or proposals for new ideas, the type of consensus used is one based on a hot, warm, or cold (yes, maybe, no) system, indicated by show of fingers. Fingers up in the air means yes, middle means maybe, and down means no. If there is mostly consensus, those who want to speak up about why they were indicating “no” or “maybe” can do so, and then either a discussion ensues or the proposal goes through or gets down-voted. Discussions can last anywhere from 30 seconds to months. There are many students involved peripherally with Long Lane. There is a student list serve to which many students belong, and they can decide if they’d like to show up for a particular Sunday meeting, or to participate in certain events but not others; there are many different frequencies of involvement.

There are therefore a few ‘key’ members, even within this non-hierarchical system, who take on a lot of the responsibility by being present both on the farm and at meetings most often and therefore taking on a larger proportion of tasks. Also, different involved students have different interests, and thus a student will occasionally act as a point-person for a specific topic. Early farmers believe that this emerged on its own, with different farmers taking on the roles they were most passionate about within different facets of the farm, none of which was given more important than the other (Munez). Today, this is still true in many ways, and yet in the projected image of the farm, the community work it does is not just one of its many involvements, but a piece that ties the farm together regardless of differing points of view in other arenas. This “community work” means the many ways in which Long Lane is involved both within the Wesleyan community and, mainly, with the wider Middletown Community. There are many different types of involvement, but those that come into highest focus are often those involvements that include spreading education about farming or donating food from the farm. The ways in which students use this community aspect to demonstrate an overall goal or a uniting force expose the intense tensions between community and capital.

The 2014 Long Lane Farm Annual Report notes that Long Lane has a strong presence both within in the Wesleyan community and the Middletown community, and that Long Lane is “first and foremost an education space” where “sharing both produce and knowledge is an integral part of our mission” (“LLF Annual Report 2014”). The report goes on to say that Long Lane hopes to break down social barriers between communities by bringing people together and sharing skills. The farm

participates in many community activities, including selling food at the North End Action Team Farmers Market, holding Pumpkin Fest and Mayday for Wesleyan students and anyone in the broader community, and the Community Food Project with funding from Wesleyan's Patricelli Center for Social Justice and the Rockfall Foundation. This project is meant to be an educational program for families with children on federal free lunch programs. The annual farm report calls it a "free CSA," where families and kids can learn about the farm, growing food, and then can take a "share" of food. The farm (as well as other groups and facets of Wesleyan University) also works with the Middlesex Transition Academy, which provides students with disabilities, ages 18-21, with opportunities to 'transition' into adulthood ("Middlesex Transition Academy"), as well as with the Middletown Vocational Agriculture Program, which sends volunteers to help with farm activities for school credit ("LLF Annual Report 2014").

The goals of community building found in the mission statement have their own place within historical liberal arts tensions that create contradictions and strains for farmers. The current mission of the Long Lane Farm Collective is as follows:

"Long Lane is a cooperatively run organic farm that uses ecological growing practices to nourish the land and people of the Middletown and Wesleyan community. We strive to collapse the boundaries between theory and practice, work and play, productivity and creativity, through experiential learning. Long Lane Farm is a site of collaboration within our local community that demonstrates the vital importance of small farms in a just and sustainable food system." (LLF Report 2014)

The desire to collapse boundaries between theory and practice is very interesting, because it shows that students are certainly aware of the conflicts between these types of learning, and that the goal of Long Lane is to interweave and combine

them to create an immersive environment. However, the mission states that the farm will implement these two types of learning through experiment, which creates a confusion situation, as often, experimental methods come into conflict with the ‘practical;’ for example, tensions would arise if some student farmers would like to let a plot of vegetables grown on its own to learn from what happens, but other student farmers are afraid to lose their yield from that plot because they would like to give the carrots to Bon App or sell them at the farmers market. It seems as though Long Lane is trying to merge two historically opposing facets of learning by using predominantly experimental learning, which is usually associated with the ‘learning for learning’s sake’ school of thought, and therefore Long Lane seems to be choosing a type of learning right off the bat as an ideology, even as they try to say they will be merging learning types. While perhaps none of this is impossible, it is the confusions embedded in this elaborate map of conflicts and tensions that I hope to expose through an analysis of the farm and dialogue of its farmers.

Extrapolated from the tensions between practical and theoretical (experimental) are tensions between liberal arts methods and capitalist or neoliberal ideologies, which on the farm manifests as tensions between the students and the university, because it pits an alternative, non-hierarchical structure against a bureaucratic one. These tensions take the practical and learning for learning’s sake conflicts and show where, in liberal arts, they become economic.

This, in turn, produces another conflict; where capital becomes directly opposed to community building through the above conflict and an attempt to disassociate two things from one another that are historically interwoven. Students at

Long Lane say that they are connected by a love for aspects of farming and a desire to pass on this knowledge in some way. The student farmers express a desire to give back to different communities, from the community of just Wesleyan students to the broader Middletown community, in multiple capacities, extending from selling produce to certain members at farmers markets and originally even selling CSA shares, to more collaborative efforts with those who have fewer resources and access to the kind of food Long Lane grows and the kinds of theory behind the farm. I hope to expose why this version of utility, the humanitarian and community building strain, is meant to be a uniting force amongst all other conflicts.

Long Lane Farm comes up against many tensions, both within itself, between individual members, and between its overall mission and goals and the goals of the administration or state at large. These tensions exemplify the historical struggles between practical and theoretical, neoliberalism/capitalism and theoretical learning, and the constructed and enhanced opposition between capital and community.

### **Liberal Arts Ideology vs. Neoliberalism: Conflicts Between Farmers and Administration**

Learning for learning's sake has come into direct conflict with learning practically, primarily because the neoliberal values which have found their way into the subconscious of Americans dictate that one ought to learn in a more direct and efficient manner for the purpose of finding a job and thus seeking a fairly direct monetary reward. Weber's rationalization and Marx's theories of capital come into play here as the 'opposite' of what liberal arts as an entity is meaning to stand for. A

desire for efficiency and expediency and the ways in which capital has become embedded in our daily lives is highly associated with the desire in neoliberalism to learn for directly and practically, and thus, liberal arts must work against these values that are, essentially, putting them out of business. This is difficult, however, because to be successful, liberal arts must frame things in terms of the structure they live in. Because our economic system has merged with the social, most people weigh things in terms of cost and benefit without intending to, and thus it is increasingly confusing for the farm to act as an alternative space, because the outside world they must interact with is increasingly capitalist in structure. In this vein, the alternative structure and values of Long Lane often come into conflict with the bureaucratic structure and definitions of success as defined by the administrative offices the farm interacts with. The non-hierarchical model of the farm values collaboration and consensus over time expediency and efficiency. This comes in conflict with the more hierarchical and efficiency-based methods of the administration.

Long Lane's theoretical learning is possible because the university subsidizes it. Because Long Lane does not need to worry about creating a profit or making money in the same way as a farm working without grant funding might, experimental methods and theoretical structure are valued; students learn from texts to gain a philosophical understanding of farming and try out experimental practices without too great of a concern for economic failure. Because of student turnover, the farm's organizational abilities and mentality often shift slightly with this influx of new members. The organizational aims of the farm when it first began changed to become more 'alternative'—having a less business-like organization and little oversight—to

the point of the farm almost disbanding. In the aftermath of this, the farm had to find a way to keep its alternative desires while still maintaining an active involvement of students and enhancing its legitimacy by keeping relationships with more structured entities like administrative outposts, the Green Fund, and Bon Appetit. The farm depends on these structures for its survival and legitimacy, and their values are not necessarily in keeping with the farm's values or organizations.

