

Spirituality, Nature And Self-Transformation On The WWOOF Farm

MSc Thesis

Malou ter Horst (900125366010)

Master Forest Nature Conservation (MFN)

Forest Nature Conservation Policy group (FNP), Wageningen University

Under supervision of Clemens Driessen & Birgit Elands

20th May 2016



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*There is a voice
That doesn't use words
Listen.*

-Rumi-

Foreword

For the performance of this thesis I would like to give my gratitude and thanks to my supervisors, Birgit Elands and Clemens Driessen. They have given me the opportunity to investigate a topic that brought together different interests, and supported me with their advice and feedback. Similarly, I feel grateful for the chair group Forest Nature Conservation Policy (FNP) at Wageningen University to have opened the possibility for me to carry out this thesis. Additionally, the colloquia I have attended at the chairgroup GEO, besides the ones at FNP, have given me new insights which have been useful in the course of my research. I would also like to address specific gratitude towards the organization of WWOOF Australia for giving me permission to perform fieldwork on the farm and to the WWOOF farm in New South Wales where I was able to volunteer and to collect research data. I also want to thank the people who were willing to participate in my research through interviews. Furthermore, my partner and my family have been important for me in the research process; they helped me to push through in moments of hardship and offered a listening ear. This aided me to stay motivated and to keep a positive attitude. Regular yoga practice and the quiet spaces in nature close to home offered me a healing environment in which I could find a balance between work and time for myself. They reminded me of the reasons I chose to work on this specific thesis. The libraries I have been able to use as work spaces have been supportive since they engaged me in a work environment where I felt motivated by the quiet space and by others who were working also. It has been inspiring to talk with others about my research; the topic appealed to many people, which led into interesting conversations that made me take a refreshed perspective on my own thesis.

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Summary

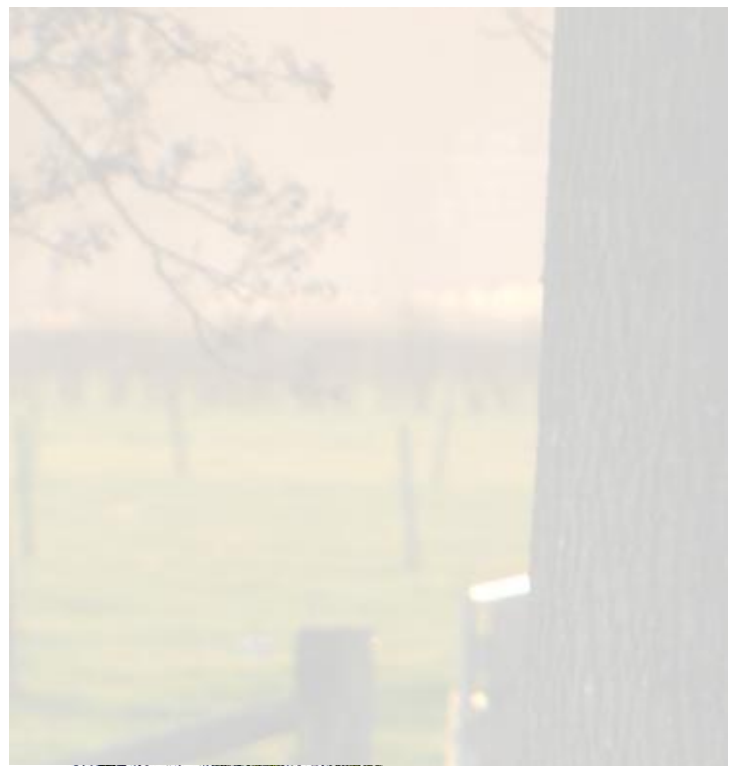
In this MSc thesis, spirituality and self-transformation are investigated in the cultivated landscape of organic farms. Contrarily, wilderness areas were central in a majority of previous research on spirituality. WWOOF (World Wide Organization of Organic Farms) is an organization that facilitates farm stays on organic farms all over the world. The farms which are members of WWOOF (WWOOF farms) form the context for this research. Previous research has mostly focused on motives and expectations in relation to a WWOOF farm stay; this thesis looks more closely at what is experienced in the setting of a WWOOF farm and how and in which ways it can affect the ones involved. Spirituality as well as self-transformation may be experienced in a variety of ways. This diversity amongst individuals is central in this research.

The conceptual framework brought together findings of the theoretical investigation in the form of a conceptual design. In the theoretical investigation, it was found that spirituality can be related to experiences via theoretical concepts such as mysticism or meaningfulness. Self-transformation may be classified as outcome of one or multiple experiences and brings forward concepts that may be related to a transformative process, such as learning and change. In the conceptual design, experiences and outcomes are visualized as part of the life world of an individual. Aspects of the life world, experiences and outcomes are mentioned with regards to associated relevant theoretical concepts such as the examples given above, which can in turn be linked in a greater or lesser extent to dimensions of the self and/or of the environment.

Three different field research methods have been used during fieldwork. Firstly, auto-ethnography and participant observation allow to research (1) the own experience and (2) the setting of a WWOOF farm. They both belong to the qualitative research field of ethnography. Secondly, interviews have been performed in order to investigate other experiences on the WWOOF farm (or WWOOF experiences). Lastly, online content analysis has been used for researching other WWOOFers experiences and WWOOF settings via the internet, such as blogs. Altogether, these research methods allow for a wide range of investigations into the topics of interest.

It was found that there is a variety of WWOOF experiences that may be referred to as spiritual. They have been classified in five different types of experiences. Additionally, six types of outcomes have been described that may be related to self-transformation. Examples of formulated types of experiences are deep or joyful, and formulated types of outcomes can be emotive change or farm learning, amongst others. Some types of experiences, such as connecting, could be seen as related to a specific type of outcome such as connectedness. Nevertheless, the formulated types of experiences and outcomes are not linked to each other in a clear cut manner. The formulated types of experiences as well as outcomes are mainly related to natural features on the farm with which one mostly gets in touch during farm work, for example weeding in the vegetable garden. Furthermore, spiritual experiences on the WWOOF farm found in this thesis show similarities to such experiences in the wilderness. However, spiritual experiences on the WWOOF farm, together with outcomes related to self-transformative processes, may form a mosaic of different combinations that can alter with the individual and with circumstances, in which self-environment relations are dynamic. Therefore, spiritual experiences in the wilderness could remain unique, just as their counterparts on the WWOOF farm.

1. Introduction



1.1. Spirituality, self-transformation and nature

For this thesis, research has been done on spirituality and self-transformation in the context of the natural environment of the WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) farm. In the following paragraphs an outline of argumentation will be given to reason the investigation of these concepts in the specific context of a WWOOF farm.

In the western world, recent years have been characterized by material well-being and consumerism, as well as by more easiness to travel to and connect with different parts of the world (Maycock, 2008). Globalization has opened the door to multiple perspectives on the world, and, consequently, also on spirituality (Kloek, 2009). Spirituality in nature has been increasingly raised in international discussions on sustainable management and preservation of forest, nature and biodiversity (de Pater *et al*, 2008) since it can be of influence on the well-being of citizens. Spirituality has also become more popular in day to day activities and conversations. Not only does spirituality become an item on the table on global level; on local level the interpretation of spirituality is contested and it changes accordingly as a result of globalization (Kloek, 2009).

It is said that nature can enhance the occurrence of spiritual experiences. Meinema (2014) describes his mindfulness course experience on a boat at sea:

“The sea in all her greatness, with everything that can live within it, the constantly changing winds, the burning sun...When I finally accept that they are stronger than me, I can share with them my innermost feelings. (...) I can surrender to the vagaries of nature and I can feel the space to start hearing myself again.” Meinema, 2014: 26-33.

Potential material and energetic interconnectedness between people and the natural environment may be a contributing factor to the occurrence of spiritual experiences in nature (Havik *et al*, 2015). In the case of Meinema (2014), nature can give space and can act as a companion. It helps to go back inside oneself (Brymer *et al*, 2010) and to recover from the stress of daily life. Considering its restorative potential, nature may indeed assist in the process of moving the attention of the outer object to the inner space for reflection (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989; Tolle, 2005). This can happen in natural places close to home (Maslow, 1972; van Trigt *et al*, 2003) as well as far away from home (Frederickson & Anderson, 1999; Hinds, 2011).

Engagement can be seen as the interaction between an individual and an outer phenomenon that intermingles with inner processes. Nature could act as a physical setting in which engagement can take place through, for example, activities (Williams & Harvey, 2001; van Trigt *et al*, 2003). Living a more ecologically oriented lifestyle is said to engage an individual with nature and to bring personal meaning into life (Timothy & Conover, 2006). Gardening can be a related activity (Heintzman, 2009). Leisure activities such as hiking can also be a manner to engage with nature (McDonald & Schreyer, 1991; van Trigt *et al*, 2003; Wylie, 2005; Heintzman, 2009).

Engaging with the natural environment may be related to what is called the distance modern society has taken from nature (Conesa-Sevilla, 2008). Paradoxically, despite this distance, human beings are said to be dependent on nature, for example, in terms of food supply. Conesa-Sevilla (2008) refers to this paradox as a damaged eco-psychological nexus. This may present the opportunity to bridge the

gap between, or connect, nature and human beings in order to establish a balanced relationship. An experience on a WWOOF farm could assist in this process; for example, it can offer the opportunity for WWOOFers to connect with the food they eat by harvesting it themselves from the garden.

Involvement in nature could potentially open up doors for inner transformative change in emotions and behaviour towards the natural environment to take place, which may enhance environmental stewardship (Mayer & Frantz, 2004; de Pater *et al*, 2008). Direct experience in nature is seen as necessary in order to provoke such processes. When there are already positive affiliations towards nature present within an individual but haven't been brought to the surface yet, they can be activated by such experiences in nature (Hinds, 2011). Experiences on a WWOOF farm provide the opportunity to directly engage with nature and could thus potentially become a catalyst for such transformative change within the individual.

Wilderness is said to be a possible place to experience a closer connection with nature, as these natural areas are undisturbed by people and subject humans to the forces of nature (Frederickson & Anderson, 1999; Hinds, 2011). Alternatively, nature experiences can be seen in the light of an escapism from modern industrial society and consumerism (Nimmo, 2001; Maycock, 2008; Deville, 2011; Cronon (1996)). Van Trigt *et al* (2003) as well as Cronon (1996), however, argue for spiritual experiences of nature that can be found in small aspects in daily life and around the house, for example, on the farm. Like wilderness, the natural setting at a WWOOF farm can potentially give the opportunity to experience a closer connection with nature (Maycock, 2008). The cultivated landscape and the working environment of a WWOOF farm possibly bring up alternative experiences of spirituality as opposed to wilderness areas.

Contrary to the relation between wilderness experiences and spirituality, scarce research has been done on spiritual experiences in cultivated landscapes and built areas (Kloek, 2009). This opens the door for new investigations on spiritual experiences in cultivated landscapes such as farms. Researches of Kloek (2009) and van Trigt *et al* (2003) regard spirituality in relation to a natural landscape in which people live, work and/or recreate. However, the WWOOF farm remains a unique setting besides the already explored forest environment or museum landscape. Additionally, WWOOF experiences and outcomes remain until today an under-researched topic. Therefore, spiritual experiences in the cultivated landscape, as well as WWOOF experiences and outcomes are interesting for investigation.

To deepen the comprehension of spiritual experiences, multiple concepts that have been mentioned in literature will be addressed in this thesis. They embrace transcendence (Williams & Harvey, 2001), serenity (Kloek, 2009), mysticism (James, 1902), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), connectedness to nature (Mayer & Frantz, 2004) amongst others and will be explored more thoroughly in the next chapter.

This thesis aims to explore the potential relation between spirituality, self-transformation and nature in terms of experiences and outcomes in the setting of a WWOOF farm, something which has scarcely been investigated. Therefore, this research can bring forward new and relevant information concerning these topics. Engaging in nature may be facilitating the occurrence of experiences that could potentially be called spiritual. Nature, in the setting of a WWOOF farm, may be called a cultivated landscape that forms part of the everyday farm environment. Furthermore, engagement in the farm environment can potentially enhance a process of self-transformation. The latter could

be provocative for transitions in environmental behaviour to take place, potentially towards environmental stewardship.

1.2. The WWOOF organization

The setting in which this research will take place is that of WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) farms. These farms can be found all over the world and are interlinked with each other through an online network. WWOOF is a local as well as a global phenomenon, and may be seen as an opportunity for individuals to try their hand at farming (Maycock, 2008). The global network of farms makes it an accessible opportunity for individuals worldwide. Additionally, it provides the possibility to get involved in the organic way of living and the practice of farming on a local scale. WWOOF incorporates the opportunity to stay on a farm for multiple days, weeks or months, in which a few hours of work is exchanged for accommodation and food.

The principle of WWOOF came into existence in the UK in the 1970s, as a result of the desire to work on the land whilst living in the city (Deville, 2011). Initially called “Working Weekends on Organic Farms”, WWOOF was mainly a weekend activity in which citizens from the city gathered and worked together on farms in the countryside to learn about the organic way of living (Deville & Wearing, 2013). As this was a continuous success, WWOOF became more widespread within and outside the UK.

The interpretation of the abbreviation of WWOOF has changed over time. As the working weekends on farms quickly became longer periods of stay than just a weekend, the name shifted towards “Willing Workers On Organic Farms”. However, there were concerns about the use of the term workers, as it was associated with migrant workers, something WWOOF didn’t and didn’t want to stand for (FoWO, 2013). Even though this interpretation of the abbreviation is still used by a number of countries, such as by WWOOF Australia (WWOOF Australia, 2015), FoWO shifted towards the use of “World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms”. Another interpretation that is used besides these two is “We’re Welcome On Organic Farms” (WIA, 2007).

The growth in popularity of working on organic farms in exchange for a bed and for food has continued over the years. Not only has the number of WWOOF countries increased; the amount of farms joining WWOOF as hosts as well as the amount of individuals to volunteer on these farms, WWOOFers, has also augmented significantly. In Australia, for example, between 1992 and 2010 the amount of WWOOFers per year increased from a few hundred to around 16000 and the amount of WWOOF hosts from a few hundred to around 2000 (Deville, 2011). Nowadays, there are more or less 2600 WWOOF farms in Australia (WWOOF Australia, 2015), meaning that the past 5 years the growth of WWOOF hosts has continued. It is possible that the amount of actual WWOOFers in the country are less than stated by Deville (2011), though, as this number is based on annual membership. Having a membership doesn’t necessarily mean that the individual is WWOOFing in the country at that time. It should also not be taken for granted that each country has the same popularity in WWOOF, which could mean that the increase witnessed in Australia is not similar for other countries. Australia, and New Zealand as well, are indeed most visited for WWOOFing experiences by backpackers (Deville, 2011) and could therefore potentially have higher increase of WWOOFers and WWOOF hosts over the past years than other countries. The scarce research that is

done on WWOOF (Lipman & Murphy, 2012) is mostly scattered and difficult to compare with each other (Kotulek, 2011). Therefore, it is not easy to get a well estimated indication of the success and significance of WWOOF over the world. Simultaneously, it opens doors for investigation in a relatively new field of research, something which is done in this thesis.

1.3. Tourism in the cultivated landscape

A recurring theme in the literature which is often linked to WWOOF is the trend of backpacking and travelling for gaining new experiences (Ateljević & Doorne, 2001; Ateljević & Doorne, 2004; Deville, 2011; Maycock, 2008; Nimmo, 2001). Central in this is the experience and a low budget (Ateljević & Doorne, 2001), two aspects which WWOOF can offer, not only in one country, but practically all over the world. WWOOF, then, is local as well as global at the same time, offering a global network accessible for the traveller and unique, diverse experiences on the land (Kotulek, 2011). Even though it is argued that the WWOOF experience has changed to becoming a way to travel in a cheap and an experience rich manner instead of learning about organic agriculture (Deville, 2011), sustainability still is seen as a key aspect in WWOOF. There is indeed a motivation for travellers to get acquaintance in sustainable ways of living via a WWOOF experience and organic practices as well as environmental ethics remain key in the WWOOF world (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001; Trainor, 2008). Maycock (2008) puts the motives of WWOOFers in the context of the greening movement, referring to the will to connect with nature in a practical and hands on manner on a farm as a reaction towards the disconnection with nature in modern society. Moscardo (2008) even argues that travellers can become a source of support for local organic agriculture in the region whilst WWOOFing.

Even though there is a tendency to link WWOOF to tourism, it is not always seen as such (Deville & Wearing, 2013). Moreover, there seems to be a contradiction between WWOOFing and tourism, one that is paradoxical (Deville, 2011). WWOOFing is mainly practiced by tourists; however, WWOOF can embrace the opposite of what mainstream tourism is said to be about. WWOOF can involve close engagement with local communities, contribution to regional development in a sustainable way, involvement in organic food production and slow living. But the contradiction between main tourism and WWOOF may even be a shifting vision, as there is an increasing awareness about topics such as sustainability that could be extended to mainstream tourism. Indeed, there is a great potential for creating a sustainable tourism industry in which positive social change is maximized and negative impacts minimized (McGehee, 2014). As such, more and more people become interested to involve in and learn about sustainable practices, something WWOOF can offer. This could potentially motivate individuals to spend their holidays on a farm.

There are different manners in which WWOOF tourism has been described in literature. For this research, the concept of transformative tourism is most relevant. Other forms of tourism that are associated with WWOOF will not be elaborated on in this thesis; only their names will be mentioned briefly. They are the following: farm tourism, responsible tourism, sustainable tourism and slow tourism.

Deville & Wearing (2013) speak of transformative tourism in relation to WWOOF. Self-transformation may be seen as an outcome of a single or a row of experiences that can be influenced by the life world in which the experience(s) take place. Specifically for WWOOF, it will be

interesting to zoom in to the relation between the WWOOFer and the farm environment, since this is where the natural landscape (the other – the farm environment) and inner transformation (the self – the WWOOFer) may come into touch.

Inner transformative processes are said to be often occurring as a result of a WWOOF experience, in which the experience has provoked a change in or impacted an individual's life (Deville, 2011). Reasons given for this are related to the 'reconnection' with the natural environment through farming, to alternative surroundings in which one is placed, cultural exchanges, amongst others (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; Maycock, 2008; Nimmo, 2001; Deville, 2011). WWOOF is thus found to be an opportunity for life change and self-transformation (Deville, 2011). Questions that can come up are about the purpose and meaning of one's life and the authenticity, the engagement and the empathy of the contact with others can function as a stimulus (Deville & Wearing, 2013). Cultural and educational exchange, which is increasingly becoming part of the desire of the globalizing society (Maycock, 2008), can be an example of engagement that can aid in a self-transformation process.

An important aspect of transformative tourism, and especially with regards to WWOOF, can be to increase awareness and to change the attitude of individuals towards sustainability and the natural environment. Through practical learning in nature, WWOOFers could possibly undergo new experiences in relation to nature and sustainability that can oppose their former ideas. An example of this may involve facing challenges of applying sustainability on the farm versus the ideal of the sublime and harmonious nature (Cronon, 1996). These potential inner transformative processes for WWOOFers may help to face and act accordingly to the problems society is said to deal with, such as the disconnection from nature and the application of sustainability in everyday life, and the opportunities for change that can come with it (Deville & Wearing, 2013). The dependency on and the disconnection from nature can be brought into awareness through WWOOF, by bringing individuals back to nature with their hands (Maycock, 2008).

The aim of the above paragraphs was to bring forward WWOOF in the light of tourism. WWOOF can be seen as a form of tourism that lays the focus on sustainable farming and community engagement. Additionally, the concept of transformative tourism may be related to WWOOF. Self-transformation can be seen as an outcome of a WWOOF experience, which happens in the self and potentially in relation to the (natural) environment. Hands-on learning about organic farming and sustainability can assist in this process. Consequently, change in environmental attitude may become part of such self-transformation.

1.4. WWOOF: from motivations to outcomes

WWOOFers have certain ideas and reasons for choosing to undergo an experience on a farm. Similarly, hosts choose specifically to invite individuals to stay and help on the farm. In literature, those reasons are also referred to as expectations and motivations. Expectations are normatively oriented and often weighted against reality. Motivations can range from escapism to sharing to seeking experiences (Deville, 2011). Most of the research on WWOOF up until now has focused on the motivations and expectations of WWOOFers and hosts and much less on experiences and outcomes (Deville, 2011). This research is mainly concentrated on WWOOF experiences and outcomes but these concepts are better understood when contextualized with related phenomena (motivations, expectations). Therefore, all will be briefly addressed below.

Motivations and expectations

Starting with motivations, it is found that an important reason for hosts to take part in WWOOF has to do with the opportunity to acquire cheap and flexible labour (Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014), or differently phrased, help on the farm (Dewille, 2011). Another motivational factor is related to the consideration of life styles (McGehee, 2014) in which cultural exchanges and experiences (Dewille, 2011) stand central. Social interaction is found to be another essential factor; 54% of the hosts, the highest response rate mentioned, saw this as one of the three most important reasons for hosting (Dewille, 2011). The motivations of WWOOFers have been divided by Dewille (2011) into three categories, namely avoidance/escape, seeking experiences and sharing/giving. For example, an individual wants to escape confusion he/she is finding in life, hoping to find clarity about him/herself in a new, potentially spiritual, experience and finding people to share with/gain support from. This may provoke an impactful, transformative change in the individual and his/her life.

Expectations and motivations are sometimes mentioned in one breath; however, they can also be seen as two separate concepts operating in advance of a WWOOF experience. Motivations can be about what an individual would like to gain, whereas expectations can be more normatively oriented, focusing on what should be part of the experience. Alvarez (2012) focuses in her PhD thesis on the expectations of WWOOFers and WWOOF hosts. She makes a distinction between transactional and relational expectations. The first one consists of expectations about work, food, accommodation and learning opportunities. The second one consists of social life, cultural exchange and communication. Transformative experiences in the self may arise when bounced upon a mismatch between expectation and reality, as well as when expectations are being met. Those opposite poles may potentially lead to a different form of self-transformation, though (Dewille, 2011).

Alvarez (2012) points out the importance of these expectations for all parties; hosts and volunteers, and also the WWOOF organization. Especially the communication is seen as an essential aspect in this triangle of actors and their relationships. Even though expectations of hosts and volunteers appear to fall within similar categories, they can still differ significantly from each other. It is said to be important to find ways to match volunteers and hosts with each other in order for expectations to be realistic and informative; this can be influenced by the organization involved (Yamamoto & Engelsted, 2014). However, when speaking in the light of self-transformation, unmet expectations may be just as important as met expectations with regards to a WWOOFers personal process.

Whereas expectations and motivations are mostly formed before an activity, experiences and outcomes can happen during and after an activity. Motivations and expectations can change accordingly to what occurs during the experience.

Experiences and outcomes

Even though WWOOF experiences and outcomes have hardly been investigated, there are a few researches that have pointed out the following. It is found that self-transformation, life change, social and cultural exchange, alternative lifestyles and escaping commercialism as well as the assistance of people and environment may be related with WWOOF experiences and outcomes (Dewille, 2011). It is said that within those experience there is a balance between working and relaxing, and reciprocity is seen as part of the exchange (Nimmo, 2001).

The way an outcome is directed can be linked to the (mis)match of the expectation with the experience. Unanticipated outcomes are created by a mismatch, whereas anticipated outcomes are formed by a match. In a WWOOF experience both can occur and they can also be mixed (Deville, 2011). Nevertheless, an outcome can be characterized by a change in life, or a self-transformation, whether this is in a desired manner (match) or in a new manner (mismatch) (Deville, 2011; Mostafanezhad *et al*, 2014). However, it may seem more likely for a mismatch to lead into self-transformation since the individual is taken by surprise instead of already knowing what is going to happen on the track. The rural and natural landscape can potentially co-shape the experience as well as the outcome.

Deville (2011) explains that engagement with the environment is linked to the *other*-oriented aspect of the outcome of an experience and self-transformation is related to the *self*-oriented perspective. However, self-transformation may be seen from the *self*-oriented as well as from the *other*-oriented perspective. Moreover, both orientations may not be as easily distinguished from one another. For example, farm work on a WWOOF farm may aid in feeling a connectedness with the farm environment and simultaneously be a confrontation with inner challenges. There is thus no easy line to draw between transformative processes related to the self and to the other, in this case, to the farm environment. In this manner, the term self-transformation as used in this thesis does not necessarily refer to the distinction Deville (2011) makes between self and other. It notes the investigation of inner or personal transformation, which may *in turn* be to a greater or lesser extent related to self or other.