In the past few years, there have been several key events that have meant the farm has had to increase its collaborations with the administration. The language used by farmers to refer to the administration makes it seem like an obstacle. King said that as a freshman, the administration was very hands off; "they didn't know what we were doing, didn't use us for advertising; they weren't ever a problem" (King). This conception of the university as something that could be a problem comes from an anti-bureaucratic philosophy, which echoes the desire of liberal arts students to separate themselves from rigid structure. An anthropology paper written by two student farmers refers to Long Lane as a "site of embedded subversion," where the farm is "entangled within the bureaucracy of Wesleyan" ("Existing and Resisting" 2). Thus, Long Lane is constantly feeling the pull of the system within which they are embedded. Even those farmers who, in their interviews, did not take as strong an anti-capitalist stance, such as Rind, said that they believed a lot of the problems Long Lane faces are "because it's mediated by the administration at Wesleyan, which is minimally supportive and pretty constricting" (Rind).

One example of a way in which the farm has begun to shift slightly toward a model that addresses cost-benefit while still hoping to maintain their non-hierarchical

structure is consensus. For a long time Long Lane was run on a 100% consensus system, where all members had to agree before a proposal or project was accepted and enacted. More recently, the farm has worked with a more flexible model of consensus. The model used now indicates that every idea is open to discussion but may not always require complete consensus. Often, proposals or ‘motions’ are smaller things, and there is easy and unanimous agreement, or, at the very least, no definite ‘nos’ and few concerns, but in the event of a larger issue, a consensus-style meeting might take a long time, as the goals are not efficiency but to allow every voice to be heard, and to allow all different viewpoints to inform others and let members learn from one another. There is no limit or pressure placed on the length of discussion time. Even further changes to the model have been the hope of certain farmers over the years, including Rind, a recent graduate who expressed his hope that, perhaps, “as the farm figures out how to assign specific responsibilities to individuals or groups of individuals, it will retain its non-hierarchically without bringing every decision before the entire group,” (Rind). This shows a preference for more a slightly more ‘efficient’ strategy while still holding onto the values and essential structure of the Long Lane Collective.

Not all farmers see their model as being in direct opposition to the economic and social models of our time, but at least one farm member, including Green, argued that the alternative way of teaching within Long Lane would allow it to, like “countless [other] innovative, small, ecological, community-oriented farm projects [to not only survive] *under* capitalism, but [to] *survive* capitalism” (Green), again taking up this idea of Long Lane as existing outside of capitalism and neoliberalism. The ways in

which liberal arts have come to be pitted against economic climate are clear within these thoughts and statements about the farm. The ways in which neoliberalism has informed thought about liberal arts since Reagan's era have only heightened this conflict and made it seem like a direct opposition, especially to the student body. In a direct opposition to the idea of top-down economics, Long Lane intends to educate student farmers so that they will be able to enter the world with a knowledge of farming that allows them to start practically, from the bottom up, to change food systems and spread their method of farming (Green). It is unclear whether or not this, in actuality, would be a bottom up system, or what that might fully look like, but farmers certainly hold this in mind as being in opposition to the current ideas on assuaging wealth and inequality.

These tensions are exemplified by the conflicts Long Lane has had over obtaining chickens. In the spring of 2013, the collective decided that it would like to have chickens on the farm. Goslinga notes that this is when things began to change for the farm in terms of their perceived autonomy. The farm had always had a very self-directed existence; in other words, was able to structure itself and run its own agenda. However, chickens involved a new level of legality and public relations issues, such as end of life and other ethical questions. This meant there was a new level of faculty and administrative involvement in the farm. Farmers felt that this exposed the “tensions between increased visibility that brings about perceived legitimacy, and increased visibility that results in expanded regulation” (“Existing and Resisting” 9), once again showing the conflict between Long Lane and interaction with the university as a bureaucratic but legitimate structure. This was the beginning of a high

and increased involvement of the university in the affairs of the farm. As the farm grew both in production of food and size of its collective, as well as ambitions, the administration created The Long Lane Committee of which the Long Lane Farm Collective was made to be a part. The Committee included staff members and other stakeholders from the administration. During this transition in supervisory structure, Goslinga coached the farmers on how to work and organize themselves so that the university could recognize they were "solid enough to manage [their] own affairs," thus maintaining the horizontal structure and consensus based decision making process, even during these meetings, that was so important to the farmers' vision of their collective" (Goslinga, King). The administration noted that John Meerts, the Vice President for Finance and Administration, would have the final say, regardless of the consensus (King). Therefore they aimed for 80% consensus, "as a nod to time constraints inevitable in the university environment" ("Existing and Resisting" 10). Long Lang members felt that they were being put through a long and step by step process when, for example, they had to form long, formal documents and proposals for their chickens, including a chicken memorandum of understanding, contingency plans, and many other documents. Also, farmers felt that the university was mainly looking after its image, instead of actually being interested in the information they were dispensing about the benefits of chickens and how to manage their well-being. The university decided that the chickens could not be free range, which is often better for them, because they could be picked off by a hawk or harmed in some way, and Wesleyan did not want to deal with the liability (King). It is this

image-based values-system that liberal arts students associate with the capitalist model.

Also, as the university started to become more involved, Wesleyan Long Lane members felt that they had to translate their definitions of things like success and communication to fit the rhetoric of an institution situated within neoliberal ideas. They felt that the university determined success in terms of things like profit and expediency, and this meant that the farmers had to transform their ideas into more formal language, or quantify their produce outputs, or allow for slight changes to their non-hierarchical structure.

In the eyes of the administration, this structure creates some inconsistencies when one person is used as a point person for the entire farm. Long Lane's collective opinion is most clear when members are together as a collective. When spoken to individually, members have different opinions. This is to be expected, and the point of the non-hierarchical model is to work out these differences and come to consensus; the problem occurs when one individual speaks as though their views are that of the collective. Although the collective has worked and agreed, at times, to have different point people on different topics, sometimes the collective message comes out through the lens of that one person. This does not seem to be intentional, but rather occurs when members think they are cohesively molding their particular stance with that of the group, but still end up expressing a view that not everyone might have.

In a 2013 conversation with the farm, Jennifer Kleindienst, Wesleyan's Sustainability Coordinator, noted:

“Last year there was such a focus on consensus and sometimes no one was responsible for things, and these things fell through the cracks...for example,

lets say some person from Physical Plant talked to Person A, but really Person B was the one with knowledge of the project. Person A never got the message across to Person B, but Physical Plant did not necessarily know to go to Person B, either” (qtd. in “Existing and Resisting” 7)

This particular analysis of the Collective and its consensus methods is certainly through a lens that values efficiency and expediency. The idea that some information might get lost in translation or take longer to reach its final destination might not actually be a large obstacle to a collective, because time management is not as constrictive. It is easy to see where this could look like disorganization, but it is also possible to note that organization is a bureaucratic objective. However, there are instances in which the overall decisions and ideology of the collective seem to fall apart in the absence of the collective. Green Fund member Jack Brand\* also pointed this out from his experiences and involvements with the farm as a collective, saying that on Long Lane, “there are too many conflicting leaders, there’s no one leader you can talk to with a vision for the farm,” and expressing that often, he would correspond with one particular member, and then would realize that this was perhaps not the exact belief or desire of other farm members (Brand). The ways in which information travels and gets translated by a non-hierarchical system does not match well with the clear and direct ways in which bureaucratic systems desire to obtain their information. For farmers, it might not seem as important to get across one clear message, but rather to have several voices for a topic, or to have a best approximation.