Deville (2011) states that the overlap between the self and the other augment when more interaction takes place between the individual and other people and/or the environment. Within this interactive process, the other and the self can become part of each other and therefore their meaning can also shift or even merge. This is also what Wylie (2005) argues for in his article about narrating the self and the landscape during a day of walking. In his perspective, the self and the landscape are intertwined in material and sensual sense, creating a platform in which one can act and sense. In this way, the landscape can become part of the life world of an individual, or a material/energetic interconnectedness is recognized and experienced (Havik *et al*, 2015; Liu & Robertson, 2011). In this place of interaction between the self and the environment, spiritual experiences may arise, such as through activity (flow) or the experience of passivity (mysticism).

WWOOF can thus be divided in the before (motivations and expectations), during (experiences) and after (outcomes), all of which are outlined above. This research aims to investigate the, scarcely researched, experiences, that may or may not be spiritual; and their potential outcome, namely self-transformation. Motivations and expectations are inherently linked to experiences and outcomes as well. Expectations, for example, can be manifested in experiences in terms of match/mismatch and may be seen as a learning opportunity that can provoke self-transformation. Therefore, even though this research does not lay emphasis on them, expectations and motivations may be of influence on WWOOF experiences and outcomes.

1.5. Researching spirituality

Spirituality is a phenomenon that can be experienced differently by people. It can be seen from a collective understanding or from an individual approach. Therefore, this thesis will not lay the emphasis on finding one true meaning of spirituality. The focus will be on investigating the diversity in views on spirituality and the range in which this term may be captured in experiences. There is such a diversity in perspectives that reducing it to a singular meaning could possibly be a colourless representation of the richness in people's perceptions of the world.

Not only could one definition run short on the diversity of interpretations; it may be difficult to reach to the depth of the meaning of spirituality with only words. Spirituality can indeed be a complex phenomenon to investigate. Words such as immaterial, untouchable, elusive and vague may be associated with spirituality. It is something which is difficult to capture; like a firefly that can flash its light on and off in the dark. Sometimes you can get a glimpse of it, and then it seems to be gone. It can be everywhere and nowhere at the same time. This taken into consideration that a firefly can be materialized, whereas spirituality is hard to grasp in any material form. This can be extended to research on the topic; indeed, it can be challenging to investigate spirituality in a clear-cut way when it is hard to grasp in the first place.

In order to keep a consistency in word use in this report, the term spiritual experience is used as an umbrella term for related concepts of spiritual experiences. However, spirituality can also be used as a term by participants to describe their experience. Therefore, two different terms of spiritual experiences may be found to be referred to in this thesis: the spiritual experience as umbrella term, which will be used throughout the whole thesis. And the specific spiritual experience, or referred to as spirituality in the conceptual framework, which refers to the moments when participants describe their experience with the term spirituality. This term will be found scarcely throughout the thesis, merely with regards to the conceptual framework and the findings in the field.

It is significant to recognize that spirituality can be a laden term that may discourage individuals from engaging with it through talk or practices (van Trigt *et al*, 2003). Use of different concepts such as flow or connectedness could offer an accessible approach to investigate spirituality in the field, either for uniting contrasting views on spirituality or for when there is a hesitation towards the term spirituality during fieldwork.

All in all, spirituality is a widely interpretable term that can be connected with different perspectives and experiences, either individually or collectively. Additionally, it is a hard to grasp phenomenon which poses challenges in researching it. Different associated concepts can be used to make spirituality more accessible to investigate.

1.6. Coming to research questions

In the above subchapters, core concepts of this research have been reasoned for. Experiences in nature, which may range from ordinary to spiritual, in the setting of WWOOF farms may differ as opposed to a wilderness area. It could involve engagement through daily farm activities and with natural aspects in a cultivated environment. The occurrence of such, potentially spiritual,

experiences has yet hardly been investigated, whereas it has been explored more often in relation to the wilderness. Similarly, WWOOF experiences and outcomes are under-researched. Therefore, this thesis opens doors to relatively new research topics. Potentially through spiritual experiences, WWOOF farms can provoke a process of impactful, or inner transformational change, on the individual which may redirect one's life. This can be related to varying personal processes as well as to environmental awareness and behaviour.

Thus, several core concepts and their potential relations become central for investigation. They are: spirituality, nature and self-transformation in the light of WWOOF. The main goal of this research is thus to explore the potential relation between WWOOF experiences and nature with regards to spirituality and self-transformation. From this, the following central research question has been formulated: in which ways, if any, are WWOOF experiences and nature related, with regards to spirituality and self-transformation? Outcomes, here, are a result of the mentioned WWOOF experiences and can potentially embrace self-transformation.

Several sub research questions have been formulated which fall under the umbrella of the main research question. These questions are as follows:

- *What kind of **experiences** do people at WWOOF farms have?*
- *Do these people relate those experiences to **spirituality**, and if so, in which ways?*
- *(How) are those spiritual experiences related to **nature** on a WWOOF farm?*
- *In which ways, if any, can an experience on a WWOOF farm become **self-transformative**?*

This thesis report is set up as following. In the second chapter, the different concepts which are associated with this research will be theoretically explored and outlined in a conceptual framework. The objective of this framework is to get an idea of the topics and relations involved; there is thus no means of pre-defining a hypothesis or model that is to be tested in the field. Rather, data collected in the field may be related to and combined with theoretical findings. In the third chapter, methods that have been used for collecting and analysing data will be explained. In the fourth chapter, the results of the fieldwork will be described. A discussion of the findings combined with literature can be found in the fifth chapter. To wrap up the research, the final chapter will embrace a conclusion. For each field research method some extensive field data is presented, which can be found in the appendix.

2. Theoretical background



In this chapter an overview is given of literature that is associated with the concepts of this research. First, experiences, ranging from ordinary to spiritual, will be discussed. Then, attention is given to the different faces nature can have. Spirituality in relation to nature, use of symbols and the concepts of home and journey, as well as the distinction between wilderness and cultivated landscapes are brought forward. After this, outcomes of experiences in relation to self-transformation are being discussed. Lastly, the most relevant concepts are brought together in a conceptual framework, which can be associated with an indicative design in order to visualize the concepts and their potential relations.

2.1. Experiences

For looking more closely into experiences on a WWOOF farm, a theoretical exploration has been done of what an experience can be and if and when it can be called spiritual. There are different approaches to examine experiences. One way to look at the concept of experience is derived from the neurosciences. Here, experience can be viewed as a state of consciousness (Elands & Lengkeek, 2012), or as a cognitive construct that can trigger affective responses (Jacobs, 2006). Within this construct, conscious reflection forms part of the way one knows the world, as well as the influence of memory, knowledge and beliefs. Perception is seen as the step coming before knowing the world, as it is responsible for relating existing representations in the mind to the new incoming information. Consequently, we do not experience the world as it is, but we experience it according to our construction of the world. In this process, the affective system can interact with the cognitive system (Jacobs, 2006). Even though they are separated from each other, in reality it is said to be difficult to make a distinction between the cognitive and emotional aspect of an experience. Zylstra (2014) describes the 'experience as a consciousness that participates and patterns *within* the world', rather than a concept operating on an abstract level.

The lived experience

Furthermore, van Manen (1990) has described the concept of 'lived experience'. Here also does consciousness play a role, that is, a 'pre-reflective consciousness'. The lived experience is seen as part of the flow of life in which the experience can never be understood or reflected on in its immediate manifestation. This can only be done after the experience has taken place. Even though reflection does not take place during the experience, there is a 'reflexive awareness unaware of itself' within that moment (van Manen, 1990).

The concept of 'lived experience' is associated with phenomenology (van Manen, 1990) in which the emphasis is put on the understanding of the experience of the 'life world'. This life world is created through talk, interaction and behaviour (Green & Thorogood, 2014). This world is a dynamic stage in which experiences can constantly take place. These experiences are lived in the present; however, memories of past experiences (Jacobs, 2006) can co-shape them. In this way, not only does a lived experience tell something about the observed life world, it can also bring forward sources in the past which are linked to this contemporary experience. In this light, the life world of a WWOOFer is not necessarily created through on-site experiences; the luggage coming from the past may also be a contributing factor. In this way, an experience of a WWOOFer may entail much more than the actual farm stay.

Morse (2011) notes 'lived through' as characteristic for an experience. With this he means streams of experiences that together form one experience. This differs from the lived experience described by van Manen (1990) as the latter does not per se speak of multiple experiences grouping together forming one, even though similar words are used to phrase the concept of experience. In this way, a WWOOF experience can entail multiple experiences as well as it may refer to one singular experience.

Experience and meaning

Phenomena in the world can be experienced in many ways and they can also be given different meanings (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Meaning can, in this manner, be linked to experience and can even be a means to describe the concept of experience. Meaning could be formulated as 'shared mental representations of possible relationships among things, events and relations' (Paloutzian & Park, 2005) and can potentially occur in the life world phenomenology investigates. Zylstra (2014), who researched the concept of meaningful experiences, emphasises that meaning does not only relate to experience and the emotions it brings up, but also and even as importantly the impact it has on the life of a person. Zylstra (2014) classifies meaningful experiences to be non-ordinary experiences. This can possibly be linked to the distinction Elands & Lengkeek (2012) make between daily and non-daily experiences. Non-daily experiences are described as being different from experiences of everyday reality, the latter seen as necessary for managing everyday routines (Elands & Lengkeek, 2012). There are different extents to which distance can be taken from everyday life; also, a non-daily experience could shift to becoming a daily experience and vice-versa.

Thus, according to phenomenology, it is not so much an objective reality but a lived reality that can be experienced by an individual. An experience can be multi-layered and influenced over space and time. It reflects the construction of the life world of an individual, in which emotions and thoughts related to past and present come together. Mental representations of the life world may be referred to as meanings which can contribute to impacting an individual's life. The lived experience could be seen as part of the flow of life that can consciously be reflected on afterwards. An experience can range from ordinary to special; it is here where the shift towards a spiritual experience may take place. Even though daily life on a farm can be associated with everyday routines, it may be possible that (part of) its experiences can become special. Small things in daily life can be experienced as extraordinary (van Trigt *et al*, 2003). The next chapter will go more into depth as to what spiritual experiences may entail.

2.2. Bringing in spirituality

There is not a clear distinction as to when an experience becomes spiritual. It could be seen as a continuum of experiences which are to a greater or lesser extent spiritual (Kloek, 2009). An experience that is non-ordinary and meaningful could possibly be associated with spirituality (Zylstra, 2014). Spiritual experiences could also be named extraordinary (Elands, 2015) and related to terms such as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or transcendence (Williams & Harvey, 2001). In order to get more of an idea of the different approaches towards spiritual experiences, some that are interesting with regard to this thesis are outlined below.

Experiencing flow

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes the experience of flow, which he associates with activities. As activities occur daily in a WWOOF experience, this theory may be relevant in the process of my research. There are several characteristics of flow that distinguish it from other experiences. There is an 'intense experiential involvement in moment-to-moment activity' (Csikszentmihalyi *et al*, 2005) which brings forth three other aspects that are involved: the merging of action and awareness, a sense of control and an altered sense of time. The first can take place because the self, that is mentioned to intrude the awareness, disappears; awareness goes completely to the action undertaken. This can potentially be similar to the reflexive awareness which van Manen (1990) mentions in his description of a lived experience. Flow also gives a feeling of control as fear to lose it is absent. As awareness is completely devoted to the activity, there is ample space to think about something like time. Besides these characteristics, Csikszentmihalyi (1990) describes certain conditions which make flow occur. The most important ones are the following:

- The activity contains a clear set of **goals** which structure the experience;
- There is a balance between the perceived **challenges** and the perceived **skills** of an activity;
- There is clear and immediate **feedback** with regard to the activity taking place.

There may be a limitation to this theory in the light of the type of activity involved in flow experiences. According to the author, flow can only occur when in line with personal goals and experienced as pleasurable (Williams & Harvey, 2001). However, less pleasant activities could be important in a WWOOF experience as well. Even though expectations may not be met, the experience can still be meaningful for the individual (Dewille, 2011).

Mystical experiences

Even though the theory of James (1902) is much older than all other literature used in this thesis for examining experiences in relation to spirituality, it may be useful for my research. One of the motives for going on a WWOOF experience is to escape from the materiality and consumerism of contemporary society (Nimmo, 2001; Dewille, 2011). James (1902) emphasises the contradiction between the object and the unseen and immaterial. Even though James (1902) refers to objects as created by the mind it does not have to mean that these objects cannot be physical. Moreover, as Jacobs (2006) also describes, mental dispositions can be created in relation to senses picked up from physical reality. According to James (1902), our beliefs and attitudes are based on objects that come into our consciousness but which cannot actually be grasped as such. Something, for example God or the soul, may be present because we believe so with our minds whereas in reality we cannot actually know if that is the case. Moreover, we attach ourselves to these objects.

The type of experience James (1902) describes is referred to as mystical states of consciousness, or mystical experience. Mysticism can be seen as a somewhat vague and undefinable term. It is an experience that can be conceived very broadly. The author, however, came up with four marks in an attempt to describe it more thoroughly, of which the two first are said to be most commonly found:

- **Ineffability:** this experience has to be undergone by oneself; it cannot be transferred to others.
- **Noetic quality:** this experience can lead to states of insight that are sourced in a truth unfathomable by the discursive mind.

- **Transiency:** states of mysticism are temporal. However, reoccurrence can lead to recognition and can thus create the possibility for continuous development.
- **Passivity:** experiencing mysticism can give a feeling of being grasped by a superior power in which the will of the individual becomes of less importance.

The following quote seems to grasp an essence of a mystical experience: *"Moreover, something is or seems, that touches me with mystic gleams. Like glimpses of forgotten dreams- of something felt, like something here; of something done, I know not where; Such as no language may declare."*
James, 1902: 49

In the story of the book 'the Celestine Prophecy', written by Redfield (1994), the main character (MC) undergoes a mystical experience whilst being on a hilltop in the middle of the Peruvian rainforest. Afterwards, he tries to describe to a priest (P) what had happened:

P: "(...) you had an experience on the ridge; can you remember how that felt?"

MC: 'I felt light and secure and connected.'

P: 'How connected?'

MC: 'That's hard to describe,' I said. 'Like the whole landscape was part of me.'

P: 'But what was the feeling?'

I thought for a minute. What was the feeling? Then it came to me.

MC: 'Love,' I said. I guess I felt a love for everything.'"

Experiences as described above, as well as escapism from the materialistic society, may be associated with wilderness areas and not so much with spending time on the farm. Cronon (1996) mentions that the farmers on the land know better than the ideal of escaping to an imaginary wilderness landscape, since they live on and from the land and have thus built up a different relation with the landscape. WWOOFers may thus potentially be idealising a farm stay in advance and get confronted with the toughness of the way of life whilst going through the WWOOF experience. However, mystical experiences may be lived, for example, during planting work in the garden. A WWOOFer could, for example, come in such a situation to moments of insight and truth (noetic quality) that brings a feeling of humbleness (passivity).

Flow and mysticism

Flow differs in a variety of ways from mysticism, although there are also similarities to be found. The most profound distinction is made by the performance of activities. Flow is mainly viewed from the angle of activities, whereas mysticism may be called more passive. In the case of a WWOOFer pausing in the garden from a farm job, it may suddenly be grasped by a feeling of humbleness and insight. Even though these characteristics seem to be describing a mystical experience, they could also be a result of the performed job. Perhaps it is related to an aftermath of an intense feeling of flow during the activity, in which the self is still emerged with what has been done. Alternatively, a feeling of flow and mysticism may be merging into one extraordinary experience.

Another interesting aspect is related to the mentioned contradiction by James (1902) between the physical object and the immaterial. In flow, the object and the immaterial seem to be merging with each other in an activity. The object may even be seen as an initiator of what Csikszentmihalyi (1990) calls the merging of action and awareness. The awareness, in this case, can be called the immaterial as opposed to the object. In the case of flow, such an experience would not take place if there was no activity. The object involved in the activity can be the body, garden plants, amongst others. In this

case, flow can bring together the material manifestation and the elusive. Thus, an activity may seem to make the elusive experience more fathomable and real since it occurs in the physical reality. A mystical experience may do something similar; however, not necessarily through an activity, but, for example, through an expanded awareness of the natural landscape (Redfield, 1994).

Flow as well as mystical experiences are temporal and cannot be transferred to others. In this sense, a specific activity may give an experience of flow to one person but not necessarily to another. Both concepts also entail a feeling of intense connectedness and a unity of the individual with an unfathomable truth. What may seem to be paradoxical between the two concepts is a sense of control as opposed to a feeling of passivity. Whereas passivity describes the grasping and surrender of the individual by a superior power, a feeling of control indicates an active and controlled state of mind. However, in flow the individual is completely devoted to the activity, just as in mysticism the person surrenders to a superior power. Can a sense of control go together with a feeling of humbleness and devotion?

Concluding, flow and mysticism are outlined as two different concepts that may describe spiritual experiences. However, they may entail more alike aspects than dissimilarities. Even though flow is mentioned from the perspective of activities and mysticism can be perceived more broadly, both concepts bring forward an intense feeling of connectedness, truth and devotion. The physical reality of activities may make flow a more graspable concept to work with than mysticism.

Spiritual experiences

Spiritual experiences are used as an overarching term to embrace concepts that may be associated with it. However, spiritual experiences may in itself also be such a concept that falls under the umbrella of the description of a spiritual experience. For example, one individual may note a hike as spiritual and another as being in a flow. Both of them could have described a spiritual experience, one using specifically the term spiritual experience, the other not. By including spirituality as one of the terms to describe a spiritual experience, it becomes one of the possible ways in which such an experience can be expressed. Therefore, in this thesis, there are two ways in which the concept of spiritual experience can be interpreted: as umbrella term, or as one of the concepts to describe the umbrella term. The latter may also be referred to as a specific spiritual experience and is associated with the concept of the total spiritual experience as mentioned by Kloek (2009) in relation to a sense of togetherness. This open conceptual framing may allow for a diversity of interpretations of a specific spiritual experience by participants. The specific spiritual experience will be mostly used in the findings since it aims to capture descriptions by participants of spiritual experiences through the explicit use of the word spirituality. In the following paragraphs, several aspects that are associated with the spiritual experience as umbrella term are brought forward.

Authors describing spiritual experiences do this, unlike James (1902) and Csikszentmihalyi (1990), in relation to the natural environment. Williams & Harvey (2001) specifically examine people visiting, working or living in forest environments. Kloek (2009) researched visitors' experiences in the landscape of a museum. Van Trigt *et al* (2003) look more closely at the experience of spirituality in relation to trees and forest.

The transcendental and serene experience are described as the two components of a spiritual experience by Kloek (2009). Williams & Harvey (2001) researched transcendental experiences in more detail. They distinguished levels of transcendence within an experience, ranging from strong to

no transcendence. Their findings pointed out that strongest transcendental experiences can be associated with either intense feelings of insignificance, in which there is a focus on aspects in the physical environment; or with a sense of compatibility and familiarity, in which soft fascination plays an important role. Transcendence in the sense of a feeling of insignificance could be associated with the passivity that is characteristic for a mystical experience mentioned by James (1902), as well as with the sense of devotion that comes with the experience of flow that is described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). As with soft fascination, a similar easiness to emerge in a situation can be found in the experience of flow. What James (1902) describes as 'glimpses of forgotten dreams' may provoke a feeling of compatibility and familiarity in the individual.

Transcendent experiences can to a lesser extent be associated with aesthetic and restorative functions of nature. Non transcendental experiences could possibly be associated with what Kloek (2009) refers to as serene spiritual experiences in which harmony with the environment is central. As already mentioned above, serene and transcendental experiences, according to Kloek (2009), together form the total spiritual experience. However, it may also be possible that there is a sense of serenity to be found within the transcendental experience, for example, whilst feeling soft fascination and being in a state of familiarity and relaxedness. Therefore, the distinction between transcendence and serenity may be more blurred than stated in the literature.

Van Trigt *et al* (2003) emphasise that spiritual experiences can occur in many ways. They specifically lay importance on daily moments in people's lives, such as the experience of seasonal changes on trees. This is underpinned by Cronon (1996) who urges to open the eyes for natural aspects that surround individuals in daily life. Such daily moments may be experienced more regularly on a WWOOF farm than on regular travels, since the traveller stays put on one place for a while and potentially performs similar tasks every day.

Nature, spirituality and the self

Havik *et al* (2015) describe specific natural features which can be involved in spiritual experiences. They can be elements, such as water or fire, as well as objects in the landscape, for example trees. Furthermore, open spaces may be of influence as well. Places in the natural environment that contain a specific memory for the individual involved can also enhance a spiritual experience. However, spiritual experiences in nature are said to differ from place to person and can change within people in different situations (Cole, 2011). Additionally, situation (weather, presence of other people, free time..) as well as personal (character, emotional state, life history..) dependent factors can be influential (van Trigt *et al*, 2003). In this manner, the natural features related to spiritual experiences as described by Havik *et al* (2015) may alter for each individual and potentially also over time.

It is found that there could be an innate connection, or a material and energetic interconnectedness, between nature and people (Maslow, 1972; Havik, 2011; Liu & Robertson, 2011; Havik *et al.*, 2015). From this connection, spiritual experiences can possibly arise (Heintzman, 2009). They may take an individual into a quiet space, to a feeling of connectedness and a deeper self (Havik *et al.*, 2015), triggering deep reflections and rekindle inner connections (Brymer *et al*, 2010). This can indicate that human beings are inherent beings-in-the-world in which a possible separation between people and the environment seems unlikely.

Van Trigt *et al* (2003) divide a spiritual experience in nature into two aspects: the personal aspect and the interactive aspect. Spiritual experiences in nature could be interactive on the one hand, in which a subject external to the person, or the natural environment, is the trigger for the experience (Kloek, 2009). A personal spiritual experience, on the other hand, would be independent of the manner and of the subject for starting to exist; it would merely be an internal experience of spirituality (van Trigt *et al*, 2003). Even though these aspects may be separated on a conceptual level, in practice they are intermingled and it is said almost impossible to distinguish them from one another (Kloek, 2009). Moreover, it may be questioned whether it is even possible to separate the individual from the environment, considering that people continuously interact with the environment as beings-in-the-world. Specifically during spiritual experiences, personal borders may be alleviated (Havik, 2011), potentially creating a space in which self and the environment can merge.

The self and the other orientation of inner transformative experiences may be associated with subsequently the personal and interactive aspect of a spiritual experience. Furthermore, these orientations could be linked to different concepts that may describe spiritual experiences. When being in flow, an interaction with the environment seems to be inevitable since it involves the merging of the self in activities that touch the physical reality of the surroundings. In the case of mysticism, the relation between the self and the environment becomes more vague and elusive. Serenity can be linked with harmony and peacefulness, whereas transcendence is potentially more characterized by a feeling of insignificance. Mysticism and flow can both carry these aspects in their experiences.

Nature may also be said to function as setting in which a spiritual experience can take place (van Trigt *et al*, 2003). The merging of individual and environment may occur here as well, although this perspective seems to frame them as two separate objects which can come together. The peace that can be given by nature as setting (van Trigt *et al*, 2003) can function as acceleration in encountering spirituality during the performance of an activity. The engagement with nature through activities may be important to mention, because work as well as leisure activities form an inherent part of WWOOF (Nimmo, 2001). Activities can be related to the concept of flow that is described previously. When flow occurs, action and awareness merge. There is ample space to be occupied with something in the moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). It could be questioned, however, if a concept such as flow can also occur when activities are experienced as less pleasant (Williams & Harvey, 2001). Alternatively, natural features could be experienced during an activity, for example, through a feeling of humbleness (Frederickson & Anderson, 1999) that may be associated with transcendence (Williams & Harvey, 2001).

Collective spirituality

Collective spirituality can be viewed from different perspectives. The most common one may be through a religion that is organized in religious institutions (Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2005; Helminiak, 1989). Prayer is mentioned to have the power to evoke spiritual experiences (Damasio, 2003), in which prayer can be an individual as well as a collective act that is potentially linked to a religion. It is said that the concept of spirituality may reflect the individual inner experience whereas religiosity is mentioned to be tied to particular traditions and institutions (Cartwright, 2001; Wink & Dillon, 2002; however, this seems to undermine the potential occurrence of spiritual experiences within a religious character. Spirituality, then, can possibly come back on an individual level for

people practising religion on an institutional basis. Moreover, it can be argued that, even though religion and spirituality are not necessarily one and the same, religion can be a manner to share practices and beliefs on spirituality with likeminded individuals.

Spirituality can also be seen as part of a culture that is shared by a group of individuals. A shared religion could potentially create such a culture. This culture can manifest itself in a diversity of ways. Examples of such shared cultures can be found in tribal communities such as the Huaorani, who live in the Amazon. They relate growth processes of humans as well as group social dynamics to natural processes of trees. According to them, there are symbiotic relations between all living beings. This philosophy puts the community to performing rituals and symbols that aid these processes (Rival, 2005). Spirituality in this context may be related to the use of symbols and ritual performance (van Trigt *et al*, 2003).

Spiritual collectiveness may thus reflect a culture that is potentially shaped by a shared belief or interest, which could potentially embrace religion. When looking at a WWOOF farm, a culture may be created through shared activities and interests. This culture could potentially construct collective experiences, or the individual experience could be influenced by the cultural understandings or beliefs. It will be interesting to investigate aspects on the WWOOF farm that may be experienced as spiritual and in which ways they are influenced by culture. WWOOF hosts could possibly co-create such a culture, as the host generates the space in which WWOOFers dwell during their WWOOF experience (Mostafanezhad *et al*, 2014). WWOOFers, then, can elaborate on this space, in which culture is thus able to become a mix of host and WWOOFer input.

2.3. The different faces of nature

Nature is a concept that may be viewed through different spectacles, varying per individual and likely to be influenced by culture (Schouten, 2005). The term nature, thus, does not only necessarily refer to a physical setting. Perceptions, emotions and symbols can merge with the physical setting into different ideas of what nature can be about and a diversity in nature experiences. In this subchapter, different faces of nature are discussed. This incorporates the use of symbols, wilderness ideals as opposed to cultivated landscapes, and the natural landscape around the house versus far away.

The use of symbols

Nature can function as a symbol, or symbols can be used to describe nature. Nature, then, refers to certain ideas or thoughts and emotions are expressed in relation to specific characteristics of nature (van Trigt *et al*, 2003). The symbols of nature can be created on an individual as well as a common basis. Symbols and rituals related to nature can become part of a culture which is embedded in the local context and in the history of a community (Rival, 2005). Spiritual growth can then become part of this expression of culture. Symbols can also be created on an individual basis which can, for example, be connected to experiences in early childhood or to deep emotions.

Abma (2003) describes people's images of nature from an emotional perspective by using gods from the Greek mythology. In his research, he brings forward that the wilderness setting could be symbolized by the Dionysus side within us. This side wants to submerge in the bigger universe and subjects itself to forces nature takes on. Drama and emotional flow play an essential role here. On

the other hand, nature which is cultivated by man, such as built landscapes and farms, can reflect the Apollonian side within us. This side is in a constant inner conflict between wanting to create, and feeling it is not having control. Once harmony is found, the expression of creativity can bring great things. The Dionysius and the Apollonian side can clash with each other; for example, when drama and emotions of Dionysus become grotesque and uncontrollable for Apollo.

The symbolism used by Abma (2003) can be applied in different cases. In relation to this research, we can ask ourselves if there is a specific reason why there is more investigation done in the field of wilderness than in the field of landscapes influenced by peoples. Are people generally more attracted to the wilderness? Are the types of spiritual experiences different? Is there something specific people are looking for more than something else?

During this research Abma's (2003) symbolism could be helpful in interpreting different perspectives on the relation between spirituality and nature. For example, mentioned when speaking of this relationship is the extreme nature experience (van Trigt *et al*, 2003) in which contact could be made with a Higher Power and in which one can get a feeling of humbleness (Williams & Harvey, 2001). This type of experience could potentially link back to Dionysius and nature. Experiencing spirituality in nature can also be serene and harmonious (Maslow, 1972; Kloek, 2009) which could possibly reflect an Apollonian state of mind.

Wilderness ideals

As mentioned before, questions raise about the reasons for the interest in wilderness nature as opposed to cultivated landscapes. Here, this discrepancy will be given some attention. Cronon (1996) describes more in depth the culture behind the concept of wilderness. His ideas link in with the formulated questions in the above paragraphs and may be relevant to take into consideration when distinguishing nature in terms of cultivated land and wilderness. He says:

'As we gaze into the mirror it holds up for us, we too easily imagine that what we behold is Nature when in fact we see the reflection of our own unexamined longings and desires.' (Cronon, 1996:69)

The dream to retreat into wilderness, according to Cronon (1996), can come from an urge of escapism from everyday life and its history. The ideal in which wilderness is an isolated place away from it all seems to place the human being outside of the natural environment. Opposing countryside folks who are working the land, with city dwellers who search for that escapism, makes this clearer:

'Country people generally know far too much about working the land to regard unworked land as their ideal.' (Cronon, 1996:79)

Nowadays, this wilderness ideal also seems to trickle down into tourism, potentially through WWOOF, as well as in virtual imagery such as wildlife documentaries. Tourism may be creating something called a virtual reality (Dressler, 2011) in which the tourist destination is imaged in the mind and through media, and often intended to actualize in order to keep the tourists happy. Additionally, media can play upon emotions of its receivers in order to keep attention and potentially provoke the initiation of judgement and action upon the topic (Bouse, 2000). The latter could be beneficial for the promotion of the practice of organic farming. It may be questioned, however, whether it is possible to create such a virtual reality for farm life since it is directly

experienced through practical activities in the farm setting. However, WWOOF hosts may play an active role in providing an entertaining experience, potentially entailing the prevention of boring jobs and the emphasis on fun. This can be applied in, for example, balancing leisure and work activities (Nimmo, 2001). Whether such a balance would be incorporated in daily farm life without the WWOOFer can be questioned. Additionally, boring jobs on the farm as part of daily necessities cannot be left undone.

Thus, wilderness for escapism as opposed to cultivated landscapes as work environment potentially brings together two divergent nature perceptions. They may be related to city dwellers and farmers, however there could be individual differentiations. With WWOOF, the farm environment may become accessible for a greater diversity of individuals from over the world, potentially undergoing new nature experiences. Whether WWOOFers are really confronted with the reality of the farm is not certain since one of the aims for hosts can be to provide WWOOFers with a 'good' experience (Nimmo, 2001), potentially leaving out less pleasant aspects.

Home and away

Experiences in natural areas have been described by Elands & Lengkeek (2011) as a manner to distance oneself from daily life, also by them referred to as out-there-ness. Indeed, nature experiences away from home can lead to an uncomplicated state of mind in which there is more space for self-reflection and –expression. The absence of the gaze of society (Hinds, 2011) as well as the contrast between the complexities of modern living and the simplicity of the natural environment are experienced as significant. This process can be described as the restoration of the psyche (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). It can be questioned, however, if it is really necessary to go away from home to achieve this. Indeed, the natural aspects that can amaze may be sought in small moments of daily life or close to home (van Trigt *et al.*, 2003). Additionally, Cronon (1996) urges that the wilderness people seek can be found close to home. Individuals can learn to be respectful and humble as well as to use nature as a tool to transform their inner and outer world.

The search for the exotic and the strange during travelling is said to be happening often (Maslow, 1972) and could be related to contemporary transitions in the world (Parks, 1992) such as globalization. However, the journey could become a flight instead of a deepening of the self, whereas in home the sacred can be found. Contrarily, Maslow (1970) points out that activities which form part of the daily routine could take away joy and relaxedness because of their repetition and predefined purpose. Interestingly, the concept of flow describes the importance of setting goals in relation to an activity in order to have an enjoyable experience. WWOOF may be a manner to get away from it all; simultaneously, it offers the opportunity to create a new home and to become part of a daily routine.

Concluding, in the above paragraphs several topics have been addressed that are related to the variety of ways in which nature can be interpreted. Emotive perspectives of nature have been symbolized by Abma (2003) through the use of Greek gods. Especially interesting for this thesis is the discrepancy between cultivated landscapes, such as farms, and wilderness. Wilderness has been researched more often and is recurrently idealized through talk and imagery. In this sense, a virtual nature is being created that may not necessarily be matching with reality. Farms can offer a refreshing perspective. They can bring the individual into touch with hands on outdoor work that may not always be the idealized reality that is imagined in the wilderness perspective. However, the

daily reality of the farm may be obscured by the wish for entertainment. Furthermore, the natural aspects in a daily environment may offer experiences of amazement. Additionally, farm work during a vacation could throw a new light on the concepts of journey and home since a farm can bring a daily routine and a sense of home during travels.

2.4. Self-transformation

There are many ways in which an experience can influence one's life. An experience could, for example, provide the opportunity for someone to grow (James, 1902), to develop, to transform or to change (Deville, 2011). Outcome can be used to describe the impact of the experience on the individual, in this case, through self-transformation (Deville, 2011). In this chapter, different approaches towards the concept of self-transformation will be addressed. Firstly, the concepts of meaning system shifts and of spiritual development are explored for a better understanding of what self-transformation may essentially entail. Secondly, several concepts are brought forward that can be helpful to investigate inner transformative processes. They include learning, change, sense of place and connectedness. For example, learning has been mentioned often in literature as an intrinsic part of WWOOF (Mcintosh & Campbell, 2001; Nimmo, 2001; Trainor, 2008; Deville, 2011) and potential self-transformative processes (Deville, 2011).

Below, a description can be found of shifts and development in relation to self-transformation. They can be helpful to gain a better understanding what self-transformation can possibly entail. Learning, change, connectedness and sense of place are also outlined, and can help unravel inner transformative processes in relation to the self and to the farm environment. In fieldwork it was pointed out that processes related to self-transformation were not or scarcely described as shifts, or as development. It was found more often that learning and change were used, as well as connectedness and sense of place. Therefore, the latter have been included in the conceptual framework (figure 1).

Self-transformation may be experienced in similar ways but described otherwise by their experiencers. This is not to say that the different used concepts are necessarily one and the same phenomenon. Keeping this in mind, WWOOF experiences can be analysed in their diversity whilst also staying open for similarities in experiences, even when terminology seems to point out a diversion. On the other hand, the use of similar terminology does not necessarily indicate a comparable experience. Therefore, each individual experience may be unique and comparisons with other experiences are to be treated with caution.

Shift in meaning systems

Paloutzian *et al* (1999) describe the process of change in meaning systems within an individual as spiritual transformation. The reason why the authors use the concept of spirituality is related to the scientific background of the researchers, namely religious conversion (Paloutzian, 2005). These terms are to be used cautiously, as there are many ways in which spirituality and religion can be understood, experienced and practised. However, it may be possible to extend their ideas to a wider context on spirituality, self-transformation and experiences that can be applicable to this research.

A meaning system consists of the ideas about a phenomenon, the relation between these ideas, emotions that react upon these ideas, prescription of particular actions, and a goal direction in

which the values and global purposes are expressed. For this meaning system to shift, a trigger is necessary. Very often, this trigger, or input pressure, comes in the form of doubt and can cause a change, or inner transformation, within the expression of a meaning system. Learning can be seen as such a trigger, in which that what is learnt can create a feeling of doubt concerning the specific theme. For example, when learning about organic gardening, the individual can start to feel doubt towards the conventional way of farming since it is shown an alternative and more sustainable approach.

Additionally, the goal orientation of the above described meaning system reminds of the flow experience. Interestingly, during flow, the self and the action merge seemingly into one and there is an absence of doubt. The experience of flow may thus possibly take place in concordance with the meaning system of the individual, or, when turned around, a shift in meaning system through an activity may not bring an individual into flow. The question here is thus whether an activity can take an individual into flow even when it is not in concordance with his/her meaning system. Indeed, Williams & Harvey (2001) mention that flow mainly occurs during pleasurable experiences that are in line with the set goals and are not talked about in the light of challenges or doubt.

A challenge in the use of potential shifts in meaning systems to describe self-transformation lies in its combination with the use of the concept of meaning and meaningful experiences as described earlier in this chapter. Even though firstly noted as self-transformation, a shift in meaning system may also be called a meaningful experience in itself. This implies that all self-transformations are meaningful. In this thesis, the concept of the meaningful experience is mentioned as one, amongst other, types of experiences that can lead to self-transformation. It is important, here, to make a distinction between the experience that can provoke self-transformation and the description of self-transformation itself. Self-transformation may be meaningful in itself but provoked through an experience that was not described as meaningful but, for example, as serene. Additionally, the concept of meaning can play a role in the background of each experience, meaningful or differently described, since it forms a part of the life world of the individual.

Thus, a shift in meaning system may be used to describe self-transformation. Triggers for such shifts can come in different forms, for example that of doubt. Spiritual experiences such as flow may be less applicable here since it is associated only with pleasure. Self-transformation through shifts in meaning systems may be meaningful in itself but other types of experiences, not necessarily meaningful experiences, could have led to the self-transformation to take place.

Spiritual development

Spiritual development is a specific concept addressed in literature which may, on the one hand, relate to self-transformation, and on the other hand to spirituality. Fowler (1981), one of the theorists on spiritual development, says that the process of making meaning of life, values and commitments, is central. The relation to others is conceived as important, as it allows the individual to understand its own standpoint. Indeed, cognition (mental processes), sociality (interaction with others) and morality (views on what is considered to be an appropriate manner to live) may be associated with a process of spiritual development (Cartwright, 2001). These factors can all be considered to be (part of) the life world of an individual, thus continuously influencing one's experiences. Additionally, they may be associated with the dimensions of the self (cognition, morality) and the environment (sociality), such as mentioned by Deville (2011) with self/other

perspectives. In this way, the scene in which the process of making meaning takes place, is that of the self and the environment in interaction with one another. It is here where spiritual development, or self-transformation, may take place.

In some of the literature, the phases in a human life are associated with spiritual development. Parks, for example, mainly focuses on young adults and their search for faith and meaning (Parks, 1992; Parks, 2011). This stage of life could represent a vulnerability and openness for what is out there and the intensity with which it can influence the youngsters. Negative life events, religious involvement and personality characteristics in early adulthood can potentially influence the spiritual development of an individual. Stage like changes which are taken from a lifespan perspective can thus be considered to be related to spiritual development (Fowler, 1981; Oser & Gmünder, 1991).

Spiritual development may thus be associated with self-transformation. It can carry related aspects, such as stage like changes, which may be synonymized with shifts in meaning systems. Furthermore, a potential division between self and environment may be distinguished, which could be associated with the self/other perspective as described by Deville (2011) and may be found in experiences as well.

Learning and change

Even though self-transformation can be seen as an outcome of the self (Deville, 2011), the barriers can become increasingly blurred when the self and the environment are in a process of interaction. In this manner, self-transformation can be an outcome related to the self as well as to the environment. Whereas it is difficult to make such a distinction in practice (Kloek, 2009), in this thesis several separations have been made in order to create an overview. Learning and change are said to be more related to the self. The concepts of sense of place and connectedness can be related to self-transformation as well, and they may be more linked to the other, or, the farm environment. They will be described in the next subchapters.

Change could be viewed in the light of multiple experiences and their outcomes, potentially evolving with a continuous path of inner transformation over time. Something similar has been mentioned in the light of mystical experiences. A single experience is temporal and transient; however, when multiple experiences happen over time it can become recognized and it can thus become part of a continuous path of development (James, 1902). Change may thus take a gradual course along with the path of self-transformation, or may be called as an aspect of the self-transformation process. Change, in this light, may describe inner transitions that can be transformative, which could be provoked by inner or outer happenings. These happening may or may not be change in themselves.

Learning may play a role in the process of self-transformation (Deville, 2011). The process of learning may be seen and experienced as a manner to relate in a new way to a theme, for example, organic gardening. These experiences can function as eye-openers and could potentially change the perspective or behaviour of an individual. In the case of organic gardening, the learning process can make it possible for the individual to adapt new skills that create the opportunity to set up a garden back at home. Similarly, it can convince the individual to take on a new, more sustainable perspective on gardening. In this way, learning can act as a link between an experience and the self-transformation it may provoke. Learning may also be seen as a manner to interpret a self-transformative process in which an improved connection with the world is established. Challenging experiences can act as a learning opportunity, specifically the potential mismatch between prior expectations and reality (Deville, 2011). Similarly, spiritual experiences such as transcendence or mysticism may come from a challenge or a difficult situation. It is here where flow experiences

possibly do not participate, since it is often associated with pleasure and goal fulfilment (Williams & Harvey, 2001).

Altogether, learning processes can create the opportunity for an experience to become self-transformative, or may describe manners in which self-transformative processes can take place. Furthermore, a row of experiences may lead to a continuous path of change that can be described as self-transformation. Change may also be seen as part of a self-transformative process.

Sense of place

A sense of place is created once a space becomes, in one way or another, meaningful for an individual. This can involve the development of warm and homely feelings in relation to the specifics of a place. Even though not directly thought of in terms of self-transformation, sense of place could be involved in a self-transformative process that is linked to the interaction between the self and the natural environment (Kloek, 2009) of the farm. Moreover, it can establish a positive change in the connection between the individual and its surroundings. Spiritual experiences could potentially be involved in the development of a sense of place (Frederickson & Anderson, 1999).

Thoughts, emotions and interpretations of the self and the environment can influence the appearance of a sense of place (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997; Rothbard, 2001). Within this, meaningfulness and safety in the process of engagement with the farm environment (Kahn, 1990) can be of specific influence. They are said to be enhanced with the presence of support and rewards, as well as enrichment and fit of the activity (May *et al*, 2004). Even though Kahn (1990) and May *et al* (2004) focused their research on the work environment, it may be applicable in other types of environments as well. WWOOF farms may be seen as a type of work environment; however, it is often mixed with recreation activities in order to find a balance between work and relaxing time (Nimmo, 2001).

WWOOF farms may be fertile places to enhance a sense of place. As an opposing experience, Wylie (2005) mentions how the constant reallocation during long distance walking created a feeling of detachment, or as a barrier to build a close connection with the place the walk took him to. Contrarily, since WWOOFers tend to stay in one place for a longer time (which could be in terms of days, weeks or months), there could potentially be more opportunity to engage and to build up meaning with regards to the farm. Consequently, people can foster warm and homely memories of a farm and may potentially return to the same place.

Thus, sense of place may be likely to occur on a WWOOF farm as part of a self-transformative process. It could be seen as a link between the self and the farm environment, in which homely feelings for the specifics of a place can enhance a positive connection between the individual and the farm environment.

Connectedness

Connectedness to nature can be seen as the emotional connection an individual makes with the natural world (Mayer & Frantz, 2004), and as an outcome of an experience in which this connection is felt. It may be part of a self-transformative process through the positive change that can be established between the individual and the environment (de Pater *et al*, 2008) of the farm. Connectedness could be seen as leaning towards the *other*-oriented perspective, in which the

engagement between the individual and farm environment can enhance an inner transformative process.

Connectedness may be related to the experience of transcendence, in which there is a fascination for a uniting and new phenomenon (Williams & Harvey, 2001). Those phenomena could entail different natural attributes. Havik *et al.* (2015) bring forward a list of attributes in nature that are specifically experienced as connecting. Such attributes entail open spaces, trees, water amongst others. Whether the experience of such attributes is merely transcendental can be questioned. Connectedness with nature may happen through different kinds of (spiritual) experiences. For example, a WWOOFer may have a feeling of connectedness while sitting against the trunk of a big tree because it gives a feeling harmony and peace. This would be better described as serene over transcendental. Furthermore, experiencing a deep connection to the natural environment has been brought forward in flow as well as in mysticism. This can be through the intense involvement in an activity, or during a passive state of humbleness.

Mayer & Frantz (2004) describe connectedness between people and nature with the connectedness to nature scale (CNS). This measures the extent of emotional connection of individuals to the natural world, in which personal traits play an important role. Relating this to the research done by de Pater *et al* (2008) on spiritual concerns of forest managers, connectedness is characterized by sensitivity to external impressions and can be explained as an outcome of an experience that can function as initiator for change. Measuring a higher connectedness on the CNS can potentially be linked to self-transformation on a spiritual or personal level with regards to susceptibility for change. This self-transformation can possibly bring about shifts in world perspective as well as practices that are embedded in connectedness (de Pater *et al*, 2008).

An important aspect that is mentioned in relation to connectedness is the change it can provoke in terms of environmental awareness and behaviour (Mayer & Frantz, 2004). It is said that the higher the CNS of an individual, the more likely a process of self-transformation and shifts in environmental behaviour will take place (Gosling & Williams, 2010). Direct experience in nature is seen as necessary in order to bring this change. When there are already positive affiliations towards nature present within an individual but they haven't been brought to the surface yet, they can be activated by experiences in nature (Hinds, 2011).

In the above paragraphs, the concept of connectedness has been outlined from multiple perspectives. A variety of concepts of spiritual experiences in nature can be related to connectedness. Moreover, it can foster a unity and understanding within divergent forms of spirituality. This can be, for example, spirituality in the light of shamanistic rituals versus spirituality with regard to mountaineering (Taylor, 2001). The question remains, considering the divergent understandings of nature and spirituality, whether it is possible to classify the concept of connectedness with a singular scale. It is plausible that it simplifies the process of measurement and classification of the concept; however, it is important to keep in mind that connectedness may be a broader concept than CNS.

2.5. Coming to a conceptual framework

In the previous subchapters, an attempt has been made to theoretically outline the concepts which are involved in this research. Bringing together the available literature has resulted in an exploration of what these concepts can possibly entail. In order to bring the different concepts together in an overview, a conceptual framework has been designed (figure 1).

Before starting to explain this framework, I refer back to the research questions that were set up and outlined in the introductory chapter (chapter 1) as a refresher. These questions link, in one way or another, to the conceptual framework that is presented in this subchapter. The main research question of this thesis entails the following: in which ways, if any, are WWOOF experiences and nature related, with regards to spirituality and self-transformation? This resulted in four subsequent research questions:

- What kind of **experiences** do people at WWOOF farms have?
- Do these people relate those experiences to **spirituality**, and if so, in which ways?
- (How) are those spiritual experiences related to **nature** on a WWOOF farm?
- In which ways, if any, can an experience on a WWOOF farm become **self-transformative**?

The first aspect that needs to be discussed of the conceptual framework is the overarching concept of life world. As already mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, this entails the world in which an individual lives. It may be seen as constituted by a continuous interaction between the individual and the environment. The world in which an individual dwells at a particular moment in time is not necessarily an absolute reality; it rather is a reality that is created by the individual. Therefore, it could be seen as a combination of the outer and the individual's inner world. This involves perceptions, emotions, meaning and so on. Experiences in the present moment as well as luggage taken from the past and ideas for the future all form part of the life world. It may be seen as a space where past, present and future can merge.

In figure 1, the life world is visualized as an overarching area in which experiences can take place. In the life world, a division is made between the self and the environment. In the case of this research, the farm, and especially nature, refer to environment. Other aspects of the life world are more related to the self, for example emotions. Two dotted arrows show the connections between the life world, the self and the environment. As mentioned by Deville (2011), Kloek (2009) and van Trigt *et al* (2003), self and environment are challenging to distinguish from one another in experiences and thus the above framework can be seen as a simplified sketch. The line between the self and the environment represents an axis that links them, and on which experiences can take place. The experiences can result in certain outcomes that may be more related to the self or more to the environment. This has been indicated by dotted arrows between self, environment and outcome.

Before going deeper into the outcomes of experiences, I would like to address the concepts that have been mentioned in figure 1 as related to spiritual experiences. Even though a part of this thesis searches to find out more about the kind of experiences at WWOOF farms, specific interest is given to the shift of ordinary, or daily, experiences to spiritual experiences. Therefore, the concepts that come forward in relation to experience in figure 1 are mainly pinpointed to the latter. Spiritual experiences can be used to outline a specific experience or can function as an umbrella term. A specific spiritual experience is used to create a space in which such experiences are explicitly named as 'spiritual' by participants. Spiritual experiences as umbrella term frames all of the mentioned concepts in figure 1 that can be related to spiritual experiences. Under this umbrella fall spirituality,

which refers to specific spiritual experiences as described above, serenity, transcendence, flow, mysticism and meaningfulness.

Outcomes of an experience may be related to the self and/or to the environment. Specifically for this research, outcomes related to the self-transformative process are interesting to investigate. The concepts that can be associated with a self-transformative process are mentioned in figure 1. As shown in figure 1 with dotted arrows, self-transformation in terms of connectedness and sense of place may be more related to the environment. The other dotted arrow links the self-transformative process to the self via the concepts of change and learning.