Long Lane student famers aim for a certain amount of autonomy, even though they are subsidized and grant funded, “a small band of radicals making a life and a political statement on a two-acre piece of land” (“Existing and Resisting” 8).

Goslinga points out that ‘autonomy’ for Long Lane means that the farmers must demonstrate an ability to care for and run their own affairs, structure themselves productively, and act as their own ‘sovereign entity,’ especially when collaborating with the university. It was important for Long Lane to be able to hold its own in a partnership with the university, as their non-hierarchical organization, as somewhat of a social experiment, needed to be sturdy and able. She notes the farm could not be financially autonomous because students do not “have deep pockets (though many put their own money down)” (Goslinga). The farm was (and still is not) financially autonomous, (though, in Goslinga’s eyes, it could become so). As a University farm ultimately, she says, “it is an educational space, a space of *student* social experimentation and activism, and the infrastructure is upheld by Bon Appetit, COE fellowships, the Green Fund, and the SBS” (Goslinga). Goslinga hoped that Long Lane farmers could become more autonomous in terms of the control of their own money, even if they could never be completely financially independent.

The ideas of financial autonomy and total financial independent (what I will call “complete” financial autonomy) are difficult to separate. The former suggests that farmers would have better control of their money, but the sources of their money would still be subsidy, grant, and fund-based, and the latter suggests that the farm would be able to fully support itself without external help, by selling produce at farmer’s markets, creating CSA shares, and other methods. For student farmers, a desire to be autonomous in a structural way might bleed into and combine with desires for *complete* financial autonomy, even though farmers do know they are subsidized. Frustrations expose these internal liberal arts tensions; farmers are eager

to push against the very system they work within, and are, in fact, dependent on. Because they are technically a student group, the Student Budget Committee (SBC) now keeps the farm's money, based on proposals and projections of estimated farm costs, in a university-run account. In order to access this money, farmers must apply for projects big and small, which frustrated the farmers. If farmers run out of a wrench, a hoe, or even lighter fluid at the annual Pumpkin Fest BBQ, they cannot simply grab the 10-30 dollars they are looking for, but rather have to go through a rather arduous process to either submit receipts and get reimbursed or apply and wait for the money (King, Goldsmith, Paradise).

Because of this, there is a history of student farmers creating their own external bank accounts and depositing money from the farmer's market and other fund-raiding events. Over the past 5 years, the collective has set up several external bank accounts, and then had their accounts shut down by the university or, less directly, have been told they must close the account before others in the administration find out about it (King). Student farmers desire autonomy, even though this desire conflicts with the fact that if they were completely autonomous not just in structure but economically, they would not be able to sustain themselves financially, or would possibly have to switch to a model that valued efficiency and business over learning and experimenting. Student farmers have learned to operate in this ambiguous space, sometimes functioning in slight secrecy or shaping information in a certain way so that the administration will be supportive, and sometimes using their legitimacy as a university organization to obtain such things as grants for funding, or associations with the community, or a place at the farmers market.

Farmers do note that “perhaps, the farm is not as idealistically autonomous as it may consider itself” (“Existing and Resisting” 7); in other words, the frustrations over not having flight financial autonomy can sometimes reveal themselves in a student attitude that purports that Long Lane could be completely financially independent, even when, asked to think about it realistically, farmers know this is not true. Even in their basic tensions with the fact that they cannot control small portions of their money for small projects, they are finding themselves frustrated with a structure that is inherently their means of survival.

And yet, in the face of a proposal that would have allowed the farm to operate in a more economically autonomous manner, farmers were unsure, exposing that perhaps, the security of their more flexible arrangement with Bon App does play a factor in decisions in a monetary way. Most Long Lane farmers were not interested in a Green Fund proposal in fall 2013 that would allow Long Lane to be somewhat more autonomous with their money, at the risk of more responsibility placed on their outputs and production.

Long Lane is situated such that it can afford to be more experimental because it does not need to focus on making money to keep itself afloat due to its subsidization, but at the same time, the collective often wants to be able to make money for the sake of convenience and a feeling of autonomy. King notes, “we’re not a small business because we don’t have to make a profit but we buy and sell in a high frequency,” and it is in this in between stage, as a subsidized farm that does not operate for profit but still runs in many ways like a business, that there is inherent conflict. This is not to say that these tensions do exist in non-for-profit farms in the

world outside of academia, but often these farms are in the most precarious financial place and are in need of constant aid and have to worry about their subsidies and grants, and therefore have less flexibility for their money and must worry about it. On Long Lane, however, none of the farmers' livelihoods are at stake, and members know they can usually get the money they need and sometimes extra, which leaves them with room for experimentation; they can devote money to a particular project and, if it fails, they will not be in a precarious situation. They can devote land to experiments, which might fail because they do not depend fiercely on amount produced. They do, however, want to be able to produce enough for Bon Appétit, the farmer's market, and other pursuits, and have lately in the past year become more interested in recording output (Paradise).

Green Fund member Brand noted that there was a tense relationship between the Green Fund and the farm during his freshman year in 2012, which he believed to be due in part to the fact that the farmers aren't in control of their own money (Brand). Independence (autonomy) to Brand meant that Long Lane wouldn't have to go to the Student Budget Committee or Green Fund for little things, like shovels, but instead could carry out their own discretionary funding. The Green Fund put together an economic model based on an input and output system that included components of productivity such as number of student workers, hourly rate, production in pounds per week, etc. They included and extrapolated for new factors that would lead to heightened production, such as the new Long Lane greenhouse, which increases production year round including the winter. Brand believed that the collective would possibly be able to break even, and over the years with increased efforts, could even

begin to make profits around \$2,000. This was a detailed, projected model, with variables that could be manipulated by changing inputs like amount of labor/hours per week to see changes in output, including profit.

The proposal suggested that Bon Appétit and Long Lane change their arrangement; instead of funding a flexible 80 hours a week in exchange for any produce, Bon Appétit would pay market rate for the poundage of whatever produce they happened to receive that particular week, and they would directly pay this money to the farm and the farm could choose to use this money as it saw fit. This would mean that Long Lane would be more devoted to its output because there would be higher stakes if they happened to produce less. Labor would then be funded by the Green Fund, who would pay half of the salary of workers on the farm (five dollars of the ten dollars an hour farmers currently make). As is policy according to Brand, the university would then match the 5-dollar wage for work-study students. After a while (the time was not specified), Long Lane would be able to generate enough revenue and save enough money to pay back the Green Fund for funding their salaries, and they would eventually make a surplus, based on current projections. Long Lane would continue to receive funding from the SBC and could still submit larger projects to the Green Fund for approval, but the idea was that for smaller items, they could have some monetary flexibility. This made many farmers uncomfortable because it meant that the focus would shift away from the pursuit of knowledge through experimental trial and error and more toward a valuation of quantity of production in order to generate profit. And yet, as Bill Rind points out, “earning money from working at the farm was important for a lot of students, both as financial aid jobs and

otherwise, [and] enabled people to commit more consistent time to the farm in lieu of working another paying job” (Rind). Separately, it felt to Long Lane members and others as though the Green Fund was trying to take hold of the farm and threatening their autonomy; which may actually have been the case. Bon App seems quite happy with their relationship and current arrangement with the farm. The Green Fund was working as a separate group hoping to lend its voice and possibly become greater stakeholders (Strumph).

Brand noted that the Green Fund hoped to help the farmers assuage relationships between the university systems and the farm system, by allowing them a semi-autonomy. Farmers rejected this idea due to their dislike of economic models and their desire to keep their experimental possibilities and maximize their autonomy, but there is also a strong possibility that, perhaps, the inflated pay of Bon App and the support for non-work study students and the constant support of larger structures in the administration were things that the collective did not want to lose (Brand). In other words, the values of Long Lane came into conflict with the security of a more flexible monetary arrangement, under the guise of Long Lane not wanting to operate in a more business-like manner.