All in all, the conceptual framework in figure 1 represents a visualization of the different concepts and potential connections between them that are important for this research. It can be seen as an overview or a red thread that can be used in the discussion of the results from the fieldwork in combination with the literature that was found. Important to note is that this framework is set up as an exploration and description of the research concepts and relations. Therefore, it is not an end piece but more an indicative design, and may be used as a framework for elaboration.

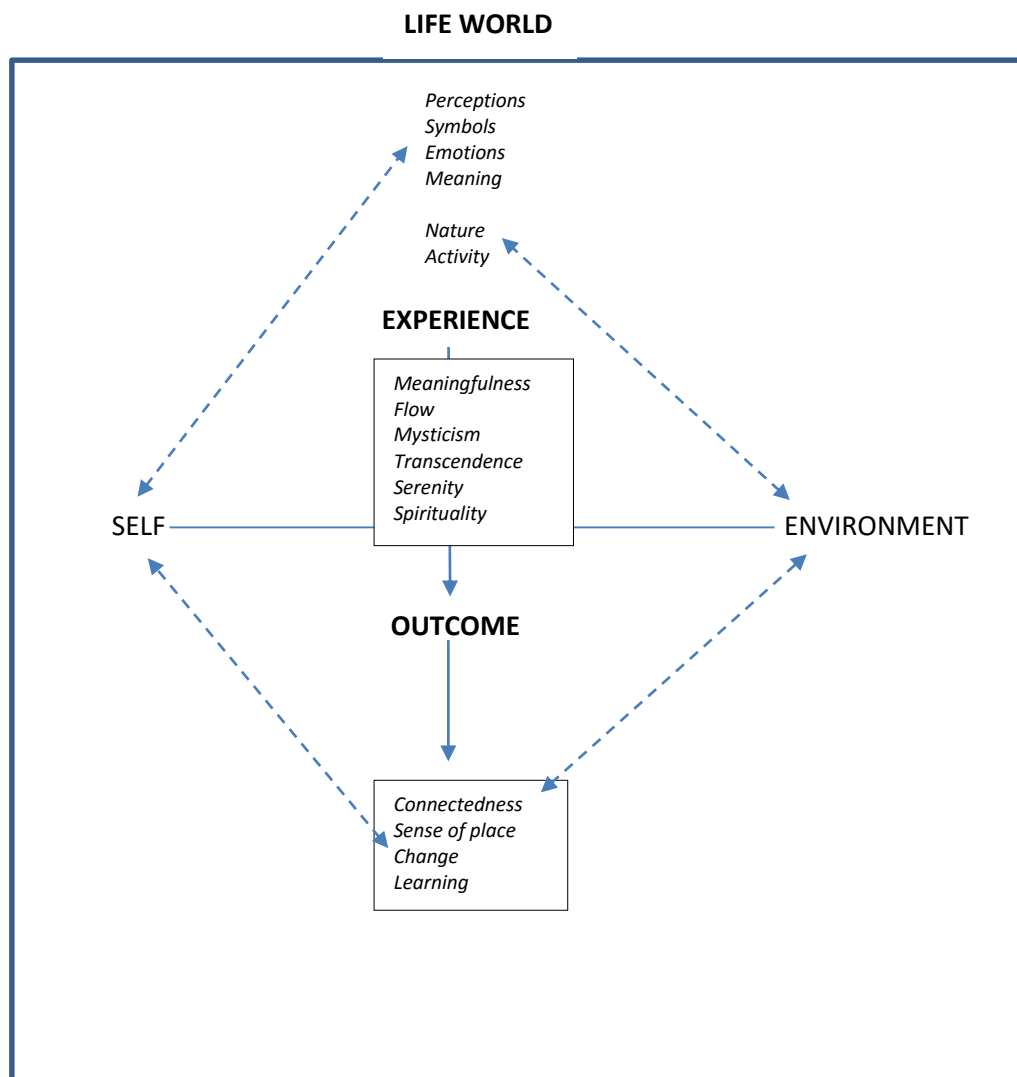


Figure 1. Conceptual framework set up according to main research concepts and literature.

3. Methods



3.1. Approach and purpose of the study

In this section I will outline the methods that are going to be used for conducting this research. The methods can be divided in methods for data collection and methods for data analysis. The nature of the research that is carried out shapes the methods that are being used. For this research, the qualitative approach is the most appropriate. Even though qualitative and quantitative research cannot be fully separated from each other (Green & Thorogood, 2014) there are a few distinctions that can characterize them as being different. Qualitative research mostly collects a smaller amount of data and is subjected to an iterative process of (re)shaping the design and direction of the research conducted. Contrarily, quantitative research may formulate hypotheses beforehand and sample size can be much larger. Normally, the latter can collect data of a numeric nature, whereas data of the first can be characterized by language. However, both types of data may also be found in both types of research (Green & Thorogood, 2014).

Within the field of qualitative research, there are different approaches possible. The most relevant for this research is the interpretative and phenomenological approach. These two are directed to understanding reality. Reality, here, is seen from a relativist point of view, meaning that there is not one truth but many different truths that are subjective and diverse in perception (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Green & Thorogood, 2014). Experience, interpretation, understanding and social meaning are some of the keywords which can be related to these approaches (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Specifically for this research, an attempt is made to make sense of WWOOF experiences in the light of different understandings of nature, spirituality and self-transformation.

Phenomenological research is said to focus on the experience of the 'life world'; the interpretative approach may ask questions about the interpretation of people of this 'life world' (Green & Thorogood, 2014). It is not to be said that both can be distinguished from each other, nor that they are one and the same; however, they are interlinked and the subjective reality can be seen as the stage on which they operate.

The direction a research can take does not only depend on its quantitative or qualitative nature and on its approach; it also depends on its purpose. This can be exploratory, descriptive or explanatory (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The purpose that can be ascribed to this particular thesis is exploratory, as the aim is to investigate a relation in a setting that has hardly been researched yet. It is to discover something more about the potential relation between spirituality, self-transformation and nature, specifically in the setting on WWOOF farms. Furthermore, this study may be called descriptive since it aims to bring forward the different understandings of spirituality and self-transformation in the context of nature during a WWOOF experience. Explanatory does not seem to be appropriate for this research because there is no aim to bring forward a causal relation between the core concepts. Especially seen the complexity and intangibility of the research topic and its core concepts (for example spirituality), this would be a challenging job to perform.

3.2. Ethics

There are several aspects which have been important to take into account during the course of my research. First of all, I cannot merely start doing research and automatically include others in this. To

be able to do my research I need to inform WWOOF hosts as well as WWOOFers about my research and ask them if they are willing to participate in this. I have done this in the form of informed consent. This means that I have informed the participant about all aspects of the research in which it is involved in a manner that the participant can understand it. Next, the participant can agree or not to take part in this research on a voluntary basis (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Specifically for the ethnographic fieldwork, in order to give the WWOOF host a clear idea on my research, I wrote a short summary of what my research is about and which data I wanted to collect. I gave this summary in the initial contacts with the host, before starting to work as a WWOOFer on the farm. In the case of the interviews, I performed the same process, however, in a more compact manner. I gave a short description to the WWOOFer about the research after which I asked them if they were willing to participate.

Before I started approaching individuals, I had to ask permission from the WWOOF organization for doing this research. This organization can be seen as a gatekeeper who controls the access for me to the field (Green & Thorogood, 2014). One of the requirements from WWOOF Australia was to obtain an ethical statement for the research I was doing. This was a challenge since it is not common in the Netherlands to have such a statement. Contrarily, for WWOOF Australia, this was one of the basic requirements for me to perform fieldwork in Australia. I managed to arrange an ethical statement in cooperation with my university supervisors, which I passed on to the participants.

Additionally, it is important to take into consideration the manner in which the core concepts of the research are brought in to the field, and how they are explained by participants. For example, will experiences be named spiritual because it is mentioned to be one of the core concepts of the research, even if it is not experienced as such? In this way, probing from the researcher could act as a persuasion to describe a concept such as spirituality, for which the person cannot actually find the words. Additionally, the act of talking about such a concept may be experienced by the participants as spiritual or self-transformative in itself.

Care is thus to be taken with the role I have in the field and the effect that has on the participants. Being simultaneously participant and researcher can make the fieldwork and the relations in the field complex. Maintaining an energy of trust can be called central, as well as the caution to be taken when talking about potentially intangible and personal subjects such as spirituality and life changes.

Indeed, along with gaining trust, privacy is another aspect that should be taken into consideration. Especially as the topics addressed may be very personal and sensitive, I should think carefully of the way in which I present data and how I select the data I would want to present. The sources of the data should be anonymized, that is, is not possible to trace who the participant was (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). On top of this, when wanting to take photos permission should be asked from the ones involved.

3.3. Methods for data collection

In this chapter I will describe the methods I used for collecting data in the field. The data that is collected focuses on descriptions/interpretations of experiences at WWOOF farms. Different methods have been applied according to the process of the fieldwork, including ethnographic on-site

observation and participation, interviews and online investigation (table 1). The fieldwork brings together a variety of WWOOF experiences from different countries over the world (table 2).

Table 1. Used methods for data collection and the type and place of assembled data.

Method	Type of data	How collected	Quantity collected
Ethnography -Auto-ethnography -Participant observation - Conversation	Personal diary Notes Open ended	WWOOF farm	1
Interviews	Question list Open-ended	E-mail Face-to-face	4 1
Online investigation	Blog Video Forum	Internet Internet Internet	5 3 1

Table 2. Collected data per method, the type of WWOOF farm and country of experience.

Method	Type of farm	Country of experience
Internet investigation - Blog	Diverse.	Diverse.
Internet investigation - Video	I. Organic family farm. II. Hare Krishna community. III. Mushroom farm.	Australia. Australia. United States.
Internet investigation - Forum	Diverse.	Australia.
Interview - e-mail	I. Community. II. Organic family farm. III. Organic self-sufficient family farm; Organic family farm. IV. Community; bed & breakfast; permaculture farm; raw-food community.	Spain. Netherlands. Portugal; Romania. France; Portugal; Spain; Thailand; Australia.
Interview – face-to-face	Organic olive growth farm; family farm.	Italy; Australia.
Ethnography	Permaculture farm.	Australia.

Ethnography

This thesis will be carried out partly in an ethnographic manner. Ethnography is qualitatively based and it focuses on the study of (groups of) people/culture in a specific setting (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Specific in ethnography is the deep investigation and the development of a description of a setting over a specific amount of time, in which details of everyday life are provided (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). Green & Thorogood (2014) relate ethnography to naturalism, which has a preference for studying phenomena in their naturally occurring environment. This is indeed what ethnography entails to do. In the case of this thesis the setting for investigation will be the WWOOF farm. The farm and its people can together create a culture. Cultures formed on a WWOOF farm do not have to be seen as a fixed thing but can possibly be dynamic and shaped according to the people

who are part of it and it can change over time (Mitchell, 1995). Within this culture, individual, visceral experiences can potentially be as important as social relations (Lorimer, 2005). In the case of this research, culture becomes relevant for the own WWOOF experience and the relations between the host, WWOOFer and farm setting. Since there were no other WWOOFers present on the farm, there was no co-creation of culture between WWOOFers. It was rather their absence that could have contributed to culture formation on the farm.

Ethnography is characterized by an iterative process. Research can be seen as a process of discovery, in which initial ideas and questions may be altered according to what is come across in the field. Literature reviews can be done throughout the process and do not have to be fixed at a particular stage. They can go hand in hand with upcoming ideas and data from the field and can provide new contexts for understanding novel discoveries (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Indeed, for this investigation, the literature review, as well as the used methods for field research has been altered over time according to what was found in the field.

It is difficult to know about a setting until one becomes part of it (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). Therefore, as a setting is researched over an amount of time, the researcher participates in the everyday life of the participants. This means that the researcher is entering the thing it is researching (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). In this way, the researcher becomes as much subject of the research as the participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Reflexivity can be seen as one of the most important aspects of doing ethnographic research. It refers to the reflection of the researcher on its own role and actions in relation to the research. This is something which is conducted throughout the period in the field, and also afterwards when continuing to analyse the data. I have participated in everyday life on a WWOOF farm by taking on the role of a WWOOFer. Reflexivity, thus, has formed an important aspect during this time in the field as well as afterwards.

Auto-ethnography

This specific form of data collection focuses on self-understanding; on learning about own feelings, identity and personal lives in the context of the sociocultural surroundings (Anderson, 2006). Auto-ethnography is the study of the self in the context of a specific setting. For this research I have followed my own process during the time I was on the WWOOF farm. I have kept a diary in which I have written down my personal experiences. I found that sometimes, when I was taking on a research role, I could be involved as a WWOOFer simultaneously. This resulted in notes that could be brought under the umbrella of participant observation as well as auto-ethnography. Auto-ethnography went further into the personal experience whereas the observational part could entail, for example, reflexivity on the research role and the description of the setting. Some notes that were taken during the farm stay have been included in appendix 1 of this thesis.

The challenge of such a method is to be biased with regard to my own research. I know what my research is about; I know what I ask and what I have found in the literature. Additionally, I entered the field with a personal 'life world' that coloured my experience on the WWOOF farm. In this sense, I entered the field loaded with personal and research 'information'.

Wylie (2005) described in his article a personal one-day walking experience. He mentions that he had troubles to come loose from the theoretical framework he had set up before his fieldwork and

that it made his walk more troublesome than what it needed to be. Moreover, he realized that the findings from his fieldwork were not matching so much with his preconceived framework:

'(...) disquiet haunted the walk because of a failure to apply the very principles underpinning the research to what was actually happening in its unfolding.'

Wylie's (2005) experience indicates the importance of taking distance from a preconceived approach when entering into fieldwork, especially when it concerns one's own experience. In his mind, personal experience and preconceived approach made the fieldwork experience as well as the analysis a complex process.

Over the course of the auto-ethnographic process, I came to reflect on my personal perspective about the core concepts of the research. Realizing my own approach made it possible for me to take a more critical distance from the data I was generating. Additionally, it made me realize that I had a unique approach, just like any other participant in my research. In this sense, I could start treating this data more similarly to other participant's data; it could become one of the multiple approaches and experiences generated from all research participants. The distance is especially important considering the open and explorative character of the investigation, in order to prevent biasing of the research by my own perspective.

However, I had to take care not to what Wylie (2005) calls 'over-intellectualize everyday practice'. During the fieldwork this was relatively easy; I wrote down as much as I could about what I had experienced during the day, even if I thought it had nothing to do with my research. In this way, I tried to be open for all significant experiences crossing my path on the farm. Over-intellectualizing became more troublesome afterwards while I was trying to match preconceived theories with auto-ethnographic data acquired on the farm. Here, Wylie's (2005) comment becomes relevant: that field data can match well with theory once both are perceived as equally valid and interrelated. In this sense, the field data are not necessarily matched to fit in the theory box, but both are intertwined in a dynamic organic structure.

One of the criteria I had for data collection was a proficiency in English of all participants in order to overcome language barriers. Paradoxically it was challenging in the case of a native English speaker. The host from the WWOOF farm where I stayed had a very strong Australian accent, which made it a challenge for me to understand what he was saying. Sometimes I had to ask him three times to repeat what he said. After having raised this with him, his pace of speech slowed down. However, several single words pronounced in dialect were still hard to understand. The language became thus part of a cultural exchange between him and me. In this way, the language barrier was not created because of insufficient English but because of a dialect.

Another criterion was a minimum time of stay on the farm. I experienced in practice, though, that this did not work so well. The situation of the host was constantly changing, and my experience also influenced the time I wanted to stay on the farm. I realized that, with the intensity of the experience, time became relative; I did not need to stay a certain amount of time in order to have a valuable or impactful experience. In this way, I decided not to stick to what I had initially planned.

Participant observation

Participant observation is a way to explore the farm setting by writing descriptions. It has been applied on a daily basis and throughout the period of the fieldwork on the WWOOF farm. Not only is the researcher an observer of the setting; she participates in it as well. Therefore this method can refer to participant as well as observer (figure 2). It is possible to play with this when collecting fieldwork. For example, the researcher could be observing the setting whilst also becoming the observed when examining her own role in the research process. It is unlikely that the researcher within ethnographic research will become a complete observer, as she is most often engaged in the setting in order to reveal the details of everyday life (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001); in this case, the setting of and the experiences of herself and others.

This method does not acquire direct information from the participants but takes a step back and creates an observational space. It may fill in the gaps of information acquired from conversations. This includes body language, observed interactions with the surroundings, and more generally the setting in which the participant dwells. In this way, observation creates an informational basis considering the field in which the research is performed, here, the WWOOF farm. Especially for spiritual and self-transformative experiences, this may provide valuable information since they may be even harder to capture merely through a conversation about the topic. Thus, observations can become useful tools for exploring such experiences.

Both written texts and visualizations could aid in getting a more complete portrait of the setting. For this research it involved note taking and sketching of the farm's natural, social and built environment. Photos have not been taken because of privacy considerations that were discussed with the host.

Conversations

In the setting of the WWOOF farm, the initial idea was to perform ethnographic and in-depth interviews. However, there were no other WWOOFers on the farm to interview. Instead, a descriptive collection of conversations with the host were gathered, which were intermingled with personal diary and observational notes. The conversations were often spontaneous and there was space for open sharing. Interesting, here, was the constant switching between the role of the researcher and the role of the WWOOFer. Sometimes I felt I became the student to learn from the host about topics such as permaculture practices, even though the conversation had started off as an attempt from me to speak about one of my research topics. Even though frustrating sometimes, this was similarly part of the complex role I was taking in in the field of the WWOOF farm.

The conversations with the host could be referred to as interviews, although they were not as formal and straightforward as the word would indicate. Since they were often intermingled with daily tasks and activities, it was almost impossible to transcribe any of them. Often I would take the time in breaks and evening hours to write down notes. Conversations (or informal interviews) with the host were thus often combined with observations and own experiences and therefore they come back mainly in the written notes that also include own experiences and observations.

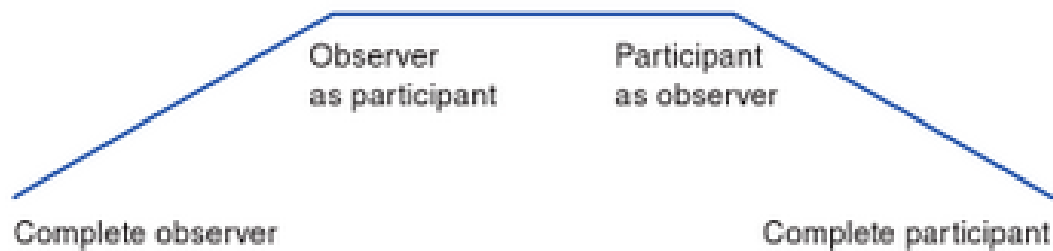


Figure 2. Types of research roles by Gold (1958) by Green & Thorogood (2014)..

Interviewing

Interviewing is a widely used method for data collection and it can be performed in a diversity of ways. Interviewer and interviewee in the interviews performed for this research are intended to have a co-participant relation. Interviews, in this sense, are conversations in which the researcher leaves the topics he/she wants to talk about open for discussion and input from the respondent (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). In this way, and what can be said in wider scientific scope as being non-influential on the research subjects, interviewees are preferably not steered by pre-formulated concepts or frameworks the researcher wishes to investigate. Therefore, the agenda of the researcher thus does not take the lead over what the respondent wants to share but can merely work as a guidance throughout the interview.

This is an essential approach with regards to the phenomenological character of this research. The aim is to investigate the (diversity in) lived experiences in which spirituality and self-transformation may be described or undergone in a manifold of manners. For example, the use of the word spirituality can be tricky to use in an interview because it is merely one way to describe such an experience. Using this word during an interview can mean that the interviewee will be leaving out descriptions of experiences that could otherwise be placed under the umbrella of spiritual experiences but are not perceived as spiritual by the interviewee. On the other hand, concepts such as spirituality and self-transformation may scare interviewees away for whom these are controversial topics, whereas they may generally be happy to talk about their experiences on the WWOOF farm.

Interviews allowed to dive deeper into individual WWOOFer's experiences besides my own. In-depth, face-to-face, interview and e-mail interviews were held. The face-to-face interview differed from the e-mail interview in the sense that there was more opportunity for improvisation and direct interaction in the face-to-face interview. Thus, this interview was directed by a free flow of comments and questions from both the interviewer and the interviewee. The e-mail interview was more limited since it worked with pre-defined questions. However, within the range of these questions, an attempt was made to formulate the questions as openly as possible in order to give sufficient space for the interviewee's interpretation.

In-depth interview

Since there was a limited possibility to interview other WWOOFers on the farm where I WWOOFed myself, I found alternative manners after fieldwork at the WWOOF farm to reach them. One of them was an in-depth interview with a WWOOFer whom I met on the road while I was travelling in Australia. This WWOOFer had had a diversity of WWOOF experiences in different countries together

with her partner. The interview was held at the farm she and her partner were housesitting at that moment. The interview gives some attention to the description of the farm; however, the focus is mainly on conversing about WWOOF experiences.

The interview took place as an open dialogue between me, the interviewer, and the WWOOFer, the interviewee. The only tool I used was a selection of themes, in order to remind myself of the most important aspects I wanted to address in the interview. These themes are closely interlinked with the conceptual framework as well as with the research questions. The themes are as follows:

- WWOOF experience
- Spiritual moments
- Connectedness
- Sense of place
- Learning
- Change

The theme of WWOOF experience provided the opportunity to ask about the kind of experiences in relation to the setting of the WWOOF farm. Spiritual moments were used to highlight potential spiritual experiences. Learning, change, connectedness and sense of place were used to find out more about the self-transformative process. I purposefully did not mention specifically the above terms often because I wanted the WWOOFer to be able to describe their experience in their own words. Instead, I tried to keep the questions and comments descriptive. The transcription of the interview can be found in appendix 2 of this report.

E-mail interview

My initial idea was to try and get contact details of WWOOFers who had WWOOFed at the farm I had stayed at. However, the host was very steadfast in keeping the privacy of his WWOOFers; therefore, he did not want to pass on their contact details to me. In this way, he became the gatekeeper that controlled access to the information I wanted to have for my research.

The e-mail interviews were held with four WWOOFers I had contact with via the internet, and whom were willing and able to participate in my research at a distance, in this case, via e-mail. These were people who had had and/or were thinking to enter into a new WWOOF experience soon. The people were thus selected based on accessibility (involving contact details and internet access) and willingness to participate. I received all responses to my questions within a time span of three weeks after sending the list of questions.

For these interviews, I set up a list of several, broadly formulated, questions. The idea behind this is to address several relevant topics by asking open questions that can be filled in in the form of an essay. Even though there is limited participation or interaction involved in emailing, the open end questions may give the participants the space to give expression to their thoughts and feelings. The question lists were as follows:

1. What kind of **WWOOF experience(s)** have you had? Which five words would best fit your experience(s)?
2. Was (were) the WWOOF experience(s) in accordance with your **expectations** beforehand? How did this **influence your experience**?

3. What was your most **beautiful** moment and your most **difficult** moment?
4. What have you **learnt** during your WWOOF experience(s) and do you feel it has **changed** you? If yes, in which ways?
5. Would you go WWOOFing **again** and why? If yes, where would you go and what kind of experience would you look for?

In bold the core aspects of the questions that link back to the conceptual framework and to the research questions can be found. The first question of the above list is designed for the participant to tell about his/her experience at the farm. The second question links back to the literature in the sense that expectations are said to be potentially a source for a spiritual experiences or a self-transformative process to happen. This is related to the possible (mis)match of the actual experience with the expectation and potential learnings that may arise from it. The third question can be seen as a potential entrance to, on the one hand, discover something about spiritual experiences in the farm environment, and, on the other, to find out potential sources for self-transformative processes to take place. The fourth question is mainly related to the self-transformative aspect, specifically considering learning and change. The last question can be seen as a reflective one, which could say something worthwhile about the impact of the experience and the reasons to potentially undergo another farm stay in future.

In the above questions, the concepts of nature and spirituality have not been mentioned for a specific reason. To see the WWOOF experience in its fullest perspective, an attempt was made to leave open the questions as much as possible. If (aspects of) nature was experienced as influential, the participants would mention that, in one way or another, in their answers to the above questions. This became indeed apparent in the answers I received back from the participants. The term spiritual, as already mentioned before, can be a laden and non-embrace term and is therefore not mentioned specifically. The above questions, however, do open a space to investigate spiritual experiences with the conceptual framework (figure 1) in the background. One of the e-mail interviews has been included in appendix 2 to serve as an example of the e-mail interviews that were held.