### **Practical vs. Theoretical: Experimental or Entrepreneurial?**

Long Lane not only experiences conflict between itself and other entities but also within its own membership. These conflicts mirror tensions between practical learning and learning for learning’s sake. The farm has always had experimental components; in the first year, the farm managers conducted projects for the College of the Environment by looking into different pest managements, and they had an

experimental plot with broccoli. Goslinga's first contribution was to organize a trip to Eliot Coleman's Four Season Farm in Maine, a hero of organic farming and the students. Students spent two nights and three days farming with Coleman, and learning directly from him. Eliot Coleman's writings on farming tend to be very technical, and thus the learning experience farmers were receiving here was practical in its barest form. In Goslinga's words, "this kinetic learning and other consultations with local farmers gave the students techniques, visuals and a regional network for how to lay out a working farm" (Goslinga). This idea of a "working" farm aligns more closely with the practical form of learning. Long Lane's permaculture slope, in existence today, is an example of the overlap between these types of learning; it is a widely used practice on small farms looking to follow more 'alternative' methods; and thus, it is not just experimental, but practical in the sense that it is known and used by all kinds of farmers and farms.

Where the practical comes into conflict with the experimental is where it takes the form of entrepreneurship or more '(capitalist) business-like' aims. For example, permaculture is a well-known practice, but does not necessarily yield much produce. This could come in conflict with the a desire to learn and farm in a way that will fit the business-like relationships that the farm has with Bon App and the university; i.e. methods that focus on efficiency and production.

Long Lane, as has been iterated, looks to strike a balance between these things. The permaculture slope is only one component of the farm, filling just one plot. In this way, the experimental can co-exist with more 'efficient' crop-producing plot. Long Lane, according to current members, is not operating at full 'capacity' in

an economic sense (Paradise), because of its multiple ambitions. In some instances, student farmers have come into conflict with one another over the extent to which Long Lane operates within a system that values this efficiency in the effort to generate more produce (similar to the cost and benefit ideas embedded within neoliberalism) and the extent to which it works against it. The Collective's venture to get chickens not only showed tensions with the university, but is also a good example of the tensions between learning in a broader way about farming and learning how to be economically viable on a farm. According to King, "some wanted the farm to be more like a business, but their rationale was not to make money, but [instead] that they want to be farmers in the future, and they want to learn through this model" (King), while others who agreed that they, too, wanted to farm in the future, said that Long Lane was their chance to experiment before they left school to join more traditional farms. King is saying that the true tension often is not even related to money, but rather to the differences in what farmers see as the best way to learn in preparation for joining farms after school. This showcases not only the different views for how to learn and what the end goal of learning should be. And yet, the implication here is that Long Lane is different from farms elsewhere, which is not necessarily true in terms of logistics. There are a lot of alternative small farms that use permaculture and other seemingly unconventional farming methods, and there are plenty of non-profit farms or farming communities. There seems to be an underlying effort within King's statement to make sure that when addressing the conflict, there is no place for 'money;' the conflicting ideals, farmers reinforce, are between two types of learning, and not between profit-making and experimental efforts. This fear of

association with a desire for profit exposes again the very heart of the liberal arts struggle; students feel they must keep their anti-capitalist ideology (formed out of a resistance to ‘practical’ values formed within neoliberalism) strong, and yet, it is difficult to live in a society that imbues all our actions with cost-benefit thinking and not have a side to the conflict that has to do with profit. The glossing over of this issue only further establishes the economic roots within this conflict, and we can extract this from bits and pieces of the dialogue of farmers, mostly in places where they deny the involvement of money.

There were certainly collective members who approached the ‘chicken issue’ from a more financially minded standpoint. Rind was interested in a more economic model that would include 50 to 100 hens, explaining that a higher volume of chickens would be enough to justify the expenses, like the coop, feed, and fencing, as well as the labor to care for the chickens. He believed that the higher the volume, the cheaper it was to house and care for the chickens, because there would be ten times as many eggs, but only slightly higher costs. He explains, however, that, “while my reasoning was in part financial, I also didn’t think that having 5 (or 10, or 15,) birds would provide a worthwhile educational experience for students” (Rind), making clear that his intentions were both to teach farmers how to be economically viable as well as to enhance learning on a broader level. However, his reasoning for not believing that a smaller number was enough for this type of learning again reverts to the fact that he believed they had “little practical application” (Rind), and his ideas of successful learning were informed by the number of chickens that a traditional farm might have, and therefore were also informed slightly by the economics of these farms. Rind’s

language focused on how to have the maximum number of chickens for the maximum economic efficiency. The collective is able to learn what chicken eats, what they are like as part of the environment, how to care for them, how to upkeep, etc., all from the small number of chickens currently on the farm. Also, there are many smaller farms with far fewer chickens than Rind's proposal; they just are not in the traditional model.

In order to remedy the many different viewpoints within the collective, the farmers held countless meetings and discussions and did extensive research, and eventually came up with a proposal for just 5-10 chickens on the farm, housed in a chicken coop. Green claims that, "we found that by imagining the perspectives of others we unexpectedly loosened up our own beliefs and desires to change" (Green). This is not to say that no one kept their original view, but instead that in the spirit of consensus, people softened their points and desired to come together and learn from one another. And yet, other farmers remembered the event differently, saying that "the chicken proposal passed narrowly, but not without hard feelings" ("Existing and Resisting" 10), and some members even left the farm, whether pointedly or slowly under the guise of being seniors. Eric Green often seems most passionate about the theoretical learning at Long Lane, even though he also is meticulous about details and took notes on planting patterns and other details during a summer when no one did. He often explains the farm as economically viable within its current setting, but explains that economically viable does not need to mean working for a profit, and in many of his explanations he steers clear of language that would indicate a desire for monetary efficiency or profit maximization. And yet, at times in his explanation of

this discussion explained the chicken proposal in monetary terms, saying that “as long as we would have to buy food to feed the chickens, the chickens would have to make money for the farm, and this would mean maintaining a certain constant level of egg productivity for the chickens at all times” (Green). Long Lane farmers often shy away from monetary associations, but at times, the influence of the subconscious weighing of cost and benefit embedded in our society is more apparent in farmer’s language.

Long Lane’s more ‘relaxed’ methods have come into conflict not just with the university but also with the state. Long Lane’s records, which include details of what has been planted, poundage of produce, monetary involvements and financial information, have a history of being slightly disorganized, and for a period were non-existent. At Long Lane’s start, records were kept, but they were lost during the middle period of Long Lane’s history where it seems to be deteriorating. Because there were fewer people involved, there was more work to go around, and many students felt that it was too much, but at the same time did not want to compromise by farming less of the land in a more productive manner (Chernoff). Students involved wanted to farm with no constraints, at the expense of the farm’s potential demise; their high valuation on having no oversight or restrictions actually was starting to hinder their ability to stay together as a unit. King discusses this time period, saying that a few summers before her presence on the farm, the coalition didn’t want the “regulation or imposition of things we think of as being normal for the farm right now, like writing things down... they didn’t keep track of finance or seeds. I don’t know what the exact rationale was,” she says, but she seems to indicate that at a certain time, there was a desire for separation from the organizational constraints

farmers associated with bureaucratic organizations in a particular way that hindered operations. As previously noted, Michael Strumph of Bon Appétit offered several internships to farmers if they would grow squash for the company to use in the dining hall. Students during this period declined the offer, because they did not want to be beholden to requirements, and even used language like, “we don’t want to be involved with ‘the man’” (Chernoff, Strumph). The goals of farmers were to be able to experiment freely; some of these desires still exist. Many in the coalition feel that because they are not beholden to making a profit, they *can* experiment, and yet today Long Lane has agreements with Bon App, produces for the farmers’ market for which it must have enough to be viable, and participates in other programs in which it must prepare a certain amount of produce.

Green was apparently one of the few members who kept a journal during this time, and eventually his methods caught on, and more farmers joined him and the farm gained Goslinga as a mentor. And yet, even once a habit of recording things began, there was no one particular method, and financials and other information were still scattered. In this ‘transitioning’ time, from around 2011 to 2014, student farmers seem to begin to realize that their system might need to be improved organizationally, showing another shift in the farm from autonomy and freedom from restriction to realization that perhaps they must work with outside systems and within the dominant power structure in order to keep the farm alive. Goldsmith notes that keeping track of financials was one of the harder things she has done. She felt that there needed to be a much clearer system of recording within the collective, because retroactively accessing documents and financial information through the university was very

difficult, due to restricted access and multi-step ‘clearance’ processes. It might also be said that farmers are realizing that keeping records helps them learn better and improve just for their own sake, which could work within the learning for learning’s sake model.

In part, the efforts to begin to record information were due to outside pressure and the reality of the influence and power that the state has over a school farm. In January 2013, Long Lane Farm received an email informing them of an ongoing dialogue between Wesleyan Physical Plant and an environmental engineering consulting firm. The bottom line was that the 2 acres of soil that Long Lane had been cultivating for years was, in fact, contaminated with a chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticide called dieldrin, and the state would need to perform soil remediation, which would involve removing soil and replacing it. The university agreed that it needed to carry out a hazardous waste remediation program, the costs of which would be reimbursed by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP). Interviewed farmers have several different views on this incident, which show incongruities in ideologies. They exhibit another conflict between their desires to operate with a non-traditional structure and another power structure, this time the state, with which they must collaborate. Farmers claim that even in the face of these events, they learned “to navigate new paths of subversion and resistance” (“Existing and Resisting”), showing a clear dedication to maintaining their values and structures, and a definite opposition to external structures. And yet, the farm is continually changing its definitions of what it means to maintain its values. Ideas about production and what it means and how to define success are constantly in flux.

In fact, while stating that these interactions allow them to gain new forms of further subverted autonomy, farmers also admit that it might in fact be necessary to keep records of this kind, and that it might not necessarily detract from their values to exist outside of a capitalist structure, referring to the incident as “part tragedy, part wake up call” (“Existing and Resisting” 17). As King recalls, the state asked the coalition to take their current records and extrapolate into the next year so that they could be properly reimbursed. Farmers realized that they did not, in fact, have the proper documents, and thus were not reimbursed nearly enough to cover their costs.

The state simply dumped the earth that was from an old Wesleyan football field onto the farm site, a huge detriment to farm proceedings, and a deeply frustrating occurrence for all those who had worked so hard over the years to make very fertile soil. Soil husbandry was a focus of the farm from its very start (Chernoff), and to know that all this hard work to create soil that would feed and nourish plants and other organisms was going to be reverse was very difficult to accept. However, this, combined with student’s anti-bureaucratic attitude, made farmers react to this ‘intrusion’ by the state in certain ways that were not necessarily in line with their usual environmental understandings and passions. Some farmers proceeded to say that everything was fine with the soil, that they had worked hard on it, and that there was no way it was still contaminated (Chernoff), which seems to have sprung not necessarily from common sense but from anger at the interference.

Similarly, in its first years, Long Lane had a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program, a share of produce that could be purchased by members of the Wesleyan or Middletown communities for \$150 in order to support the farm’s first

full time summer intern (LLF CSA 2005). The 2005 plan for this venture noted that the farm hoped to expand the CSA in the years to come, and was beginning plans for greenhouses and a curriculum for visiting school groups. Somewhere in the year or two following this, however, the CSA collapsed. Long Lane was faced with returning the money to those who had paid for their shares, but they had already used this money.

Even now, farmers often want autonomy up until the point where necessary responsibility conflicts with their student-ness. For example, even though the farm now cares for chickens, most to all of student farmers return home for the bulk of winter break. They often ask for the help of a Bon Appetit employee during the times that students will not be around (Chernoff). The collective and its key members this year have taken certain strides to try and fill these gaps and create a larger feeling of responsibility for farmers around this issue, and yet there are varying levels of willingness. This is, in some ways reasonable; it is difficult to be both student and farmer. However, it is also problematic and shows the differing ideas about how committed students must be to the farm and the conflict between learning experimentally and casually and putting a higher focus on time and organization in the interest of productivity and being able to communicate with external infrastructures and organizations.

In many instances it is therefore clear that a focus on anti-bureaucracy and a passion to keep Long Lane proceedings and flexible and free from oversight as possible has actually, in some ways, held farmers back from learning in the way that many of them want to. Even if farmers do not define success in terms of amount of

produce or consistency of documentation, their lack of these things over the years led to a farm that almost fell apart, and even learning for learning's sake cannot occur on a farm without the key elements of a farm. There have been variations of the extremity of these opinions, and the past four years seemed to contain the height of internal conflict between understanding that better organization was necessary, but maintaining a reluctance to lose the freedom that farmers felt at Long Lane with no obligations or at least with no pressure to conform to a certain systematic mold when they did not collectively decide to or that they felt might take away their desire to focus on theoretical learning free from risk or liability.

Joel Gopher\* has worked both on Long Lane as well as on farms in Tennessee, and plans to work on farms after graduation. For him, the type of learning that Long Lane dispenses is much more theoretical. "Had I just worked at Long Lane," he said, "I might be interested in pursuing farming, but I would not be as confident in knowing how to go about it," demonstrating that for some who plan to go work on a bigger and more business-like farm, Long Lane serves a different kind of preparatory purpose, and seems more theoretically based. Gopher sees Long Lane as more of a small garden. King and Goldsmith both noted that Long Lane farmers don't always know what they are doing, and that this is okay, but explains why they wouldn't make a profit or qualify as a business in a lot of ways.

The collective during particular year, however, seems to be more organizationally oriented in a way that corresponds with the university. This year, the collective has been compiling financial information from multiple places, and has condensed it in a more concise manner. The system has improved, with a hardcopy of

all information as well as a binder with a recording system for every plot and each row within the plot, documenting what is planted and when (King). Sal Paradise, an involved farmer from the 2014/15 school year, says that he also found the information to be very disorganized. Different people harvest or plant at different times, and they might record in different ways or call certain vegetables by slightly different names. His intention with the most recent organization was to “create a template with which future reports could be easily created, to further systematize our processes, to further legitimize the farm” (Paradise), showing a shift toward a system that engages with the structures and definitions of success put forward by the university. He mentioned that some student farmers believed that there ought to be a historian position; a farmer who would keep track of records day to day to make sure that entries and information were streamlined. The current overwhelming ideology of the farm seems to be changing slightly.

Sometimes, Long Lane can use its competing ideologies interchangeably to its benefit. As King says, “sometimes we’re like you should trust us, we’re Wesleyan University, sometimes we’re like, you should trust us, we’re just a bunch of kids;” what are sometimes conflicts are certainly acknowledged by the student farmers and allow them a great deal of flexibility. The balance between practical and theoretical often shift year to year, while always attempting to accommodate and mediate the different views and ideologies of different members. Therefore, Long Lane means different things to people with different goals.