Online investigation

This method was added during the course of the fieldwork in order to find out more about WWOOF experiences. I did not collect data on the WWOOF farm concerning other WWOOFers experiences; instead, besides the interviews, I used the internet to explore this more thoroughly. This was done through blogs, videos and forum (table 3). An example of collected data using online investigation can be found in appendix 3, which incorporates the transcription of a video about WWOOFing on a Hare Krishna farm.

WWOOFing is a worldwide phenomenon which is facilitated by the use of an online network. Considering the distances, internet can be a useful tool for WWOOFers to connect with hosts and with each other. Not only can internet be used to contact hosts for a farm stay; often WWOOF experiences are shared, for example, to help other WWOOFers or to connect with acquaintances. Specifically for WWOOFers and hosts, a forum is set up by the organization of WWOOF Australia with the intention to facilitate online interaction. Furthermore, ample WWOOFers have kept blogs of their travel experiences. Descriptions of WWOOF experiences could be part of a blog on travels of the individuals, or could be set up specifically to share the experience on the WWOOF farm.

Blogs and videos are openly accessible for the public. The forum is only reachable for officially registered WWOOFers and hosts with the Australian WWOOF organization. Since I was an official

WWOOF member I could get access to this forum. Often, blogs are part of bigger websites that support individuals to keep blogs. In this way I did not only search for blogs through search engines such as google, but also through blog websites. For videos I mainly used the website You Tube. I used keywords such as WWOOF, WWOOF experience, WWOOF Australia, WWOOF experience Australia, WWOOF permaculture, farm volunteering.

Whereas blogs mostly entail descriptions in text, videos on the internet add the visual dimension of the WWOOF experience. In some cases the video shows aspects of the experience, such as images of the farm or of involved people, in combination with vocal comments. In other cases the video merely shows the WWOOFer speaking about the experience on the farm. Where appropriate, descriptions of the visual imagery have been made for the videos and have been included in the transcription of the text in the video.

I came across many interesting stories; however, after a while I started noticing repetition. This happened simultaneously with the blog, videos and forum texts I was watching and reading. In literature on qualitative research this is referred to as data saturation. It can be described as 'boredom resulting from having heard/read it all' (Morse, 1995). It is a point where repetition can end in recognition of certain themes throughout the data; the results can start making sense together. Indeed, there were aspects of WWOOF experiences that kept on coming back in the different data. These aspects were later on used in coding the field data. The codes that were used for the analysis of the data can be found in appendix 4. The codes found could be associated with all data collected during this research, not just data derived from online investigation. In this way, since this was the last used research method for fieldwork, data saturation seemed to be reached for the collection of field data in general and not merely for the data found during internet investigation.

Table 3. Outline of the data collected online with quantity collected and specifics.

Data type	Quantity	Specifics
Blogs	5	I. What I wish I knew before I WWOOFed. II. Adventures and misadventures with the WWOOF volunteer program. III. Permaculture jobs, sustainable living and endless travel: how Vagabonders' dreams can become reality. IV. Five lessons learned from organic farm volunteering in Central America. V. A girl WWOOFing Europe: connecting through dirt, work and dinner conversation.
Videos	3	4. Organic family farm, Australia. 5. Hare Krishna community, Australia. 6. Mushroom farm, United States.
Forum	1	I. WWOOF Australia forum - WWOOF experiences.

Integration of methods

It could be said that the three different methods for data collection in the field, namely ethnography, interviews and online investigation, can together create a data triangulation. Together, they can possibly intercept the weakness and potential bias of one particular method (Green & Thorogood, 2014). This may come forward with regards to the levels of engagement in the different

methods. First, there was constant engagement during the emergence in the farm setting and investigating the own experience. Secondly, engagement was limited to the duration of the interview and took place outside the farm setting. The e-mail interviews represent engagement at a distance, in which there is no farm setting nor direct contact during the interview. Thirdly, internet investigation is most distant, because it acquires information that has already been posted online. There is thus no direct interaction. The different levels of engagement that occur in the three methods could aid one another in confirming data findings, and simultaneously help keep a critical distance from the collected data. The latter may become more challenging with an increase of engagement in the field.

Furthermore, the data triangulation could have aided in filling up gaps in the data. Considering the absence of direct interaction, it was specifically for the online investigation a bigger challenge to collect information about the life world of the individual. This may also have counted for the e-mail interviews, although the level of engagement was slightly higher here. Face-to-face interviews and on-site ethnographic field work created more opportunity for direct interaction with the setting and/or the participants, and may have thus aided to fill up potential gaps for exploring the life world of individuals.

Online investigation, on the other hand, can also contribute to the strengthening of the used methods. It offers to show an important 'other side' of the coin of WWOOF, referring to the global as opposed to the local aspect of WWOOF. This global aspect makes it possible for WWOOF to create a worldwide network. Additionally, WWOOFers and hosts can connect and share worldwide through the internet. The internet can thus uniquely provide information about WWOOF experiences that may have otherwise not been shared or come across as accessibly.

3.4. Methods for data analysis

I gathered a manifold of data through the different field methods that I used. This data embraces written texts, drawings, videos and audio recordings. The audio recordings and videos have been transcribed into written text in order to make it more accessible for analysis.

Coding is the main method used for analysis for this thesis. It can be helpful for comparing data with one another, especially considering extended written texts. Certain codes are assigned to individual cases within the data collection. These codes can be seen as categorizers: they link similar data to one another and distinguish divergent data from each other by potentially dividing the data into categories that best describe them. Coding can be helpful for understanding the influence of individual cases on larger processes as well as for interpreting specific cases with an increased comprehension of the larger processes (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). Rereading data can be useful to see these codes through the texts. The codes that have been used for this thesis can be found in appendix 4.

Analysing visual data, such as drawings and visual imagery from videos, may be more challenging to code as these are not framed into words but into pictures. For analysing visual data, a visual analysis such as described by Van de Kamp & Cuijpers (2011) can be used. The model developed by them is divided into three steps: 1) a description of what can be observed; 2) an analysis of the observed and its cohesion and 3) the interpretation of the meaning(s). The steps present a process that starts with

describing what can be observed and moves towards exploring the deeper meaning that could lie behind the image. In other words, a process from description to analysis of the data. In order to analyse the image, additional information may be required. Specifically the deeper meaning may be difficult to derive from a single picture or drawing. Therefore, the visual data that is to be collected is best to be jointly analysed with written texts derived from conversations, observations and personal experiences. A mixture of data can also help in underpinning already created categorizations or in discovering new categories or potential relations.

Interpretations of data are difficult to universalise, as the choices in the process of the analysis tends to be shaped by the presuppositions of the researcher (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001). Specifically for data analysis this could incorporate that a 'silent frame' (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001) is placed on what is interpreted and in which ways. This links back to the importance of reflexivity that has been discussed previously.

4. Results



In this chapter the findings of the performed fieldwork are brought forward. The findings are organized in six tables. The first three tables (tables 4-6) describe the types of experiences that have been discovered with the empirical material. The last three tables (tables 7-9) outline the types of outcomes that were found. Firstly I will explain the basic design of the tables, after which the tables are presented. Then, the formulated types of experiences and types of outcomes will be more thoroughly described and compared.

4.1. Tables representing results

Here, I will explain the basic design of tables 4-9, which can be found below the text of this subchapter. The two types of tables (for experiences and for outcomes) have a similar set up. In the far left columns one can find the main theoretical concepts that were described in the conceptual framework (CF based). For experiences these embrace the concepts that could be related to spiritual experiences as an umbrella term; for outcomes they entail the concepts that can describe self-transformative outcomes linked to the dimensions of the self and of the environment. Whereas the two types of tables differ in the description of either experiences or outcomes, they are similar to each other with regards to the integration of the life world of the individual. In the bottom left column of both types of tables concepts of the life world of the individual can be found. They have been divided into aspects that are more related to the self and aspects more linked to the environment, which is in accordance with the conceptual framework. In this way, the empirical findings are placed in the life world of the individual with regards to (1) the experiences and (2) the outcomes. Thus the potential relation between (1) and the life world as well as between (2) and the life world is explored. Furthermore, (1) and (2) may be related to one another through the different tables that describe them.

Moving to the right from the CF based column, we come into the columns that show the interpretation of the empirical findings. This is an interpretation because each of the findings is directly linked in the table to the theoretical concepts of the conceptual framework. Therefore, the data is interpreted according to the related concept in the left column. The data interpretation has been divided into different sections. The umbrella sections are the classified types of experiences and outcomes. Within these sections the data has been separated into the field research method they were collected in. These are auto-ethnography (AE) plus participant observation (PO); interviews and online investigation (the internet).

As already mentioned before, the two types of tables each embrace three tables. This is because the size of the two table types (for experiences and for outcomes) were too large to fit as one table. Therefore, they have been divided into multiple tables. Six different types of experiences were found, of which in each table two are outlined. The division of the types into the tables has been done randomly; this means that there is not necessarily an interconnection between the types of experiences described in the same table. This is a bit different for the types of outcomes. In total five different types of outcomes are brought forward. However, within two of these types, subtypes have been defined. They are each described in separate tables and embrace (1) change and (2) learning. These categories appeared to be large and internally differential which made it possible to subdivide them into subtypes: (1a) life change and (1b) emotive change; (2a) interactive learning, (2b) farm learning and (2c) self-learning. In the accompanying tables they have not been divided into

different sections; the subtypes form part of the same section but have been separated in the method columns. In this way, you can find two or three columns with data for each method.

There are remarks to be made about the empty spaces within the tables. Not all of the gaps have been filled in. This is because it was not always appropriate in relation to the data to fill in the space. For example, certain experiences could be related to the theoretical concept of flow and not so much to the concept of meaningfulness. The border line with regards to concepts linked to the life world was often blurred. For example, sometimes a perception was explicitly shared and other times it was absent or to be read in between the lines. Other aspects could then instead be mentioned more explicitly such as an emotion that came up. Thus, experiences and outcomes were not always necessarily linked to all theoretical concepts that were mentioned in relation to the life world, experiences or outcomes. The ones that came forward in the data are included in the tables, were it expressed explicitly or in between the lines by participants.

Table 4. Representation of the pure and deep experience.

EXPERIENCE	PURE EXPERIENCE			DEEP EXPERIENCE		
	data interpretation					
CF based	AE/PO	Interview	Internet	AE/PO	Interview	Internet
<i>Meaningfulness</i> <i>Flow</i> <i>Mysticism</i> <i>Transcendence</i> <i>Serenity</i> <i>Spirituality</i>	Unique, insightful, light Purity	Ineffable Beauty		Deep connection 	Lived through Deep connection Passivity Insignificance/gratitude Appreciation	Lived through Passivity Insignificance
Self <i>Perceptions</i> <i>Symbols</i> <i>Emotions</i> <i>Meaning</i> Environment <i>Nature</i> <i>Activity</i>	streams of energy, inner light lightness, love Intuition streams of energy, inner light, unconditional love Gardening	love Longer stay when love for farm Magical & picturesque landscape Walking		Overwhelmed Garden Weeding	Overwhelmed/amazed/urge Interest in olive growth Farm landscape/olive growth farm/earth Interaction with hosts/likeminded people; olive farming	Overwhelmed Farm landscape Gardening/farm & educative activities

Table 5. Representation of the joyful and memorable experience.

EXPERIENCE	JOYFUL EXPERIENCE			MEMORABLE EXPERIENCE		
	data interpretation					
CF based	AE/PO	Interview	Internet	AE/PO	Interview	Internet
<i>Meaningfulness</i>		Flow of life			Special/best	Unforgettable/meaningful
<i>Flow</i>	Pleasant	Flow/rewarding/job satisfaction	Pleasant	Pleasant	Merging	
<i>Mysticism</i>						
<i>Transcendence</i>	Gratitude		Fascination/compatibility		Compatibility/familiarity	Compatibility/familiarity
<i>Serenity</i>	Peacefulness	Relaxedness			Appreciation, aesthetic	Appreciation, care
<i>Spirituality</i>					Treasuring	Treasuring
Self						
<i>Perceptions</i>		Taking it as it comes/reward for work	Cool to use recycled wood			Importance of caring for land
<i>Symbols</i>			Body cells as happy			
<i>Emotions</i>	Joy/happiness	Joy/satisfaction	Happiness	Happiness	Appreciative	Appreciative, caring
<i>Meaning</i>	Importance of creativity, willingness to return			Willingness to return	Isolation in nature	Unforgettable moments/learning
Environment						
<i>Nature</i>	Fruit tree patch/farm landscape	Homemade/garden food; sun; trees	Body cells/wood	Farm nature	Beautiful/new nature in farm surroundings	Farm land
<i>Activity</i>	Eating garden fruit/creative work/ outdoor work	Watching sun/eating/picking fruits/meditating	Singing/building		Bathe in river, playing games, cooking discover new nature	Daily farm activities

Table 6. Representation of the harmonious and connecting experience.

EXPERIENCE	HARMONIOUS EXPERIENCE			CONNECTING EXPERIENCE		
	data interpretation					
CF based	AE/PO	Interview	Internet	AE/PO	Interview	Internet
<i>Meaningfulness</i>	<p>Sense of control</p> <p>Secure</p> <p>Compatibility</p> <p>Restorative</p> <p>Resonance</p>			Deep connection/timelessness /merging	Deep connection	Deep connection/merging
<i>Flow</i>				Deep connection	Deep connection	Deep connection
<i>Mysticism</i>				Restorative	Appreciation	Appreciation, restorative
<i>Transcendence</i>				Team energy/resonance	Resonance	Resonance
<i>Serenity</i>						
<i>Spirituality</i>						
Self	<p>Harmony with self and nature, relaxed working atmosphere</p> <p>Outdoor work as giving space, farm nature as quiet place</p> <p>Calming, meditative</p> <p>Farm nature</p> <p>Daily farm work</p>			Reconnecting with self and farm nature, solitude		
<i>Perceptions</i>						
<i>Symbols</i>						
<i>Emotions</i>				Connected feeling, inspired	Connected feeling, openness	Forest singing with birds
<i>Meaning</i>					Importance of communication	Connected feeling, appreciative
Environment	<p>Garden</p> <p>Relaxing, picking fruits, meditating</p>			Natural elements, farm nature	Farm nature	Forest, garden
<i>Nature</i>				Working outside, weeding	Talking	Listening, yoga, gardening
<i>Activity</i>						

Table 7. Representation of the outcomes connectedness, adaptation and sense of place..

OUTCOME	CONNECTEDNESS			ADAPTATION			SENSE OF PLACE		
	data interpretation								
CF based	AE/PO	Interview	Internet	AE/PO	Interview	Internet	AE/PO	Interview	Internet
Self	Reconnecting, connectedness			Adjusting			Educative		
Change									
Learning									
Environment									
Connectedness	Connecting			Overcoming			Recognition		
Sense of place	Staying longer			Getting used to, realizing			Special/memorable/ out of place		
	Connecting Sense of community			Unfamiliarity			Unforgettable		
Self	Animals & natural elements as messengers			Timeless			Others house		
Perceptions									
Symbols									
Emotions									
Meaning	Peaceful			Relaxed, frustrated, fear			Missing, discomfort		
Environment	Warmth, appreciative			Fear			Missing, awkward, accompanied		
	Animals, farm nature, weather			Strong accent			Home		
Nature	Farm nature			Nature rhythm, insects, snakes			Beautiful nature, pet animals		
Activity	Great outdoors			Farm work, talking			Playing, exploring, farm work		
	Yoga, farm jobs			Milking cows			Bird concert, farm nature, scenery		
	Outdoor work, weeding			Forest, grass hills, snakes			Sleeping, interaction		
				Sleeping in tent, farm work					

Table 8. Representation of the outcomes life change and emotive change.

OUTCOME	LIFE/EMOTIVE CHANGE						
	data interpretation						
CF based	AE/PO		Interview		Internet		
Self <i>Change</i> <i>Learning</i> Environment <i>Connectedness</i> <i>Sense of place</i>	Breaking habits	Change in feelings	Life influence, behaviour		Life influence, change the self		Challenges
	Making a difference together	Deep connectedness	Openness	Openness			
Self <i>Perceptions</i> <i>Symbols</i> <i>Emotions</i> <i>Meaning</i> Environment <i>Nature</i> <i>Activity</i>	Mirror to self	awareness, inner focus	Mirror to self, live to true inner nature		Awakening to true inner nature	Lifestyle alterations	
		Peaceful, connected			Love, miserable, alone		Excitement, enthusiast, satisfied
						Lived experience	
		Weather				Permaculture	
	Talking	Outdoor work	Social interaction	Longer stay, people leaving	Farm work		longer stay

Table 9. Representation of the outcomes interactive learning, farm learning and self-learning.

OUTCOME	INTERACTIVE/FARM/SELF LEARNING									
	data interpretation									
CF based	AE/PO			Interview			Internet			
Self										
Change										
Learning										
Environment										
Connectedness	Instructive	Practising	Self care	Experimenting	Practising	Life lesson	Exchange	Practising	Realizing	
Sense of place		Connectedness		Openness		Openness	Connectedness			
Community				Community						
Self										
Perceptions										
Symbols										
Emotions										
Meaning										
Environment										
Nature										
Activity	Sharing different perspectives	Learning as dreaming (aboriginal)	In own hands	Non-violence	It aint all that easy on the farm	Hard times, confrontation, darker self	Intimate source of knowledge	wwooof reality, avoiding blisters	Lessons not good nor bad	
			strong	What its like to live isolated, culture	New skills	Loneliness, coping	Religion, spirituality, culture, self	Religion, spirituality, culture, self		
	Permaculture, farm land	Permaculture, ecosystem farm land, aboriginal nature	Being alone		Food stock, olive growth, countryside			Farm land		
	Workshops, sharing, listening, tour	Sharing, application, tour	Standing in for self	Communication participation	Farming, building, Talking		Sharing, farm work	Planting, gardening, cooking, growing mushrooms	Seeing, hearing, achieving, failing	

4.2. Types of experiences

In this subchapter, the different types of experiences as formulated in tables 4-6 will be described more in detail. At the end of the subchapter a comparison is made between the different types of experiences.

Pure experience

In table 4, the pure experience has been described. This type of experience may be characterized by a purity, accompanied by a feeling of lightness and love. The feeling of purity is symbolized with streams of energy, in which the streams of energy in the environment could become one with the energy that is felt in the own body. This may be perceived as a merging of the self and the environment. In this process, an inner resonance may be felt, which is symbolized as 'inner light'. This inner light can refer to being in touch with one's intuition and receiving insights.

Intuition can be given meaning through the use of it in daily farm life, such as has been applied by hosts on a milk farm in the Netherlands. Many activities taking place on this farm were carefully chosen through intuitive processes; for example, when to plant a certain crop. Furthermore, feelings of love could come up during activities in the garden. Additionally, a feeling of love may be related to quiet moments during a togetherness with another WWOOFer or a host, or to walking. In the different circumstances where such a feeling of love has been mentioned, a merging was felt, even though the purity of such an experience was felt to be unique for the different individuals. Uniqueness and oneness could thus be experienced simultaneously.

The pure experiences of the self were seen to be projected onto the environment; nature was perceived as being a feeling of love that manifested in streams of energy. Inner light was seen as continuum of these streams of energy coming from nature. These perceptions of nature do not necessarily relate to a visible, physical environment, but seem to imply a nature that is present beyond the eye; a magical landscape. Within this, nature was perceived in its beauty, or aesthetics.

The pure experience was intermingled with the performance of physical activities, though. As already mentioned, gardening, walking and quietly working together with others could provoke such experiences. One WWOOFer mentioned, 'just being with the sunset and the geese' during activities on the farm was perceived as beautiful and gave a feeling of love and lightness. Such experiences motivated WWOOFers to spend more time on the farm than initially planned. The love that was felt during such experiences was projected onto the farm environment. In this way, the farm became associated with the pure experiences that were undergone by WWOOFers.

Deep experience

In table 4 also the deep experience has been described. Characteristic for this experience is the deep process through which an individual can move. This may also be described as an experience that is 'lived through'. During such a process, a deep connection is felt. This can be with the self, with other people or natural features in the farm environment. The overwhelming feeling of such an experience can give a sensation of insignificance, in which something that is bigger than the self seems to be entering the scene. This may make the individual feel passive and can result in a feeling appreciation and gratitude for that what is.

Sometimes WWOOFers could feel overwhelmed in their farm tasks, for example by the toughness of weeding, or by the potential presence of snakes. Deep experiences, in this manner, may happen through challenges and confrontations. It can also occur through pleasures and easiness. An example of the latter is the amazement and appreciation of an old olive growth farm property where two WWOOFers were volunteering. The latter provoked an interest in the WWOOFers for olive growth farming. This developed into a passion that motivated them to move to other olive growth farms to volunteer. For one WWOOFer, a deep experience was expressed by an urge to get in touch with 'the earth through the hands' through engagement in a sustainable community with likeminded individuals. The urge, here, may be described as a deep inner wish that wanted to be manifested in the outer world.

The farm landscape was mentioned as the general nature scene where deep experiences would take place. These could be filtered down into natural features in the farm landscape that were associated with the experience, such as snakes, olive trees and weed plants which were mentioned previously above. Furthermore, the notion of earth indicates the soil and the plants, which were associated with practical farm work.

It was not only farm work such as weeding, pruning or planting that provoked deep experiences; educative activities such as mini workshops about permaculture were mentioned to be overwhelming and deep considering the educative process the WWOOFer experienced. Farm work could become an educative activity when the education was brought into practice. This manifested, for example, in the farmer teaching the WWOOFer which plants to pick for the daily salad. Overwhelming feelings were, in some cases, related to the load of information provided by the host. Furthermore, interactions with the host could result in a feeling of deep gratitude, appreciation and insignificance. An example of this is the knowledge sharing of the, experienced, hosts with the, unexperienced, WWOOFers about olive growth farming.

Joyful experience

The joyful experience has been outlined in table 5. This experience is accompanied by pleasure, flow and relaxedness. There is a fascination for that what is, which may in this case also be described as an entertaining curiosity. In a joyful experience, life can be perceived as fun, which may be expressed on the one hand as 'taking it as it comes', and on the other hand as 'rewards for work' in job satisfaction. This can involve hard work, for example unwiring a fence from weeds, or creative work, such as designing a book shelf, in which space is given for own inventiveness. Indeed, specifically creativity was mentioned to be important for initiating feelings of joy and happiness. Additionally, a joyful experience is mentioned by different WWOOFers to provoke a flow in their life, which comes together with a certain easiness and an intense experiential involvement. This experience was also noted to occur during challenges, such as painful muscles; moreover, it may have helped the WWOOFer to continue with the job.

There may be differentiations in joyful experiences according to the performed activities. Relaxedness and peacefulness were mentioned to be occurring whilst meditating and relaxing in the garden. Pure joy was experienced when picking and eating fruits and singing. Satisfaction mainly came with performed farm jobs such as building a stone wall. Even though these differentiations show slightly different kinds of joyful experiences, there is also overlap between them. For example, eating fruits from the garden was also experienced as relaxing.

The farm environment during joyful experiences was mainly described by WWOOFers according to the performed activities on the farm. For example, fruit picking and eating put the focus on the fruit tree patch in the farm garden. The shining sun whilst relaxing in the garden made WWOOFers associate the farm environment with a sunny grass field and a picnic blanket; meditation was done underneath a big tree so the tree became important in the perception of the farm environment. The happiness that can be felt during a joyful experience was potentially associated with the farm environment, motivating several WWOOFers to stay for a longer period of time on the farm.

Memorable experience

Memorable experiences are described in table 5. Such experiences can entail the memorization of moments of the experience; these may be 'unforgettable', 'meaningful', 'special', 'best' or 'treasuring'. It can be accompanied by a feeling of compatibility in which the individual may sense a togetherness of the self with the farm environment. This was often experienced as pleasant. Memorable experiences could eventually become associated with a feeling of 'home', and may contribute to a willingness to return to the farm in future.