Regardless, today’s farm certainly is working together very well, and the farm is flourishing, in all types of ways. It is producing more, has higher student

involvement, has facilitated high student interest in a farm forum class that reads theoretical texts, and has many connections and entities it works with. This shows that Long Lane really is, in many ways, enacting multiple forms of learning, despite tensions.

### **Community Involvement vs. Capital**

And yet, there are final conflicts at Long Lane that mirror those tensions within Roth's 'utility' model. This model is meant to encompass a version of practicality that will allow students to learn to serve the greater good while also helping the student to further their own social and economic status. The community piece of this utility argument actually comes into conflict with the idea of furthering one's own economic situation, as community building and social improvement are placed in opposition to capital-seeking. This happens because community outreach work and social justice involvements are meant to keep alive the theoretical and anti-capital ideology at the heart of liberal arts, and are therefore 'practical' and 'theoretical' at once. Roth argues that liberal arts schools teach practicality by leading students to understand the world so that they might embark to change it. Many liberal arts students live with high regard for social justice issues, and many Wesleyan students certainly feel expected to within the culture of liberal arts. It also occurs because this anti-practical and therefore anti-capital value of liberal arts means that students are imbued with a desire to shun relation to money, and immersing themselves in good deeds like community work seems, at times, to be the opposite of this. Lane Farm is run by students who are very passionate about exploring alternatives to capitalist structures, in the hope that they can remedy the current

problems of our society.

There is, first and foremost, tension within the idea of what it means to apply theoretical learning to societal issues. How exactly can students use their knowledge practically to improve the world? Eric Green notes that Long Lane's goal is to be able to prepare students with technical and theoretical skills that together allow them to "go out and work at other farms and start their own farms and change the food systems in this country from the bottom up" as opposed to top down. And yet, this comes in conflict with what administrators like Roth see as the way to take social change; in his book, Roth's explanations and examples of social change makers seem to operate from the top down; in his vision, students are able to gain a *higher* education by learning about what is '*lower, or common*' (Emerson), and in this way, they can take their 'superior' learning and bring it into the world and change systems by nature of their, in a way, educational and quite possibly financial, advantage. This explanation, as I addressed before, mirrors a top-down system. Therefore, the administration and the students see their education as leading them to make social change for good in different ways. Student farmers envision themselves entering the world as farmers, and working their way up, bringing change with them as they work in what is one of the most crucial arenas to our survival as humans; the creation of food.

Secondly, there are paternalistic and cultural appropriation issues within the idea of community work, which help to further expose the conflicts between community and capital. There seems to be a competitiveness among some student farmers to see who can be the most like a 'farmer,' which usually appropriates

behaviors like going barefoot or not being afraid to touch the dirt, things we connect with a certain economic and cultural status. There is a long history of stigmatizing manual labor as something much like what Emerson would refer to as “common,” implying low education or social and economic status. In a way, the emulation of these things by farmers, and most student groups where “students are always competing to be most like whatever it is they are trying to deal with” (Chernoff) is indicative of the falsity and desire to be the ‘other’ instead of just learn about the ‘other.’ This desire may have come from the deep set conflict between capital and liberal arts students, which causes them to try and move far away from association to money and instead to try and associate very closely with and emulate those they are trying to help or understand.

This brings up issues found within the type of community building utility that we see in Roth’s story of Jane Addams. A large piece of the mission statement is involvement with the community of Middletown, and this takes on several different roles, including, occasionally, a social justice and political one. Long Lane serves, in part, as a space to teach those who do not have access to knowledge of farming or fresh food, in an attempt to ‘learn from one another’ (Goldsmith, King). This is a confusing situation that has positive and negative implications. Long Lane has had a long history of social justice and food justice missions, which are pursued in part through teaching and learning and in part through community involvement, and the ways in which student farmers occasionally view their roles within their community work emulate the goals and of Addams, who lived in community settlement houses with those she intended to help and believed that they could learn from each other to

the point of becoming one community.

Rast recalls that the reasons for beginning Long Lane were varied and many, but what tied them together were food issues; production, distribution, access to wholesome food, access to learning, and others. Rast hoped that there would always be students who cared about these issues and this would lead to the longevity of the farm (Rast). Her goals were to have a larger agricultural base for students, to create a place that would allow and inspire Wesleyan courses to touch more directly on food justice issues and food politics, the environmental costs of production, the cost and access problems of healthful food and education, and other issues. She notes that it would be a way for Wes students on campus to connect with the local community, because there was (and is often) a “big separation between students at Wes and wider Middletown community,” and students who worked at Long Lane, especially over the summer, would have the chance to experience a connection that was ‘missing’ (Rast).

There are many scales and types of community involvement on Long Lane, and there always have been, ranging from work within the Wesleyan community to multiple facets of the Middletown community. A big goal has always been outreach, and this was especially informative in the politics and ideology of the original collective. In a 2004 article for the Wesleyan Argus, students expressed their uniting passion for ‘giving back’ to the community, viewing “food as political issue that combine issues of race and class-based access to food, the increasing corporate control over the food industry, and the Wesleyan and Middletown communities at large” (Wollman), showing an attitude encompassing the liberal arts opposition to corporate and capitalist structure and its ties to influences on and ties to food politics.

Allan Munez\*, another of the original collective members, noted that food is a “racist and classist issue,” (Wollman), and that Long Lane would make these issues one of its primary focuses. Rast stayed and ran the farm its first summer, bringing the majority of the produce to St. Vincent de Paul’s soup kitchen on Main Street and selling a small amount to It’s Only Natural Market. She said that one of the most rewarding aspects of organic farming is her heightened awareness of the Middletown community (Rast). This desire has continued into today’s collective, as Green, Goldsmith, and other members note that because they do not have to make a profit, they do not have to be restrictive and can devote time to community building.

The Community Food Project is a good example of community work on the farm and where it might expose tensions. This ‘free CSA’ is much more flexible than a regular CSA, in which a certain amount of money is paid in advance, and thus there is an expectation of a certain amount of produce. In this case, farmers are less indebted to give a certain amount of produce or variation, but are also able to give more flexibly and not impose restrictions. The farm also integrates donation, Food that is taken to the farmer’s market and not sold is donated either to Amazing Grace, Food Not Bombs, or St. Vincent (Gopher).

Farmers would see their donation work as different from the free CSA; they would most likely not classify the CSA as part of their ‘donations,’ because it is almost as though it is in exchange for learning. The aim is to give people the “tools” to grow their own food, considered to be a more “bottom-up” approach (Wollman). Goldsmith says that at the start of this program, she thought that it might be a little controversial, in that it felt might seem as though people of types of privilege were

dispensing educational information in a paternalistic manner, but that once she became further involved, it ended up being a much for “equal, at least at first glance or what it felt like to us” (Goldsmith), especially over the summer when the student farmers would get invited to the barbeques of those they were ‘teaching’ on Saturdays. Students are increasingly aware of the potential issues of paternalism involved in efforts to improve social systems and problems, and actively discuss them. Today, there is a student farm forum, in which students read texts from Wendell Berry and his theoretical approach to what it means to work and do manual labor, to technical readings by Elliot Coleman. Students often discuss the places of privilege and the role of Long Lane as it is situated within this, especially as it is comprised mostly of upper-middle class, white students. It seems, however, that the ways in which students feel they can overcome this is by making it seem as though there is mutuality involved (which is not necessarily un-true), which closely mirrors the approach of Jane Addams. And thus, students must try and make themselves as authentically like those they are trying to help as possible (Chernoff).