The farm landscape in the case of memorable experiences was often described by WWOOFers in relation to moments in nature; one WWOOFer told about a cottage stay in the hills during a heavy rain. She said to feel 'isolated in nature', even though this cottage was situated on the large farm land she was WWOOFing at. This isolation did not scare her; on the contrary, she appreciated the experience. Farm nature in relation to memorable experiences may thus be closely linked to memories in the farm landscape, which could in turn be connected to different natural features, such as veggie patches, grazing cows, rain clattering on the roof, or an isolated hill.

Furthermore, memorable moments may occur during the discovery of new things. This could be accompanied by a feeling of merging in the moment. Examples are exploring unfamiliar natural features on the farm or in its surroundings, such as creeks in which WWOOFers could bathe. Another one that was mentioned was cooking a new recipe of homemade garlic soup. Farming lessons were also mentioned as new discoveries, which mainly took place during daily farm work.

Additionally, the latter triggered for one WWOOFer a feeling of care for the land. Even though she did not particularly enjoy frequent weeding in the vegetable gardens, she could see how it was necessary in order to provide food for the community she was staying at. The food that was consumed in this community came mostly from the own land. In this manner, the relatively boring activity became an activity treated with care and responsibility that was sourced in a feeling of togetherness within the community. Such sense of togetherness also came forward for another WWOOFer whilst undergoing activities with fellow WWOOFers, for example playing games. In the latter, it was not so much the feeling of care that came up but more an appreciation and happiness. The sense of togetherness through care and happiness helped create memories that were treated as special.

Harmonious experience

In table 6, the harmonious experience has been outlined. Here, the individual may undergo a restorative process. This can be associated with the feeling of 'space'. One WWOOFer described this feeling while going for a walk by herself. She mentioned to feel restored from being alone and being

outside, since this was the first time the stormy weather did not force her to stay inside and to constantly interact with the host. There were no other WWOOFers to interact with on the farm.

Restoration may also be linked to a calming feeling, or peacefulness. Within a quiet and calming space, WWOOFers said to relax. This was related by several WWOOFers to performing farm work in the outdoors of the farm landscape. It brought together two aspects: natural features on the farm environment such as river beds, and working practically with the hands. The feeling of space could be connected to being alone as well as to a quiet farm environment. Nevertheless, farm work could also involve the use of tools or machines that produce noises, such as tractors or chain saws. A quiet space could then become an inner happening which may be less influenced by outer noises.

On the Hare Krishna farm there was a sign specifically asking for a quiet environment, so yoga and massage practices would not be disturbed. Here, potential disturbances in terms of noises was more connected to people and not so much to natural sounds. For example, bird concerts were experienced as calming and appreciative and not as disturbing. One WWOOFer even mentioned that she fell asleep while listening to singing birds.

The harmonious experience can additionally entail a feeling of harmony and resonance. Such feelings may manifest during farm jobs. One WWOOFer was weeding alone in the garden; during moments she felt in harmony with herself and the natural features in her work environment. Even though it could be said that she was performing 'destructive' work by pulling weeds, the feeling of harmony did not disappear with it. On the contrary, she said she felt resonance with what she was doing and with the specific environment she was working in. It was accompanied by a feeling of control and security. Such feelings have also been described during leisure activities, for example with meditation. Here, the big tree under which the meditation took place was associated with calmness and harmony. These feelings may have come up in the individual in combination with the presence of the tree; it could also be an inner projection of these feelings onto a close-by object, in this case, the tree.

Joy may be part of a harmonious experience as well; it was mentioned as coming up while picking fruits from fruit trees in the farm garden. The joy during this activity was accompanied by a feeling of relaxedness and harmony. 'Having no hurry', and being able to 'eat what was picked' contributed to these feelings.

Connecting experience

In table 6, the connecting experience has been described. The aspect of this experience that has been mentioned by most WWOOFers is a connected feeling, or a deep connection. This was often related to something specific. In some cases, natural elements on the farm were brought forward, such as the forest or the birds. In other cases, other WWOOFers or the host was referred to.

A connected feeling could come up during the performance of farm or leisure activities. Several WWOOFers said that yoga gave a connected feeling with the self, which was accompanied with a restorative process. In the community where yoga classes were given, yoga mainly took place inside. A connected feeling with the natural features on the farm was not felt often during this activity; this occurred more during outdoor farm work. Working with the hands during farm work was sometimes associated with connecting to the earth.

Connecting with others could create a 'team energy'. One WWOOFer mentioned how miscommunications between her and the host on two farms she WWOOFed at had made her realize the importance of open-minded communication in order for her to feel connected to the host. A connected feeling could also be established by working with fellow WWOOFers. This may be whilst working together, or working separately but besides each other. One or two WWOOFers noted to feel connected during moments of solitude in farm work or walking. During such moments inner reflections which connected the WWOOFer with the self could happen.

Furthermore, the connecting experience could bring up a feeling of resonance and merging with what was occurring in the moment. Resonance could be felt in the interaction with other people, and was in some cases accompanied by a feeling of inspiration. This occurred, for example, when WWOOFers had a conversation about personal processes of change during their travels. In such a conversation, merging could happen as the exchange built up a feeling of resonance. Merging, here, could be with the conversation in the moment as well as with the other individual. In such a merging experience, the individuals involved may become one with each other and the moment, and may lose track of time.

Merging could be felt as a deep connection with the moment, and it may also occur when working in the garden. One WWOOFer mentioned how she felt a deep connection while performing a weeding job. She realized it was time to go back inside once it started to get dark. It was not her focus on the clock but the transition to night that was telling her it was time to stop working. During the time she was working she had not been aware of time passing by.

Integration of experiences

The distinction that is made between the self and the environment in tables 4-9 is not as easily separated when attempting to link it to the practical reality. This complicates the findings of this research. Firstly, a coming together of the self and the environment was repeatedly mentioned in relation to the different types of experiences. Terms used for this were resonance, togetherness, merging and connecting. Furthermore, the experiences that were shared came from a combination between inner and outer reality. They thus did not represent an absolute reality; they indicated the world as perceived and felt by the individual. For example, nature as environment resulted of a perception created in the self that may have been influenced by an outer social or physical environment. In this way, the concept of nature may be a combination of self and environment. The above may indicate that an integration of self and environment could be part of a spiritual experience and a separation is not made in a clear cut way.

In addition, the defined types of experiences are not universal for interpreting spiritual experiences. They have been formulated according to the data that was found in this specific research. The experiences are thus contextualized. The different WWOOF farms where the WWOOFers spent time ranged between self-sustaining communities, olive growth farms, small family farms, permaculture farms and isolated individual farmers, amongst several others. The formulated experiences occurred variably on these different farms. It is thus difficult to generalize the type of farm environment where specific experiences tended to come up more than somewhere else.

However, several natural features and activities were found in all formulated types of experiences. Activities involving farm work, leisure activities and social interactions seemed to occur regularly in the different experiences. These could be differentiated according to the farm setting, though. In

this manner, the specific activities were unique for each farm. Farm work could, for example, involve weeding, building, fruit picking, cooking amongst others. Leisure activities occurred outside work hours, and could include picnicking, walking, swimming, exploring nearby villages or natural areas amongst others. The nature of social interactions differed per farm, according to the amount and type of people that were present. For example, at some farms the WWOOFer was alone and only interacted with the farmer. Communities, on the other hand, buzzed with people, mainly WWOOFers and permanents. Furthermore, several differentiations can be found between the different experiences in relation to the performed activities. For example, joyful experiences can specifically involve creative work, relaxing, working in the garden and meditating, the last two together with harmonious experiences. Yoga, surprisingly, is mentioned in relation to a connecting experience and not so much to a harmonious one.

The described types of experiences are generally related to natural features in the farm landscape. An exception may be found with pure experiences. Nature in pure experiences may be described more abstractly, as streams of energies and unconditional love. For the other experiences, the farm landscape most often entails the natural features the WWOOFers come across during the farm stay. Per farm, these natural features may vary, since it is context dependent. Such natural features can entail the vegetable garden, grass fields, farm animals, creeks, forest and trees, birds, the sun and the moon, the sky and the soil amongst others. Furthermore, built features such as stone walls or the farm house are sometimes mentioned in the context of the farm landscape. Some types of experiences describe specific natural features. For example, memorable experiences seem to partially relate to unfamiliar features, and joyful and harmonious experiences uniquely describe food from the own garden.

Different types of experiences may overlap with one another in their aspects. Thus, the boundaries between the different types of experiences can potentially blur. For example, a deep connection can be mentioned with regard to a deep experience as well as to a connecting experience. Appreciation has been mentioned to relate to multiple types of experiences as well, such as harmonious, connecting and memorable experiences. In this manner, similar aspects of different types of experiences may come together in a single experience. For example, a WWOOFer may feel a deep connection during intensive physical work. This could refer to a deep or to a connecting experience. When looking more closely at the experience, it becomes evident that he simultaneously feels job satisfaction, which could be related to a joyful experience. Thus, different types of experiences can come together in one actual experience, in which a potential overlap or differentiation may be found in the occurring aspects. Overlapping, here, is the deep connection, and a differentiation is job satisfaction. It is important to place the experience into the context in which it occurs, since that may bring to light differentiations, even though they can be very small. The characteristics of the described experience by the individual can, in this way, account for multiple types of experiences as outlined in this thesis.

The types of experiences as described in this thesis may happen through challenges, confrontations as well as through pleasure, easiness or appreciation. Actually, it may be questioned whether a distinction between pleasure and pain can be made during spiritual experiences. When an individual enters a state of resonance, merging, or togetherness, it may be possible that such boundaries dissolve. This is not necessarily the case for all described types of spiritual experiences, though. For example, positive moments have been mentioned regularly to be fostered as memorable.

Furthermore, a calming feeling was seen to be absent when a WWOOFer was in the middle of a challenging farm job. Hard or confrontational experiences have been mentioned by several WWOOFers to have obtained a special place in their WWOOF experience, because it brought them back to themselves. In this manner, togetherness, resonance or merging could be seen as aspects of spiritual experiences that may dissolve boundaries between pleasure and pain. These aspects may or may not be present within a spiritual experience; therefore, hardships and pleasures may still emerge when a spiritual experience is characterized by other aspects.

To conclude, the types of experiences that came forward in this research are context dependent and therefore not easily universalised. Within such experiences, the self and the environment are not distinguished in a clear cut manner. Inner and outer realities may together form the experience. Nature on the farm and farm activities are different per farm, although several commonalities may be found. These can entail, for example, the focus on natural features in the farm landscape with which the WWOOFer engaged, and farm work activities. Furthermore, an actual spiritual experience on the farm could incorporate different types of experiences as mentioned in the findings of this research. Here, overlap as well as differentiations may be found in aspects between different types of experiences. Confronting as well as pleasant moments could be part of a spiritual experience, depending on the character of the spiritual experience.

4.3. Types of outcomes

In this subchapter, the different types of outcomes as formulated in tables 7-9 will be described more in detail. At the end of the subchapter a comparison is made between the different types of outcomes.

Connectedness

In table 7, the outcome of connectedness is described. This outcome can, on the one hand, relate to a feeling of connecting, and, to a lesser extent, to a feeling of compatibility. Connectedness can be felt with the self, for example during a yoga class, or during reflection time on the inner purpose of travels. It could also relate to other people or natural features in the surroundings of the individual. Moreover, connectedness with the self was mentioned to be felt through the contact with nature during farm activities such as a weeding job.

The other people with whom was interacted were described as 'nice' and 'sharing and caring' became important. In some cases, a sense of community or a willingness to stay longer was felt. Connectedness was sometimes symbolized through natural features in the farm environment; for example, a WWOOFer saw a butterfly as a messenger for her to remind her of an inner connectedness she felt with nature. One WWOOFer came on a farm into touch with the connectedness aboriginals had with the 'land', as they called the natural environment. The host worked together frequently with the aboriginal elders in the farm surroundings, and shared some of his knowledge and experience with the WWOOFer. This inspired the WWOOFer to feel for herself what this connectedness was with the 'land'.

Warmth and appreciation often came up with connectedness. These feelings could be related to the farm environment, for example 'great outdoors', or sunny weather. On the other hand, experiences of fear and discomfort tended to block connectedness from emerging. One WWOOFer described

how she got lost in the dark in the mountains while she was trying to find her way to the farm. She questioned herself why she had chosen to go to this farm and felt scared. Furthermore, the discomfort another WWOOFer felt in the amount of talking the host did every part of the day made her urge to escape from the situation. In this manner, escapism may be seen as an opposing manifestation of connectedness.

Connectedness could be facilitated by the farm environment. On one farm, big windows in the farm house made it possible to see the moon, stars, sunsets and the farm garden. The WWOOFer mentioned how this made her feel more connected to the outdoor elements. Furthermore, the plants and wood harvested from the garden for cooking and eating gave WWOOFers the feeling of appreciation for the farm land that had provided it. Interactions with the hosts could also function to facilitate a connectedness through sharing personal experiences as well as valuable farm knowledge. A WWOOFer who stayed on an olive growth farm felt a sense of connectedness while consuming homemade food and wine, and simultaneously exchanging life experiences and knowledge on olive growth.

Adaptation

Adaptation as outcome has been outlined in table 7. This outcome may be described as 'getting used to' or 'adjusting' and could be related to a feeling of unfamiliarity. It has been described by several WWOOFers as part of the beginning of their WWOOF experience. They mentioned to have to get used to the setting. This included familiarizing with staying in someone else's home, sleeping in a tent in the forest, intensive physical farm work, meeting new people, amongst others.

Frequent feelings that were seen to come up before and during an adaptation process were fear, discomfort or unhappiness. These feelings were often related to the unfamiliarity with the farm environment, such as mentioned above with several examples. One WWOOFer, who stayed at a milk farm, said the farm stay had helped her to overcome her fear for cows. She adapted slowly to their presence and eventually started milking them. Another WWOOFer mentioned the continuous discomfort she felt by being in someone else's home; she did not manage to adapt well to this and concluded that such stays were maybe not for her. However, she could see herself inviting WWOOFers to her own place in future, mentioning that it would not be as 'awkward' when it would be her house. Furthermore, the presence of snakes in the farm garden were mentioned numerous times as bringing up fear. WWOOFers involved found themselves 'stuck' in a hard place because they were requested to perform farm work in the area where the snakes occurred. There was no way to prevent a potential encounter except from refusing to perform the work, which none of the WWOOFers did. It was noted that the fear slowly diminished whilst the WWOOFers worked in the garden. This was related to the gradual adaptation of the WWOOFer to the idea that snakes could potentially show up. Additionally, knowing what to expect in terms of wildlife when deciding to WWOOF in other countries was said to be helpful in getting used to and being careful with their potential presence.

Adaptation has also been mentioned with regards to a feeling of relaxedness. Over the days of the WWOOF stay, the WWOOFer said to slowly adapt to the rhythm of nature, not feeling the need to look at a clock. She had nowhere to be than on the farm, and the working schedule did not force her to keep an eye on the time. The adaptation to the natural rhythm gave her a feeling of timelessness, in which one moment seemed to flow naturally into the other.

Thus, a process of adaptation may come up from a place of resonance and relaxedness; additionally, it can help to feel more relaxed over time in a situation that brings up hard feelings as described above. It is shown that such a process may take place over the course of the WWOOF experience, as WWOOFers get more familiar with the farm environment and situations it can bring along. Within the WWOOF experience, though, multiple experiences can trigger a process of adaptation. For example, a WWOOFer got used to the presence of snakes, but then gets confronted with a large amount of insects when pulling out grasses. These are two situations on the farm that form part of the overall WWOOF experience, both potentially triggering fear and unfamiliarity which can open the path for adaptation to take place. Furthermore, it is not necessarily a given that adaptation takes place. This may depend on the individual WWOOFer and the emotions that are involved.

Sense of place

The outcome of sense of place is outlined in table 7. It may be associated with the establishment of a feeling of 'home', which could be linked to the ascriptions of 'meaningful', 'memorable' and 'special'. The WWOOFer starts to create deeper meaning of, or bond with, the farm environment. Since WWOOF involves to stay at another person's house for a period of time, one of the challenges that has been mentioned is to start to feel familiar and at ease in someone else's home. Sense of place could come into play when this process is successfully taking place.

A WWOOFer noted how the farm would always be the home of the host, and that care and responsibility was to be taken of this space. This meant for some WWOOFers that they felt 'out of place' or 'awkward', having troubles to find their own space within someone else's space. This seemed to be especially the case for WWOOFers who stayed at a family or individual's home. However, several other WWOOFers who stayed in a similar WWOOF context felt more at ease. This may be related to the attitude of the hosts as well as of the WWOOFers. A WWOOFer noted how the different WWOOF experiences had helped her to be more open towards unfamiliar people. Another WWOOFer mentioned how much welcoming hosts helped to feel at home. Some WWOOFers who continued feeling uncomfortable were with hosts who either did not create a schedule for the WWOOFers, misused their helping hands, did not interact much or lacked to respect the privacy of the WWOOFer. One WWOOFer said that, in order to create a valuable experience for herself, she started to create her own schedule, including the jobs that were given to her here and there and other things for herself to do in free time. In this manner, she felt she had time in her own hands and could still make the best of her WWOOF experience.

Besides interaction with the hosts, the engagement with natural features on the farm through daily farm activities were mentioned often when memorizing the farm. Pet animals, such as sheep and dogs, and natural features around the house, for example fruit trees and the vegetable garden, seemed to be bonded with. Food that was taken from the garden was also mentioned regularly, for example homemade olive oil from own olive trees. In one community, a WWOOFer decided to build a tree house to live in, so he would be 'away from everyone'. This community was buzzing with other WWOOFers, and he felt he wanted to be in his own space. The natural features of and around the tree thus became part of his new house. Interesting in this example is the diversion of escapism and feeling at home. Evidently, this WWOOFer did not feel at ease in the social centre of the community; his escapism brought him to a quieter place in the forest where he could feel more comfortable. The forest environment may have thus felt more like 'home' than the social environment of a community.

All in all, the formation of a sense of place may be dependent on different aspects of a WWOOF experience and could differ per farm and per WWOOFer. The context of the farm, the attitude of the hosts and the feelings and attitude of the WWOOFer may be influential. WWOOFers could continue to feel uncomfortable, missing to be 'back home'; or they could familiarize and feel at ease on the farm. After leaving the farm, they could potentially start missing it.

Change

Analysis of the field data pointed out that change can be split up into two subtypes: life change and emotive change. Both are outlined in table 8 and are described more thoroughly below.

Life change

As the words already describe, this type of change is related to alterations in someone's life. In many cases, this is an impactful change that can transit a WWOOFer's life into a new phase. One of the WWOOFers described life change as 'a process of awakening of the true inner self'. This change initiated during farm stays and continued to take place after the WWOOF experience. It led her to making big changes in her life. She described that, to be able to be true to herself, she needed to follow a new course in life. This may have involved 'breaking habits'. In this sense, life change could be a combination of the inner and outer, in which alterations in one's life may be made according to inner realizations.

The initiation of life change was said by more WWOOFers to start during a farm stay. Life change was mentioned to be related to different aspects of the WWOOF experience. Interacting with other people was said to be triggering; it aided in holding a 'mirror to the self'. This was said to be confrontational, and that it took openness in order to take in this reflection. From here, the individual could be 'awakened', or come to realizations. In some cases, as described below, farming practices could be part of a life change process.

The way that life change can manifest in an individual's life, can differ per person. One evident example resulting from the field data was the engagement of two WWOOFers in permaculture farms. They said that, along the course of these experiences, they started to adopt permaculture as a new lifestyle. Together with their growing permaculture experience and knowledge, their lives changed in order to live in accordance with permaculture principles. In many aspects, permaculture thus became a new way of life for them, which was potentially more in tune with their 'true inner selves'.

Emotive change

Emotive change can reflect a transition from one emotion into another. Outer changes may lead to alterations in inner states of being. Furthermore, inner changes can take place when coping with one's own emotions, potentially in combination with outer circumstances.

One WWOOFer mentions how she loves the interaction with other WWOOFers during her farm stay. She turned to feel miserable and alone when she ended up as the only WWOOFer on the farm. Another WWOOFer notes how a sad and homesick feeling at the beginning of her farm stay changed into feeling peaceful and connected when she started to do some gardening. Change in weather seemed to influence the mood as well. Rain could make a WWOOFer either feel cosy, or miserable

and trapped; sunny weather made most WWOOFers feel happy. In one case, a thunderstorm made a WWOOFer feel scared to be outside by herself, but she felt safe and cosy inside with the host.

Emotive changes may be related to challenges the WWOOFer faces. A hard job could be felt as heavy in the beginning, and turn into satisfaction in the end. Challenge could also be seen in terms of caring for the self in the given circumstances. Hard feelings could help in making the WWOOFer aware of the inconvenient circumstances for him or her, and to find a manner to change them in order to establish positive emotions. This is not always possible though; sometimes hardships are best to be work through, such as working on a tough job as described above, taking into consideration one's boundaries. Emotive changes could thus be managed through outer phenomena, as well as through internal coping.

Learning

Learning was found to be one of the potential outcomes of a WWOOF experience. Three different subtypes of learning were unravelled, namely interactive learning, farm learning and self-learning. They are outlined in table 9 and are discussed more thoroughly below.

Interactive learning

The term already indicates it: interactive learning takes place during an interactive process, or an 'exchange'. Interactive learning may indicate a continuous exchange between the self and the environment, in which external aspects could become internalized, and internal aspects externalized. The interactive learning that is described here primarily took place through people, and through this a secondary interaction could take place with the farm environment.

Within such an exchange, different things can happen. WWOOFers have mentioned to be inspired by the sharing of different perspectives. These could be embedded in cultural differences. For example, a WWOOFer mentioned how the exposure to a Hare Krishna community made him reflect on moralities. He saw the Krishna's as part of a religious culture with their own moralities, and the reflections on their moralities made him realize that he was the one who could perform the 'moral checks' in his life. Another WWOOFer noted how the interaction with Italian olive growth farmers at the olive press made her receive more insight into the culture behind olive farming in Italy. No one seemed to be in a hurry at the press and was interested to taste each other's olive oil.

Interaction with hosts helped WWOOFers learn more about the context of the farm; how did the hosts come about to settle down on an organic farm, and how did the farm develop over time. Furthermore, hosts were mentioned to be 'intimate sources of knowledge'. This incorporated their knowledge and experience in farming but also the whereabouts in the surroundings. Thus, if WWOOFers wanted to explore the area in leisure time, it was found in some cases that the hosts could provide more interesting information than guidebooks. This also counted for networks of other likeminded people; hosts sometimes provided WWOOFers with addresses of other farms they could recommend.

Interactive learning could also take place between WWOOFers. This could happen during joint participation in farm work, for example, when cooking together. In one farm community, cooking jobs would shift between WWOOFers on a weekly basis, and because there were many mouths to feed, multiple WWOOFers were needed in the kitchen. Inspirations for recipes sometimes came

spontaneously, for example, during a conversation about the available ingredients for that day's meal. Furthermore, one WWOOFer appeared to be a baker, and was making bread every day for the community members. His helpers took on knowledge from him whilst assisting in the baking process.

Sometimes interactive learning could take place indirectly, as with the baker mentioned above. Here, the baker did not directly explain how the bread was made, but the WWOOFers learned from interacting with him through their assistance in the bread making process. Workshops and tours on a permaculture farm would also be 'instructive' but facilitate a different interactive learning process. The farmer would talk about and then show permaculture practices such as mulching. Participants would listen and watch first, before trying themselves. In the baking process the helpers were assisting and learning at the same time. In the case of the WWOOFer crew in the kitchen, 'experimenting' was done together by creating recipes with the available ingredients. Experimenting, additionally, could be seen as allowing for learning processes to occur through mistakes or unexpected outcomes. Instructive learning allows less for such possibilities because the path to take has been outlined more clearly. Experimenting could, thus be seen as a path with higher risks and more opportunity for individual inventiveness.

Farm learning

Farm learning embraces practical learning on the farm, and is closely related to the performance of farm work. This can entail activities such as planting, weeding, building, pruning, harvesting, milking cows, amongst others. They often included explanations of the farmer about the specifics of the job. These explanations could, in some cases, enhance the understanding and performance of the farm work the WWOOFer was doing. For example, one WWOOFer who stayed on a permaculture farm learned from the farmer about the constitution of the ecosystem on the farm land. With the host's explanations, she understood better why she was planting grasses onto a slope. Farm learning, thus, can improve the quality of farm work for a WWOOFer through the deepening of knowledge and understanding of the reasons why a particular job is to be done. Furthermore, it can give the WWOOFer the opportunity to adopt new skills, such as building with cob instead of cement, or learning how to plant a tree.

Farm work was often mentioned as being intensive on a physical level, which could work through on an emotional and mental level and be called 'challenging', 'hard work' or 'confronting'. The exposure to intensive physical work could also be seen as one of the 'farm lessons' that was taught during the WWOOF experience. For example, one WWOOFer mentioned how her 'learning curve focused more on how to avoid blisters than the finer points of organic farming.' Another WWOOFer noted to have realized that 'it ain't all that easy on the farm'. Hardships and tough work could thus become part of a 'WWOOF reality', together with farm lessons that could deepen knowledge and skills.

Cultural understandings could form part of farm learning as well. An example can be found in the Australian bush. The Australian aboriginals symbolized learning as dreaming. It signified lessons taught by nature through a deep connection, and the importance of the full and deep understanding of such a lesson. Aspects of the aboriginal culture were adopted by one host who had a close connection with the aboriginal elders in his neighbourhood, and he integrated this in his lifestyle. The aboriginal approach to learning was applied on the farm as well. WWOOFers who stayed at this

farm learned about aboriginals through sharing by the host, as well as becoming temporary a part of the specific culture at the farm that had integrated parts of the aboriginal culture.

Farm learning may be seen as a broad learning process in which different aspects of the farm setting can be involved. Such external aspects of the farm environment can be internalized in the self during the learning process. The farm environment through engagement during farm work could thus be seen an inherent facilitator for farm learning to take place.

Self-learning

The last subtype of learning that is described in this thesis is that of self-learning. Such a learning process can be said to be primarily focused inwards and secondarily focused outwards. The lessons in this type of learning, though, can be derived from outer happenings. In this manner, the environment could influence self-learning and be influenced by a potential inner change such lessons can create. One WWOOFer described her learning process with the different components of 'seeing, hearing, achieving and failing'. In the first two, the reception of environmental input is outlined. The last two may be described as a wished or unwished outcome of an experience that could form potential sources of learning. Dealing with these outcomes possibly involves an inner reflection and dealing with the self.

Self-learning can come in the form of confrontations with the self through the occurrence of outer phenomena. An example can be found in the emergence of loneliness during a farm stay. The WWOOFer described that her feelings were related to the absence of other WWOOFers on the farm. She mentioned that afterwards she could see that she had learned to cope with these hard feelings during her WWOOF experience. It made her feel 'strong' inside herself. Another WWOOFer, who had a very similar experience, was additionally confronted with arguments with the host. She mentioned that she came to the realization she had the situation 'in her own hands', and could still try and make the best of her farm stay. Furthermore, the confrontation with the host taught her to 'stand in for herself'.

Lessons learned on the self were sometimes referred to as 'life lessons'. One WWOOFer noted how her WWOOF experience had aided her to reflect on her own life by seeing that it was possible to lead a different kind of life. Such a big theme could be filtered down into the inner reflection on emotions and perceptions, and the questioning of meaning. One WWOOFer sees 'lessons are not good nor bad' but as a neutral phenomenon that is happening to the self. The judgement of good or bad, here, could be created with the own mind according to the emotions and thoughts involved. For example, loneliness may be experienced by the individual as hard, which could lead to the creation of negative thoughts to the emotion. However, afterwards, the person can see how that hardship had manifested space for him to spend time alone to reflect on aspects in his life. The lessons learned here could thus be interpreted from different angles.

Integration of outcomes

The outcomes as described above were used for exploring the process of self-transformation. Self-transformation, or transformation, was only mentioned once or twice by participants during fieldwork. The different outcomes found with the fieldwork for this thesis can indicate that the self-transformative process may have different faces. At the same time, the different outcomes may not be as distinct from one another as their categorizations would indicate.

Connectedness and sense of place could be associated with each other. Moreover, sense of place could be named as a manner in which connectedness can manifest. In this way, connectedness and sense of place can be related but are not entirely one and the same. The connection that is made by WWOOFers with the farm environment could lead to a state of connectedness in which one can feel a sense of familiarity. This could lead to a sense of 'home', as described in sense of place. Contrarily, a feeling of 'missing' seems to be more difficult to relate to connectedness. It may even be seen as a hard feeling that could disable the individual to engage with a sense of connectedness. However, it could also be looked at as a deep emotional outcry for the connectedness that was felt with a place. The warmth and appreciation that may be present with connectedness could be manifested into a relaxed and welcoming feeling which can aid in creating a sense of place. The major difference between connectedness and sense of place, according to the findings of this thesis, may lay in the treasuring of memories. Such manifestation has not been noted with regards to connectedness but forms an inherent part of place-making.

Even though adaptation has been described separately as an outcome, it may be part of the process of obtaining a sense of place, or to start feeling connected. Additionally, it may provide lessons on the way; working through hardships as part of a self-learning process can be part of adaptation as well. In this manner, adaptation can be mingled with other outcomes found in this thesis.

Furthermore, in the findings of this thesis several differentiations have been made between different kinds of learning and different kinds of change. Emotive change may be linked in with life change when emotive shifts are influential on or triggered by life changing process. For example, a shift of emotions with changing weather during the farm stay could make a WWOOFer realize the importance for him/her to spend more time in a sunny and warm climate, because cold and rainy weather gives him/her a depressing and sad feeling. This could be a life changing process since it may motivate the WWOOFer after the farm stay to find environments where it is more likely for him/her to be exposed to the sun and to higher temperatures. The happiness in relation to the warmer climate could be referred to as being closer to the 'true inner self', or as a place in the self where the individual appreciates to be. Emotive change as well as life change could be seen as internal triggers for each to take place. In turn, they may firstly be provoked by an outer phenomenon. During the process of change, inner as well as outer aspects could be involved. This may be the case for emotive and life change separately as well as combined.

Learning was split up into interactive learning, farm learning and self-learning. The self-environment relations between these can differ and may aid in the division of learning into different types. Interactive and farm learning may be said to be more focused on outer phenomena. For the first one this is primarily in relation to other people; the second one is primarily linked to the general farm setting, and may be split up into different farm features, such as the vegetable garden or a newly constructed cottage amongst others. Self-learning may be seen as more focused inwards, even though it can be triggered by outer phenomena. Even though all types of learning may be associated with an inner process, the important difference here is the focus. For example, when new gardening skills are obtained, the WWOOFer internalizes these lessons in order to apply them in the outer world when necessary. These skills are to be used outside the self. In the case of learning to deal with a difficult feeling in the self, the newly obtained skill of dealing with a hard emotion may stay invisible for the outer world when being applied.

The line between interactive learning and farm learning may be thinner than with self-learning. Both types of learning may be seen as more directed outwards and can involve farming activities as well as interactions. In this manner, the interactions that take place with farm features, such as the soil, can become an inherent part of the interactive learning process. The interaction here, though, is directly with the soil and not primarily with a person. Interactive learning and farm learning as described in the findings has aimed to make this distinction: interaction primarily through people and secondarily with farm features (interactive learning); and interaction primarily with farm features and secondarily through people (farm learning).

Whether a clear-cut distinction between self-outcomes and environment-outcomes can be made remains the question. The differences between outcomes that are more self-related and ones that are more environment-related can be very subtle. Moreover, for each described outcome, there is something to say about the inner and outer aspects. Also, it may be context and person dependent. For example, connectedness pointed out to be able to be felt with the self, other people as well as with natural features on the farm for different WWOOFers that each volunteered on different farms and varied according to the different farm activities. A process of life change may consist of a constant exchange between inner and outer aspects. Emotive change and self-learning happens mainly in the self but can also be influenced, or even provoked, by the environment. The self-environment relations thus appear to be complex, making outcomes difficult to categorize into self or environment related.

It was shown that the formulated outcomes may show comparable characteristics. It could be possible that multiple outcomes are combined with each other in practice, which could mean that the individual undergoes different outcomes simultaneously. For example, a sense of familiarity could relate to connectedness as well as to sense of place. As already mentioned before, emotive change could take place in combination with life change. Also outcomes with differentiating aspects could occur at the same time in one person. An example of this is the potential occurrence of farm learning and connectedness while working in the garden to harvest vegetables for dinner. This complicates outcome as a concept, and points out that the categorizations made in this thesis are not fixed and can be context dependent.

4.4. Bringing together experiences and outcomes

The above described types of experiences and outcomes were found independent of each other. This means that the outcomes cannot be automatically connected to the found experiences. Indeed; the formulated experiences tend to describe what a spiritual experience can be; the outcomes aim to outline potential ways a self-transformative process can take place, which may happen through experiences that are not necessarily spiritual. Even though it is difficult to bring forward potential relations between the above described experiences and outcomes, some interesting connections have been found. There are two types of experiences that can be more clearly related to two types of outcomes. These are the connecting experience with connectedness; and the memorable experience with sense of place.

Connecting experiences and connectedness may not be very different from one another. The distinction between this experience and outcome can be blurred, thus separations as made in the

findings of this thesis may not be as clear cut. Both the connecting experience and connectedness describe the emergence of a deep connection and restoration. The notions of the activities and farm environment in which they can take place are also similar. It is thus likely that one can evolve into the other; however, with these many similarities, what makes the connecting experience an experience, and connectedness an outcome? Experience may be seen as a dynamic happening, whereas outcome could be viewed as more passive, or as a result from the dynamics of the experience. In this sense, connectedness may be seen more as goal, whereas the connecting experience could be the path paved towards it. Nevertheless, experiences and outcomes could also together form part of a continuous path of change and self-transformation, where one potentially evolves into the other. Along this path, connectedness could potentially gradually augment with the occurrence of multiple connecting experiences.

A similar line of thinking may be followed for the memorable experience and sense of place. As noted earlier in this chapter, a specific characteristic of sense of place is related to the fostering of special moments as part of the process of place-making. This can come in the formation of personal memories and stories that are related to the farm where the WWOOFer stayed. Thus, memorable experiences can come to enhance a process of place-making. This may be seen as a process in which a sense of place is increasing and fed by memorable experiences that occur along the way. In this manner, this experience and this outcome could also together form a continuous self-transformative path.

Furthermore, it may be possible that other types of experiences as described in the findings of this thesis can be related to certain types of described outcomes; however, this may be less straightforward than the above mentioned potential relations. Some examples are given. A deep experience could provoke a process of self-inquiry, in which the individual tries to deal with overwhelming and passivity. This dealing could be associated with a process of self-learning. Additionally, the occurrence of a pure experience may be linked to a life change. The 'inner light' that can be connected with through the pure experience may relate to connecting with the 'true inner self' as mentioned to be a potential initiator of a process of life change.

Learning could be related to different types of spiritual experiences on the WWOOF farm, since interactions with the self, other people and the farm environment may all occur variably during such experiences. For example, a connecting experience may occur for a WWOOFer during a period of solitude in a building job. Here, he may undergo farm learning in relation to the task he is performing. Interactive learning, as described in this thesis to primarily relate to interactions with other people, seems to be absent here since the WWOOFer is working in solitude. Self-learning could take place, for example, through experiencing solitude.

Additionally, in the different experiences and outcomes, the self-environment relations seem to unfold in a unique manner. It may thus be difficult to generalize a self-orientation or environment-orientation. In the above example of the potential connection between the deep experience and self-learning, an inward inquiry seems to take place. Here, an inner orientation could be more applicable than an outer one. This is difficult to pin down as such, though, because the experience may have started to exist as a result from interaction with an outer phenomenon, or could be influenced by outer phenomena along the way. In the case of the WWOOFer working on a building

task in solitude, there could be an exchange between environment and self during the process of experience and outcome. The orientation, here, could be going inward as well as outward.

Furthermore, the types of experiences and outcomes as described in the findings of this thesis were formulated according to the context of different WWOOF farms and WWOOFers. Within the described experiences and outcomes differentiations may be found in the manner in which an individual relates with the environment. Feelings and perceptions may vary during the performance of similar activities and in a similar farm environment. The same natural features could be symbolized, memorized or described differently. Additionally, the circumstances at a farm may vary over time, potentially altering aspects of the farm setting. Thus, the life worlds of one farm setting may vary between individuals and with circumstances. When different farm settings come into play, this variety can increase even more.

Nevertheless, this thesis has tried to explore similarities within this great variety. Within the formulation of these potential similarities through types of experiences and outcomes, it is important to keep the background of this great variety in mind. Not only may the formulated experiences and outcomes overlap or new types be formulated according to individual and contextual variations; the types itself may be experienced differently as well. In this manner, for example, a joyful experience may entail something unique according for each individual who undergoes it. Likewise, potential connections between experiences and outcomes may be undergone differently according to the individual and the context.

However, several descriptions of the farm environment by WWOOFers appeared to be similar for the different experiences and outcomes. Farm nature, or natural features on the farm, were brought forward most often. These often related to the engagement of the WWOOFer with specific natural features on the farm. The mentioned features could thus vary per WWOOFer. Sometimes the perception of the farm environment would be completely different; this can be found for descriptions related to the pure experience, in which nature is related to energies and love. Another example is the influence of teachings about aboriginal culture on the WWOOFers perception of the natural environment, specifically reflected in the use of symbols for natural phenomena and the reference to a deep connection with the natural landscape.

Activities also appeared to potentially match between different experiences and outcomes. Farm work activities, leisure activities and interaction between people have been mentioned in most different experiences and outcomes. Differentiations can be found in breaking down these activities more specifically. For example, in some cases leisure activities embraced the practice of yoga, and in other cases it was walking or exploring a nearby town. Farm work varied with the different farm properties and hosts. Some hosts would put effort into preventing boredom by varying the work; others would put WWOOFer simply to do work on what had to be done. Interactive activities could be exchanged for periods of solitude; sometimes due to circumstances and sometimes by choice. Thus, variations in activities may be found according to the context and the individual involved.

Additionally, some activities seemed to occur only within a certain experience or outcome. The practice of yoga was only noted as potential part of a connecting experience or of connectedness. Playing games was mentioned with regards to a memorable experience and to a sense of place. The allocation of these particular activities to the mentioned experiences and outcomes was related to the specific descriptions some WWOOFer had given of the activity and the resonance of that

description with a formulated type of experience or outcome. It could have been possible that other WWOOFers would have described playing games and yoga practice in a different way, which would have potentially placed them under other types of experiences or outcomes.

In this manner, similarities may be found in the WWOOFers descriptions of nature and activity. Moreover, they could potentially form part of a more general 'WWOOF farm culture'. At the same time it is pointed out how these can vary from one individual to another depending on the inner world of the WWOOFer. The differentiations in perceptions of nature and activities could be related to specific types of experiences and outcomes; however, it may be more likely to be linked to individual and contextual variations.

To conclude, the five described types of experiences and the six outlined types of outcomes in the findings of this thesis have been formulated independently from one another. However, potential relations may be found between them, some more evident than others. Furthermore, the self-environment relations in the formulated experiences and outcomes appear to be complex and may vary according to context and individual. It is thus not evident that an experience or outcome is either self-oriented or environment-oriented. A mixture is more likely to be come across. To continue, some aspects of nature and several activities in the farm setting for the different experiences and outcomes appear to be comparable to one another. They could be called part of a 'WWOOF farm culture'. On a more subtle level, differentiations can be made between them that vary according to different manners in which the world is experienced by individual WWOOFers in varying farm settings.

5. Discussion



5.1. Activities

In literature, the concept of flow as described by (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) seems to be primarily connected to activities. Other spiritual experiences as described by different authors do not explicitly mention the prerequisite of the occurrence of activities. Since activities form an important part of the research of spiritual experiences in this thesis, all of the described types of experiences have been linked to activities. Not all types of experiences are noted to be related to the concept of flow, though. Indeed, flow through activities as described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) can take place through a specific gateway, such as goal orientation. Activities and spiritual experiences may link to one another without necessarily having to be affiliated with flow, even though intense experiential involvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) may be generally associated with all described types of experiences.

On the same note, flow is mentioned to take place only when activities are experienced as pleasant. The experiences as described in this thesis may indeed be pleasant; and they may not be. Confrontations and challenges may just as much resonate with spiritual experiences as pleasure (Williams & Harvey, 2001). Moreover, the difference between pleasure and pain may vanish when the individual and environment merge as one (James, 1902) and into a timeless zone (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) where the activity takes place.

Deville (2011) argue for the challenging, or confronting, experience as a potential path to self-transformation. The results of this thesis indeed point out that confrontations during WWOOF experiences may be found as part of a self-transformative path. One WWOOFer describes the discrepancy between her ideas of farm work before she started WWOOFing and the harshness of the 'WWOOF reality' through the physically intensive jobs she had to do on the farm. This mismatch in expectations is indeed noted by Deville (2011) as significant in triggering self-transformation. In the case of this WWOOFer it was described as a learning curve, in which 'the focus was more on avoiding blisters than on learning about the finer aspects of organic farming'. Confronting or challenging experiences may thus be significant for the individual, whether or not this experience can be called spiritual.

Some activities appeared to be specifically related to particular types of experiences or outcomes. Yoga, for example, was only mentioned in relation to a connecting experience and to the outcome of connectedness. Lea (2008) notes indeed how yoga can be used to connect with the self and the environment in a new manner without necessarily being pleasant or harmonious, which underpins the findings in this research. Whether specific activities per experience and outcome may be universalised is still to be questioned though, since such potential links may be personal and context dependent.

The concept of activity with regards to spiritual experiences and outcomes may be challenged in the self-environment relation since activities are often primarily connected to the physical environment. For example, van Trigt *et al.* (2003) mention nature as a potential physical environment to perform activities that can provoke spiritual experiences. However, this thesis has shown that activities may also take place in the self, or can be a combination between inner and outer activities. This can, for example, involve inner reflections through diary writing or meditation. Additionally, participants

noted how activities in the environment, such as garden work or a walk, could facilitate the process of inner reflection, which is supported by Kaplan & Kaplan (1989) with their restoration theory. Activities may thus be connected to the inner and the outer, in which their boundaries may not be as distinctive.

To conclude, activities have been associated with different types of experiences and outcomes. Activities involving challenging experiences, whether spiritual or not, may be a potential pathway for self-transformation to take place. Furthermore, the theoretical separation between the self and the environment, in this case through activity, may not be as easily distinguished in practice.

5.2. Experiences and the natural environment

One of the new aspects of this investigation has been to research spiritual experiences in the cultivated landscape of the farm. Here I would like to address what the findings of this research have pointed out in relation to the findings of literature that describe spiritual experiences in other natural environments, specifically wilderness.

Havik *et al.* (2015) mention spiritual energies and Redfield (1994) notes a deep feeling of love, all of which may be linked to the pure experience described in the findings of this research. The natural environment that is involved in Havik *et al.* (2015) and Redfield (1994) can entail wild and memorable sites amongst others. Memorable sites in the case of the findings of this thesis can be related to familiar elements or environments around the farm that may be experienced as beautiful, or as fearful. The experience of beauty could link in with the aesthetics of a landscape that a pure experience can bring forth.

Wild sites are in literature often related to spiritual experiences. Frederikson & Anderson (1999) describe how a wilderness area can give a feeling of expansiveness and a sense of place to its visitors. Hinds (2011) notes how visitors to a wilderness area can start to feel connected and alive. Furthermore, wilderness areas enhance the feeling of 'being away' which comes with the absence of responsibilities and constraints (de Pater *et al.*, 2008; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). The findings of this research, however, point out that spiritual experiences may also occur when spending time in nature around the house. This is supported by van Trigt *et al.* (2003) and Cronon (1996).

Aspects such as responsibilities and constraints can come with farm work and may not remain absent in a wilderness setting. Cronon (1996) invites wilderness in the process of self-awareness and responsibility towards the natural environment. Similarly, this is integrated also in the WWOOF experience (Mcintosh & Campbell, 2001; Nimmo, 2001; Maycock, 2008; Trainor, 2008; Deville, 2011; Deville & Wearing, 2013).

Furthermore, similarities may be found in characteristics of spiritual experiences on the WWOOF farm and in the wilderness. For example, the feeling of expansion or space has been mentioned in the harmonious experience in relation to outdoor farm work and natural features on the farm. Feelings of merging and timelessness, as well as a deep connection, may form part of the connecting experience and of connectedness that can take place on the WWOOF farm. Frederikson & Anderson (1999), Csikszentmihalyi (1990) and Hinds (2011) note these characteristics as well, in which the first and the latter mention it in relation to wilderness areas. Nevertheless, similarities in characteristics

in wilderness experiences and WWOOF farm experiences do not necessarily indicate that they are one and the same. For example, a pure experience may be experienced in a wilderness setting through a sense of beauty whilst hiking on a path with far reaching views, whereas on the WWOOF farm it may be undergone through continuous streams of energy whilst planting seeds in the soil. Even within a wilderness setting or within a WWOOF farm setting similar types of experiences may differ for each individual.

Nature through spectacles

Central in this thesis has been to bring forward the diversity in which individuals can experience whilst at the same time attempting to discover similarities in this variety. This may be applied to the use of the concept of nature. When speaking of the natural environment, the reference is not merely to the physical environment; nature is often seen through spectacles that colour the world (Schouten, 2005). The concept of nature can thus be heavily influenced by an individual's perception and experience of the world. Therefore, in the conceptual framework of this thesis nature is part of the life world of the individual. It may be seen as a space in which the self and the environment are combined into an image that can represent nature.

From the field data of this thesis, it became clear that nature was often described similarly by WWOOFers. 'Farm nature' and 'natural features on the farm' were mentioned most often. This could indicate the formation of a collective idea on WWOOF farm nature, also called a culture. Individual experiences, here, may coincide with others (Lorimer, 2005). Symbols related to nature can aid in the process of culture formation (Rival, 2005). Indeed, aspects such as permaculture and aboriginal influences can co-create culture (Lorimer, 2005) on the farm as they form an inherent part of the farm environment. Additionally, they may influence nature perceptions of the WWOOFers involved.

Culture formation may also be applied to the nature concept of wilderness. Cronon (1996) argues how the formation of an idealized image of wilderness by a collective we in the upper classes of society has made nature into a serene place where one can get away from daily life. This may relate to harmonious or joyful experiences mentioned in the findings of this thesis. Contrarily, according to Cronon (1996), farm workers experienced the harshness of the natural environment and the dependence on it for food. Such experiences on the farm have been confirmed by several WWOOFers during fieldwork for this thesis. Interestingly, the symbol of Dionysus as presented by Abma (2003) embodies an uncontrollable flow of emotions, the wilderness in which one feels insignificant. Apollo, on the other hand, brings out a will for control that can give a feeling of peace, which is applied through the cultivation of the natural landscape. These nature experiences seem to oppose the ones described by Cronon (1996); according to Abma's (2003) theory, harmonious or joyful experiences seem to occur more in the cultivated landscape, whereas deep experiences may be more characteristic for wilderness experiences. The findings of this thesis point out how all of these types of experiences may occur in the cultivated landscape of the farm.

The potential distinction between wilderness and cultivated landscapes may be connected to the concepts of land sharing and land sparing. Integration of conservation and agricultural production (land sharing) and separation of conservation and agricultural production (land sparing) (Fischer *et al.*, 2014) form a widely discussed topic for nature managers. With land sparing, nature conservation areas are formed which are separated from human activities, whereas land sharing tends to

integrate wildlife with cultivation (Fischer *et al.*, 2008). The first approach can be associated with Cronon's (1996) description of an untouched wilderness that can be visited 'to get away' (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Farming can be associated with land sparing as well; these types of farms focus on high yields through monocultures (Phalan *et al.*, 2011). WWOOF farms may be brought under land sharing initiatives since organic agriculture on most of such farms tend to integrate biodiversity and heterogeneity in vegetation and animal life. However, fieldwork pointed out that not all WWOOF hosts took organic production seriously. Furthermore, field data showed that some WWOOF farms embrace large scale mono production of crops or livestock. Whether such farms combine their production with conservation may be questioned.

It thus becomes clearer how challenging it can be to define and classify nature experiences and to relate them to culture formation. The potential discrepancies between and similarities in nature experiences in relation to spirituality forms a crucial tension in this thesis. It brings up questions about the character of potential cultures underlying nature experiences and to which extent nature experiences actually resonate or differ from one another in their characteristics.