Enacting a particular economic status is thus part of this authenticity. The competition to see who can be the most like a ‘true farmer’ holds implications of what it means to be a manual laborer. Farmers refer to their ‘midnight dumpster dives’ as something that has been popular on Long Lane. They expressed that because food waste is something Long Lane-ers feel passionately about, often times students will search through garbage and leftovers to salvage remaining food they deem still useable (“Existing and Resisting” 5). While this may be for reasons students are actually passionate about, the involvement with an action that someone might actually

perform because they could not afford food seems to be interwoven with projections of what it means to be a farmer, when in reality student farmers have the privilege and option to perform these actions.

Similarly, farmers have the ability to set their prices at the farmers market to whatever seems appropriate. In fact, they actually have to be careful not to charge less than any other farms or organizations selling at the market. King notes that this would not be fair, since the famers do not rely on the money they make at the market since they are subsidized; and yet, this denies several things. On the one hand, student famers do at times desire to make this money, especially when they feel they want to break farther away from the university's restrictions and be able to easily spend money on smaller items for the farm or the farm's activities. On the other hand, hey do not rely on the money *as much* in comparison to those at the market (this is an assumption, but probably an accurate one in most cases); it is not their sole income, and Long Lane will not collapse without every piece of its income. Farmers can choose which side of their identity they want to put forth depending on which best allows them to side with the culture of liberal arts students and Wesleyan's student groups, often times leading them to contradict themselves.

The idea of students and non-students coming together as a community shows this Jane Addams version of humanitarianism; in which the power and privilege dynamics are glossed over by the idea of a community. While farmers recognize these problems from a theoretical standpoint, they still often try to use language and examples that show that there is a uniting of values, and that Long Lane is in the interest of the common good.

The conflation of community work as the opposite of and solution to the rationalized and money-based society in which we live creates a dichotomy where one might not actually exist.

As Green states;

“We are very fortunate to be able to experiment as much as we are here with as little economic pressure as we have. We need to continue to put this good fortune to work to make experiments that can benefit others who are less fortunate (who don't have as much latitude for experiment). We also need to put our good fortune to work in order to produce good quality food for people who have limited access to good quality food. This is the balance. We're all in this together (Green)”

Green's statement shows the connection between and juxtaposition of non-experimental learning with community work. Roth's argument purports that students can take their theoretical learning and apply it practically to improve their own lives as well as the lives of others. This is meant to break down the barriers between practical and theoretical, because theoretical gives liberal arts students the ability to learn in a well-rounded manner that will then aid any 'practical' experience, like hands-on work, i.e. Long Lane, or service-learning courses, in which students go into Middletown to work with students, old age homes, or other components of the community. Instead, it creates a situation in which the ideals of liberal arts students stay theory focused, and any goals of practicality are diverted to community work. It is almost as if there is a belief or feelings that class privilege can be denied by the doing of good works. Privilege and money go hand in hand, which seems to be another reason for a fear of association with profit making and other capital pursuits. Those who do desire to approach their learning from a more economic standpoint

resolve this contradiction by casting the ‘practical’ as a contribution the greater good. Even if a student has multiple intentions-- they want to structure the farm in a more business-like and rationally organized manner, but they also want to help others—the culture of liberal arts causes these to conflict with one another.

Because liberal arts wants to create a culture mostly informed by the ‘theoretical,’ while at the same time addressing practicality and situating itself within a world looking for a useful education, it must create a definition of the type of learning it ensures that will encompass both. And yet, this ends up creating a culture that places high value on the social justice part of ‘utility’ and forms a tension between two different ideas of what it is to be practical; to work to further oneself or to help others. For student farmers, this means that there are conflicts between the practical and theoretical, but also between ideas of what it means to execute one’s learning, to utilize the skills one learns from theoretical and practical learning. This means that using skills and theory to improve the farm in a more business-like and capitalist model comes in conflict with using skills and theory to learn to help the greater good (by teaching farming to others or by going out into the world and using certain alternative farming methods learned at Long Lane to improve systems). This conflict gets established as though it is part of the practical vs. theoretical conflict; the business-like (rationalization) models get associated with capitalism and thus with the ‘practical,’ which often gets pinned as the opposite of the culture of the Wesleyan student body, while the use of farming for the betterment of society gets tied to the ‘theoretical.’ Because liberal arts still desire to keep its cultural values, which tend to be associated with an anti-capitalist (anti-utility) model, there is a fear of *outwardly*

incorporating ‘practical’ learning and outcomes. For Long Lane, this means that those student farmers who are interested in running the farm in a more ‘business-like’ manner (– in other words, rationally systematized according to Weber’s theories–) feel that they cannot have reasoning with a capitalist basis, i.e. for-profit motives. Because of the false juxtaposition of this view with community work, they feel that they must reinforce that they are still working for the greater good, or they must claim that there are no tensions in the first place.

The community-building goal has survived through all changes to the farm, and all those who I interviewed, regardless of their potentially differing viewpoint on other factors, used this as the reason for Long Lane’s existence, or at least could all agree that it was one of the very important efforts of the farm and belonged in the mission statement. In fact, it was often used to side step the issues I was trying to address, especially when it came to money. When I brought up the conflicts between experimental and entrepreneurial, I was often told not to think of these as opposing, or as on a spectrum. I created these ideas as being on opposite ends of a pole for the purpose of comparing them to one another, but I do know that these ideas are interwoven and confusing. While farmers had many different ways of explaining this, they then often came back to rest on community building and social improvement after Long Lane.

For example, Green expresses that Long Lane can be entrepreneurial and still not necessarily be working for a ‘profit’. In his eyes, the farm can be economically viable, which, for Green, means having enough money to “keep the farm thriving and doing what it needs to do in the community... Money in excess of this is of no use to

us” (Green). His views very clearly align with the idea that the farm is for broad and deep learning. Even when he refers to practical or technical learning, it is through a lens of deeper learning. Green asserts that Long Lane’s role is to be economically ‘viable’ within their particular situational and institutional context. He says that student farmers must learn “how to avoid sacrificing our radical politics, our desire to serve and educate the community, our desire to break down the barriers Wesleyan sets up for exchange with non-Wesleyan Middletowners...and still have enough money and enough support to operate” (Green). His statements show that he is setting the community work of the farm as within his ‘radical’ politics, which are directly opposed to working within the university’s bureaucratic structure and within a typical business model.

And yet, suggestions for successful sustainable farming must work within a capitalist model because that is the system in which we live, and so the ‘betterment’ of the farm often is inevitably business-like, which makes many farmers uncomfortable. Therefore, farmers will say that keeping detailed track of such things as debt to income ratios and credit scores, how much to charge and how to target a niche audience, and other actions that might seem like they belong in a for-profit model are also ways in which the farm can improve itself and become more ‘sturdy,’ so that it will be able to help better the community.

Rind, the student farmer who originally wanted 150 chickens, said that he “wanted to build a Long Lane that was more efficient, but that didn't necessarily mean making more money as opposed to experimenting or educating students or donating to Amazing Grace.” These statements do not necessarily negate profit

making, but rather show that Rind is trying to portray the different goals and actions of Long Lane in a way in which none exclude the others. Rind says that his desires for the farm are ultimately to increase its ‘impact,’ in terms of “food grown and sold/donated, but also in terms of the depth and applicability of the education we provide,” both to Wesleyan students and the community at large. While Rind’s character suggests that Long Lane peacefully works toward food growth and produce sold at the same time as food education and food donation, he makes sure that the overall goal is impact and not money. Wesleyan farmers are operating within a model that sees social improvement and community work as the opposite of profit-making. In fact, these two things could potentially co-exist as Rind starts off by saying, if the culture of Wesleyan did not value each as different and separate parts of learning.

This years’ collective seems to be shifting more and more toward an organization that meshes with the desires and structure of the administration, while still maintaining a non-hierarchical structure. Student farmers justify this by saying that they are increasing their value to both the university and the community, and by saying that they are no interested in profit but in producing for communities (Paradise). This is not to say that this is untrue, but rather that the history of tensions creates a culture in liberal arts which in some ways, might hold students back.

## CONCLUSIONS

Long Lane students and liberal arts students in general are indeed aware of their privilege and many are aware of the potential paternalism deep rooted within their community work, but they do not necessarily see the complexity of the contradictions they are emerged within or where they might be holding themselves

back. Many students do work to recognize their place in their world and their own respective privileges and challenges and how this fits into the networks of those groups or systems they are working to change. Student farmers write,

“The Long Lane collective is comprised of mostly white students, more often than not from the middle and upper classes. Though it is hard to distinguish this homogeneity from that which exists in the Wesleyan community and the larger sustainable agriculture movement (which is alarmingly white), the collective’s white, privileged composition is a significant part of its identity. The members of the collective recognize the lack of diversity within the group, though they have not implemented any explicit plan or solution to combat the exclusivity” (“Existing and Resisting” 5).

By saying that the make-up of the farm is part of its identity, farmers are attempting to situate themselves within the greater make-up of society, and hoping to recognize their places of privilege. Even when the farm was created, Munez says, there were questions over the ways in which the community piece of Long Lane would fit into it’s message. “We knew even then,” he said, “that to have a CSA or selling to the health food store as a way of getting the message out is a different project then” things like food maps or donations or working with underprivileged groups in an education setting. Again here, the justifications for having profit-making components of the farm are for reasons like ‘getting the word out’ or ‘collaborating with the university,’ but we can see that Long Lane has always worked to understand its place and the differences between types of community involvement. Wesleyan is a special space that is farther immersed in issues of this kind than many other places, and the ways in which students work to deconstruct their own placement is very important. While it varies student to student, from freshman year to senior year students usually become more aware of their background and social ‘standing,’ and

how this fits into dialogue about changing social systems. In fact, Wesleyan student recently created the group “Wesleyan Class Confessions” on Facebook; students can join and submit their anonymous quotes surrounding class, money, and other things that students tend to be uncomfortable with. These quotes will then get posted to the group’s page, and members can see the anonymous statements.

Two recent posts on opposite ends of the spectrum are as follows:

"i try not to talk about my wealth too much. sometimes it reveals itself in casual conversation, but i feel awkward about it and try not to sound like i'm bragging about it. i'm really not sure if that's even the "right" thing to do. it's just something i've done since befriendng people who aren't as wealthy as me. sometimes when i'm with other wealthy friends, we make fun of how spoiled we are, but i'd never do that with just anyone” (“Wesleyan Class Confessions.”)

“I am really jealous of the people around me. I wish I don't have to work so much to pay for my fees every semester. I wish I can just dedicate all my time to studying/socializing with friends. But I can't afford to go out on the weekends to drink and waste time that could have been used to catch up on homework after working so many hours on weekdays. Also, stop telling me to chill - I have student loans to pay off, my parents have huge debts, and my siblings need money to go to college. I am not interested to know your drunk ... hookup stories or complaints about Usdan food / Greek life / injustices around the world” (“Wesleyan Class Confessions.”)

These distinctly different passages are rich with conflict, and the latter touches upon something Gagné noted in her study of farmer’s markets: the farmers themselves don’t often have time for the social, because they must be concerned with keeping their business afloat, just as it is somewhat of a privilege to have the time to focus on “injustices around the world,” which is something that Roth certainly doesn’t address in his utility model. Roth’s different facets of utility clearly apply to

different groups of students, not just all students, and the societal improvement model may not be possible or applicable to all.

Many Wesleyan students have a lot to say, but often seem held back by a culture in which, because many are aware of the current social and economic problems of our world, they feel uncomfortable addressing their own areas of privilege or their own areas of struggle.

It is important to note that feeling unable to make any social change in the world at all due to the many problems might be a terrible outcome to this kind of analysis; at the end of the day, it seems still more admirable to make change (if it is what you are passionate about) in the most considerate and respectful way that can be achieved based on one's situation. Instead of trying to be *like* those they are trying to help for fear of standing out, students could (and many seem to be trying to) situate themselves as an outsider looking to learn and help.

At the end of his analysis, Roth notes that while liberal arts students are extremely bright, many assume that being smart means being critical, creating a "class of self-satisfied debunkers" (183). He fears that by teaching students to critique their readings or find flaws in systems and institutions, "we may be depriving students of the capacity to learn as much as possible from what"(183) they are studying. He believes that educators have a responsibility to explore the normative and the problems of the world rather than to critique, and in this way better understand the places where intellectual work connects with and is situated within public culture and social systems. I hope that my analyses can be seen as an opening and exposing of tensions rather than a critique, although the two can be difficult to

separate. Rather than focusing on the problems of paternalism within community especially, I hope to focus on the ways in which liberal arts and community work become tied together as a method for countering things students are often uncomfortable with, such as money and privilege.

Perhaps an exposure of where the tensions lie and where certain desires are opposed to one another and do not need to be would shed illumination on how to better go about social justice work. In that same vein, once students were able to realize that community work is not the opposite of business and profit desires, they might be able to see that students are passionate about different things. On Long Lane, some members of the collective head up the community work. Some are more interested in learning technical skills, and they might be interested in learning these so they can start their own business. Some might be interested in the health aspects of farming, and are interested in public health or medicine. These are all different types of life goals. Many Wesleyan students tend to get wrapped up in the idea that because they are learning that the system they live in is not perfect, that community work should be the end goal of everything they do.

Long Lane does seem to be able to exist with its own version of autonomy at the same time as it keeps its relationships with other entities. It also does, in many ways, bring together practical and experimental learning, and helps students understand the ways in which businesses and groups can be structured and to experience an alternative structure. There are organizations who are able to work with Long Lane by striking a balance. For example, Bon Appétit is able to work with the farm by allowing for flexibility in what they produce, so there is enough room for

experiment and the farm is not completely beholden to how much they produce, and yet there is incentive for the farmers to upkeep a good relationship, and they have become, in some ways, more organized to upkeep their good relations. Starting a small farm anywhere is difficult and not exactly immediately ‘cost-effective;’ it’s almost an unwritten rule that for the first few years, new farmers will lose money, and then slowly begin to break even before they make any kind of profit. Goslinga states that it is these flexible relationships that do not revolve around a “tit-for-tat,” capitalist relationship, which allow a space to really grow into its own. Instead of working within a model that expects 15 dollars out for 10 dollars put into a business, Bon App let the farm grow on its own with their support, and now are receiving more produce than ever. The model they have is working for them, and, says Strumph, the farm has certainly developed over the last six years.

The farm has an active and bright membership that changes its methods slightly from year to year but allows students to work on different types of skills, and because the ideology is occasionally flexible, certain students can pursue what is important to them and thus might shift the goals of the farm for that particular year. Many Long Lane farmers actually do go off to work on farms or in similar capacities after college, and some will go on to run their own farm businesses and some, like Munez, will realize that there is just not enough money to be sustainable for their own personal goals, and will pursue their passions in something like policy. There are many ways in which Long Lane involvement can shape a student. Farmers tend to see community service work as what is their ever uniting force, but instead, it might be seen as one piece of the equation of a group of students united by different farm and

environment-related desires. This might make the farm's mission more flexible, or it might change year to year to be about organization or community or a combination. What hinders students is keeping things in conflict with one another just to stay within the culture of Wesleyan.

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\* Farmers whose names throughout this piece are denoted with an asterisk (\*) have

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