Activities in the wilderness and on the farm

A potential distinction between experiences in the wilderness and the farm landscape may lay in possible differences between performed activities. In literature, leisure activities in the wilderness that can relate to spiritual experiences have been noted as free time (Heintzman, 2009), being alone versus being in the group (Heintzman, 2009; Hinds, 2011) and potential specific activities such as hiking (Wylie, 2005). WWOOF experiences can involve leisure activities as well (Nimmo, 2001); however, one of the main focuses is on daily farm work. Even though Elands & Lengkeek (2012) note the occurrence of non-ordinary experiences outside the daily routine, also during outdoor work (Williams & Harvey, 2001) in day-to-day life (van Trigt *et al.*, 2003) spiritual experiences may arise. This is confirmed by the findings of this thesis. Thus, in this manner the types of activities involved when spending time in the wilderness as opposed to on a WWOOF farm can differ from one another. As a result, even though the content of a spiritual experience may be similar in either setting, for example in both cases restoration is experienced, the process of the spiritual experience through activities may differ (Heintzman, 2009). Likewise, challenges may be part of a spiritual experience in the wilderness (Williams & Harvey, 2001) as well as on the WWOOF farm, even though potentially attained through a different kind of activity.

Concluding, nature as a concept is seen to be part of the life world of an individual and may be formed by broader cultural ideas. Farm nature has been researched in this regard with this thesis. Here, the occurrence of spiritual experiences in farm nature is compared to such experiences in the wilderness. The discrepancies between wilderness and farm nature as a nature concept may be related to the integration or separation of conservation and agricultural production, however this may vary according to individual cases. It further shows that spiritual experiences on the WWOOF farm may resonate in characteristics with spiritual experiences in the wilderness. Nevertheless, such experiences may still differ from one another through, for example, the performed activities and the individual involved.

5.3. Care and responsibility for the farm landscape

The outcome of connectedness may be linked to nature through the findings of this thesis in combination with different scientific studies. Mayer & Frantz (2004) describe connectedness in relation to environmental sustainability and de Pater *et al.* (2008) mention it with regards to the forest. As they argue, it can be an important relation to recognize, because it may trigger environmentally friendly behaviour and can potentially be self-transformative in the perception of and the relation with nature through, for example, forests or food consumption. This may resonate with the thoughts behind WWOOF; the most important pillar of the organization is to create opportunities for WWOOFers to learn about organic farming and environmental sustainability (WIA, 2007; FoWO, 2013). The outcome of connectedness from a WWOOF experience could thus enhance to fulfil the goal of the WWOOF organization. Moreover, it can provide the opportunity for WWOOFers to enter a self-transformative process in the self-environment relationship, in this case with the farm environment, in which potentially environmental stewardship may emerge.

Additionally, other outcomes that were found in this thesis can aid in such a self-transformative process. Learning, for example, can provide the opportunity for WWOOFers to build up knowledge, experience and awareness of aspects that are related to organic farming and environmental sustainability. Multiple authors have indeed found that learning about such topics in a practical manner may form an important aspect of the WWOOF experience (Nimmo, 2001; Maycock, 2008; Deville, 2011; Deville & Wearing, 2013) and could be influential in a process of self-transformation (Deville, 2011; Deville & Wearing, 2013). The combination of interactive, farm and self-learning may be fruitful for such a process to take place, because it embraces different aspects of learning on a WWOOF farm, namely inward reflections as well as social and farm-related lessons.

Concluding, in literature, connectedness has been noted as related to possible self-transformations in environmental behaviour. Such a self-transformation may also be linked to other outcomes mentioned in this thesis, such as learning. Thus, outcomes of WWOOF experiences as described in the findings of this thesis, or their combinations, may enhance a process of self-transformation which could potentially be linked to increased awareness, care and responsibility for the farm landscape.

5.4. Experiences and outcomes

The formulated outcomes in the results chapter result from experiences on the WWOOF farm. These experiences may or may not be spiritual. It became clear in the analysis of the field data that several formulated types of experiences could relate to some formulated types of outcomes. The most distinct ones will be briefly discussed below.

The first potential relation is that of the connecting experience and the outcome of connectedness. As already noted in subchapter 4.4., the boundaries between the connecting experience and the outcome of connectedness can be blurred. Mayer & Frantz (2004) mention connectedness as potentially being an emotional experience in nature, which potentially undermines the distinction I make here between the connecting experience and connectedness as outcome. Connectedness may involve experiences of emotions, such as warmth and appreciation as described in table 7, but may

similarly be seen as a result of a connecting experience. Connectedness could thus potentially become part of a continuous path of self-transformation in which multiple experiences and outcomes occur (James, 1902).

Memorable experiences and the outcome of sense of place may show potential links as well. Familiarizing and appreciation (memorable experience) can be seen as steps towards the feeling of home and missing (sense of place). Once a process of place-making occurs through the fostering of special moments, a sense of place can be created. Frederickson & Anderson (1999) found that spiritual experiences and sense of place in the wilderness may indeed be connected through the creation of meaning and the fostering of memories.

Sense of place may entail a unique process on a WWOOF farm, because the WWOOFer enters to live with hosts in their home for a certain period of time. The memories and special moments in a WWOOF experience, together with the creation of a sense of place, may thus vary in comparison to being in the wilderness. Wylie (2005) notes to be disengaged with the surroundings, in which a sense of place is absent, during his hiking trip in the wilderness, as the landscapes are flashing by as he walks. This does not have to be the case for wilderness experiences of other people, as underpinned by Frederickson & Anderson (1999). The occurrence of memorable experiences, and potentially a sense of place, may thus differ per individual and per setting.

Thus, there are spiritual experiences that may lead into certain outcomes. Potential differentiations between similar experiences and outcomes could be context and person dependent. It is not to say that such potential connections can be generalized. Moreover, experiences and outcomes could together form dynamic and complicated patterns that may form a potential self-transformative path.

5.5. Out-of-the-box

As already noted previously, characteristics of the formulated types of experiences and outcomes in tables 4-9 can overlap with each other. Additionally, these characteristics can also be found in literature. An example of this is the concept of relaxedness; it may be linked to serenity as described by Kloek (2009); and it comes back in both harmonious and joyful experiences. In this way, the experience of relaxedness that is described by an individual can fall into different categories, namely that of joyful, harmonious or serenity. It could be said that the individual may experience all of the categorizations simultaneously, or that a unique combination between them is created, which may formulate an uncategorized, or out-of-the-box, experience. This process may also account for other types of experiences and outcomes.

These out-of-the-box experiences/outcomes may be occurring equally to the types of experiences/outcomes that are described in the findings of this thesis, and could vary according to the individual involved and the context in which it takes place. In order to relate the formulated types of experiences/outcomes with out-of-the-box ones, the formulated types of experiences/outcomes of tables 4-9 may be placed on a scale, locating out-of-the-box experiences/outcomes in between the categorized types. This could be associated with the connectedness to nature scale that is performed by Mayer & Frantz (2004). In this case it is not the extent of connectedness that is measured and there is not so much a limited conception of have or

no have. The scale becomes a grey area of out-of-the-box experiences with formulated types of experiences/outcomes as pillars. The purpose of such a scale is to bring forward the great diversity in spiritual experiences that can vary according to the individual involved. Simultaneously, it can give an indication of potential classification and characteristics of spiritual experiences as a basis to work from.

Interesting to note here is that out-of-the-box experiences may also emerge within the formulated types of experiences/outcomes. It may indicate the variety of manners in which one type of experience/outcome can occur, even though they are formulated in this thesis as a single type. The formulated types in tables 4-9 incorporate different aspects within one experience/outcome that could create varying spiritual experiences or self-transformative processes. At the same time, similar aspects may be undergone differently, perhaps on a subtle level, according to the individual involved and the context in which it takes place. In this way, a scale for out-of-the box experiences/outcomes may also be set up for a single experience/outcome, and simultaneously could complicate a scale which incorporates multiple types of experiences/outcomes as described in the previous paragraph.

5.6. Self-environment relations

The conceptual framework of this research has worked with the differentiation between self and environment. This division has been made in tables 4-9 in the results chapter as well. Kloek (2009), van Trigt *et al.* (2003) and Deville (2011) also theoretically distinct the interactive and personal aspects, or the self-orientation and the environment-orientation, in an experience. However, at the same time it is mentioned that in practice it appeared to be hard to separate one from the other. This has indeed been found in this thesis as well. Self-environment relations appear to be complex and can differ per experience and outcome depending on the individual and the context.

In this manner, the formulated conceptual framework may work in theory, but may not be able to make easily sense of the practical reality. Aspects of the environment could become internalized, and internal aspects could be externalized, or a continuous exchange may happen between self and environment. The challenge in the investigation of self-environment relations can thus lay in finding a framework that can include the complexity and dynamics of this relationship. The conceptual framework for this thesis has attempted to do so by placing self and environment on a scale; the experiences and outcomes could take place on this scale. The assignment of aspects of the experiences and outcomes to self or environment has created the theoretical distinction which appeared to be blurred and complex in practice.

Whether certain experiences of outcomes may be called more self or more environment oriented remains the question. This research has shown the complexities of such potential orientations in practice. The theoretical divisions into self and environment as made in the conceptual framework and the results tables may run short of catching the practical self-environment relations in their complexities.

5.7. Notions of spirituality

Most types of experiences as formulated in the findings of this thesis may be related to concepts of spiritual experiences found in literature. Joyful experiences could be linked to flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and serenity (Kloek, 2009); deep experiences could resonate with transcendence (Williams & Harvey, 2001); memorable experiences can be linked to spiritual experiences as described by Frederikson & Anderson (1999); pure experiences may connect with mysticism (James, 1902) and connecting experiences could resonate with spiritual experiences as mentioned by Havik *et al.* (2015). In addition, each type of experience may be related to some other literature sources as well.

Furthermore, the theoretical concepts for spiritual experiences as described in the conceptual framework could be related to different types of experiences found in the field data. Moreover, multiple could relate to the same type of experience through varying aspects. The types of experiences as described in the findings can be seen as connecting different theoretical descriptions of spiritual experiences found in literature since they may unravel underlying characteristics. An example of this is the feeling of insignificance; this may be brought into touch with transcendence (Williams & Harvey, 2001; Kloek, 2009) and mysticism (James, 1902). It specifically comes back as part of a deep experience in the findings. In this manner, insignificance through the deep experience can be characteristic for a spiritual experience and may be connected to multiple notions in literature of what spirituality can be.

The least reference in the field data was made to the theoretical concept of spirituality in the conceptual framework. This concept was meant for relating the use of the term spirituality by participants to a similarly formulated theoretical concept. However, the term spirituality was only used a few times by participants. Furthermore, the specific manner in which the theoretical concept of spirituality, or the specific spiritual experience, was formulated in the theoretical framework, namely as a total spiritual experience (Kloek, 2009) in which self and environment would come together as one, made the relation of field data to this theoretical concept limited. Interestingly, it was assumed beforehand that this conceptual framing would open space for individual interpretations. Even though the coming together in this framing was noted multiple times by participants, they did not always relate it to spirituality. It is with this use of the specific spiritual experience as a theoretical concept that the conceptual framework has potentially run short. A broader formulation of the theoretical concept could have left more space for different interpretations by participants. The concept could also have been left out since it sometimes created confusion with the umbrella term of spiritual experience. Moreover, the other theoretical concepts that described spiritual experiences as umbrella term could have also framed the use of the term spirituality by participants. However, the power of separate formulation of the specific spiritual experience as one of the theoretical concepts is that it reminds of the possibility for a spiritual experience as umbrella term to be referred to with a similar word.

Research on an elusive concept as spirituality appears to be complex; there are no straightforward answers to be given, yet not nothing can be said about it. The types of experiences as described in the findings aid to make it more tangible, as well as their characteristics that may be associated with different theoretical concepts. However, the diversity in descriptions of spirituality and potential overlap in characteristics can also make it challenging to create a clearer overview.

Mostly, this thesis has pointed out that there is not a straightforward manner to describe an elusive concept such as spirituality. It can be seen as a dance that is characterized by certain directions and expressions, attempting to bring forward the invisible and indescribable of spirituality. This dance may alter according to the individual who performs it. When comparing dances with one another, similarities as well as new features may be found, which could help to define better what spirituality can be about. This thesis has investigated new dances and already investigated dances, and has attempted to bring forward significant and recurring characteristics of the different types of dances.

5.8. Used methods

There are several notes to be placed about the used methods in relation to the findings of this research. As mentioned before, the initial idea to perform ethnographic research during the course of all fieldwork did not work out, because not enough data about WWOOFers experiences could be collected. Instead, other (more distant) methods were used, such as online investigation. This made it harder to collect data about the life world of the individual, something which was initially planned to be collected in the setting of the WWOOF farm. Even though surprisingly many details about the life world were found in the data collected in interviews and online investigation, the deep investigation of one's life world within the setting (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001) was challenging. This may have had an influence on the findings; indeed, not all aspects of the life world could be filled in in tables 4-9. As mentioned in the results chapter, this could be because some aspects were more appropriate than others with regards to the type of experience/outcome. However, it could also indicate an insufficient investigation of the life world. Understanding the diverse realities of the life world (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Green & Thorogood, 2014) of different WWOOFers could have been more complete. Indications for future research on this will be given in the conclusion.

What appeared to be helpful was the use of visual imagery. Specifically the videos about WWOOFers experiences aided to take a deeper dive into the setting of the farm they were at. This is where the method for analysis of visual data as described by Van de Kamp & Cuijpers (2011) became useful. However, it also became apparent how difficult it was sometimes to place the images into words. The many words in the descriptions that were used did not always capture fully the picture of the setting, or the experience of it. In this sense, the findings may be incomplete. Aspects in the video that could not be grasped in the words used in the analysis thus went missing. It is not said that all of these missing aspects were important; but there may have been significant ones amongst them.

All the data was translated into words, in order to perform an analysis. Moreover, words are a general tool to communicate, either through research or through everyday talk. This raises the question whether it is possible to ever capture indescribable aspects and include them in research findings. Something similar can be raised for the performance of research on spirituality, since this is a rather unfathomable phenomenon. The findings may thus be seen as attempts to describe something ungraspable by circling around it rather than touching the source. It can be questioned whether any research method will be able to make a more complete description, or to catch the researched phenomenon in its totality.

Another aspect to be raised is connected to sharing personal matters. It is likely that people will often not share their personal feelings, especially when it's a sensitivity, on the internet through

blogs and videos. It is more plausible that this will be shared in an interview or during an informal conversation, under the condition that there is a feeling of trust. Even in an e-mail interview it may be questioned whether such matters would be shared considering the distance between the interviewer and the interviewee. Therefore, the findings may contain less relevant personal information than it would have contained otherwise. Additionally, information may be missing in the findings because it was challenging to impossible with e-mail interviews and online investigation to continue asking questions about a relevant phenomenon.

The last aspect I want to address is the use of auto-ethnography as a method. Since the collected data comes from the researcher in the role of the WWOOFer, it may have been possible that there was a bias on the data. The researcher had a theoretical basis on the researched topics; this could have influenced the jotted down notes and the focus of the experience. Wylie (2005) argues that this bias was present in the beginning of his auto-ethnographic fieldwork, but later seemed to relocate to the background, which made him experience in a more open manner. Important, here, was that this was recognized as part of the research process.

Thus, the used methods may have influenced the findings in different manners. The use of more distant methods, such as online investigation, may shorten the performance of phenomenological research. Auto-ethnographic research is to be done with awareness and reflection because the same individual takes the role of researcher and the researched. This may have placed a potential bias on the data. Lastly, potentially no research method at all will be able to fully capture an elusive phenomenon such as spirituality.

6. Conclusion



In this thesis, a consecutive exploration of spiritual experiences, self-transformation and nature on the WWOOF farm has been performed according to the following research question: in which ways, if any, are WWOOF experiences and nature related, with regards to spirituality and self-transformation? The findings show six different types of spiritual experiences and five different types of outcomes that can be called self-transformative. Even though this may seem as a concluding categorization, it offers more of an initial idea of the different dimensions in which spiritual experiences and self-transformative outcomes in the context of the WWOOF farm may be placed. Additionally, the theoretical division made between the self and the environment in the WWOOFer's life world was pointed out not to be as straightforward when relating the conceptual framework to the field data. Studying the researched concepts and their relations was showed to be rather complex; straightforward definitions may not be appropriate but a form of framing is necessary for it to be researchable. This is the central tension that can be found in this thesis. The main research question that is named above, was divided into four sub research questions. They have been distributed into different subchapters below, each drawing specific conclusions on this research.

6.1. Experiences

The first sub research question focused on the investigation of experiences on a WWOOF farm: what kind of experiences do people at WWOOF farms have? Experiences were found to be very diverse amongst individual WWOOFers and farm settings. WWOOF experiences appeared to take place in many different countries over the world, involving different types of farm landscapes and cultures. Nevertheless, several similarities were found between the wide ranges of WWOOF experiences. They could be related to general elements of a WWOOF farm: the interaction with other WWOOFers and/or hosts, involvement in organic farming and staying in an unfamiliar environment away from home. Becoming part of the daily farm routine, the WWOOFer could be asked to perform a variety of farm jobs, depending on the farm context. Additionally, many WWOOFers expressed to have time for leisure activities, which could involve exploring the farm surroundings. Engaging with organic farming could take place through farm jobs or through interaction with the hosts. In many cases, hosts were mentioned as being open to sharing farm experience and knowledge with the WWOOFers. Additionally, sharing cultures could form part of this interaction as well. Natural features on or around the farm with which the WWOOFer engaged during the farm stay were noted mostly to form part of the WWOOF experience. During the course of the farm stay, the new environment was familiarized by most WWOOFers, although some noted to continue feeling discomfort by staying in someone else's home.

6.2. Spirituality and experiences

The second sub research question that was formulated aimed to explore when a WWOOF experience could become a spiritual experience: do these people relate those experiences to spirituality, and if so, in which ways? In this thesis, five types of spiritual experiences were found: harmonious experience, joyful experience, deep experience, pure experience, connecting experience and memorable experience. Spiritual experiences as described in the conceptual framework through flow, mysticism, serenity, transcendence and spirituality can be related to those types through the sharing of certain characteristics. It was found that spiritual experiences were not so much referred to with the word spirituality, but they were mostly found through the description of potential characteristics of a spiritual experience, such as relaxedness or a deep connection. The five types of

spiritual experiences that were found may not be generally applicable, since their formulation occurred through field data that was contextual and person dependent. Also, out-of-the-box experiences may occur where different types of spiritual experiences overlap, or simultaneously take place within the individual. In this manner, the found types of experiences may be non-embrative but indicative in describing the wide scale of spiritual experiences that can take place on a WWOOF farm. The elusiveness of spirituality makes it a challenging concept to research. The types of spiritual experiences that were found in this thesis may be seen as dances around the essence of spirituality. Whether a concept such as spirituality may ever be fully grasped in its essence through scientific research can be questioned.

6.3. Relation to nature

Here, the third sub research question is addressed, which refers to the potential relation between spiritual experiences and nature on the WWOOF farm: (how) are those spiritual experiences related to nature on a WWOOF farm? Nature perceptions that related to spiritual experiences on the WWOOF farm primarily included natural features on and in the surroundings of the farm with which the WWOOFer engaged during the farm stay. Sometimes a more abstract perception of nature on the farm was given, such as streams of energies that were noted with regards to the pure experience. Spiritual experiences in the farm environment and in the wilderness showed similarities in characteristics. However, they may still be experienced uniquely according to the individual involved and the relation with the setting. In the case of WWOOF, engagement in the natural setting mainly takes place through activities. It is within activities that spiritual experiences have seen to arise. On the WWOOF farm, day-to-day farm work is the primary activity, and leisure activities the secondary activity. In the wilderness, focus may be mainly on free time in combination with leisure activities such as hiking. WWOOF experiences can be called unique when compared to wilderness experiences through the opportunity for WWOOFers to stay in a farmer's home environment. Familiarization with the natural environment, however, has seen to be occurring in both the farm landscape and the wilderness.

6.4. Self-transformation

The last sub research question brings the WWOOF experience into touch with the potential occurrence of self-transformation: in which ways, if any, can an experience on a WWOOF farm become self-transformative? Self-transformation, here, is seen as a potential outcome of one or multiple experiences on the WWOOF farm. Self-transformation has been translated in several aspects, or outcomes, that can describe its process in the context of the WWOOF farm: learning, change, connectedness, adaptation and sense of place. Change was subdivided into emotive and life change, and learning was subdivided in self-learning, farm learning and interactive learning. All of these aspects were found to be commonly mentioned in relation to WWOOF. These aspects could relate to a greater or lesser extent to the inner (the self) or to the outer (the environment). Theoretically, such distinctions may be made; however, practical reality pointed out the complexity of self-environment relations in which one and the other may not be as easily separated. Furthermore, just as with the found types of spiritual experiences, out-of-the-box outcomes may occur when different outcomes overlap with one another, or occur simultaneously within one individual. Even though this sub research question doesn't necessarily refer to self-transformation in the light of spiritual experiences, it was shown that several formulated spiritual experiences could potentially relate to some formulated outcomes. For example, this was the case for the memorable experience and the outcome of sense of place. Self-transformative processes on the WWOOF farm,

through for example connectedness and learning, could aid in the development of an attitude of care and responsibility for the farm landscape, which could also be referred to as environmental stewardship.

6.5. Future research

There are many suggestions that can be made for future research, since this thesis has touched a relatively new topic of investigation. WWOOF experiences and outcomes have not been researched much, nor have spiritual experiences in the cultivated environment, specifically on the farm. My suggestions will lay emphasis on these, as well as on several methodological aspects. In addition, the complexity of the concepts and their relations that have been investigated for this research open up a space for more thorough investigation. At the same time, emphasis is laid on the discrepancy in aiming to define such concepts.

WWOOF experiences and outcomes in general may be continued to be studied since there is such a scarce amount of research done on them. This can be performed in an explorative and descriptive manner. Considering the challenge to investigate a context and person dependent subject such as experiences and outcomes, it may be difficult to define causalities. Furthermore, self-transformation in relation to WWOOF can be investigated more thoroughly. The different outcomes as formulated in the findings of this thesis could be investigated more deeply in their connection to self-transformation. Additionally, research could be set up to investigate in which manners self-transformation can influence environmental behaviour of WWOOFers. Alternatively, an independent research may be set up that goes deeper into the transition of WWOOF experiences into a process of self-transformation.

Spiritual experiences in relation to the wilderness are much more widely researched compared to such experiences in the cultivated environment. This thesis has focused on the cultivated environment of the WWOOF farm; future research could lay focus on a similar setting or a different one that may be classified as cultivated, such as city gardens. Furthermore, an extensive comparative study between spiritual experiences in the wilderness and in the cultivated landscape may be valuable to perform.

Several theoretical concepts have been used in this thesis to frame spirituality. As an alternative, other theoretical concepts could be used and may result in different findings. It would be interesting to compare this with the types of experiences described in the findings of this thesis. Additionally, focus can be put on discovering out-of-the-box experiences or outcomes that may potentially add or alter categories to the already described types in the findings of this thesis.

As mentioned in the discussion, the life world of the individual in the WWOOF setting may have been underexposed in this thesis due to used methods. Therefore, I would like to suggest a research that involves alternative methods. Firstly, this may include the keeping of diaries by different WWOOFers during their time on the farm. These WWOOFers may be reached in advance of their farm stay through the internet, for example online WWOOF fora. Secondly, different settings of a WWOOF farm may be investigated through ethnographic research and compared with one another. The downside to this method is that the researcher runs a risk of not encountering other WWOOFers on the farm, such as happened in this research. The focus of the research may then change, in which

the different settings of the WWOOF environment are compared with one another and not so much the experience of different WWOOFers. An option here is to compare the own WWOOF experience on the different farms through auto-ethnography.

An interesting but rather unusual method that may be used when researching spirituality in relation to nature is linked to the challenge to capture spirituality in words. It may be possible that pictures would aid to give a better outline of what a spiritual experience can be about. This can be done through, for example, the comparison of photos that have been selected by participant as best describing their experience. The use of pictures in combination with descriptions through words may thus bring up new findings. However, the test here lays in the translation of these pictures in a manner that does not take away important information.

6.6. Practical applications

This research could lay an important basis for practical applications in the field of nature management and planning. WWOOF has been widely referred to as a manner to get into touch with nature by using the hands; ‘greening the mind and the soul’, as Maycock (2008) states. Such an experience can result in a feeling of connectedness with nature, or where nature can be felt as a homely place to dwell in. Spiritual experiences in the natural environment can enhance well-being (Frederikson & Anderson, 1999), in the wilderness as well as in the cultivated landscape. Additionally, as referred to by de Pater *et al.* (2008) and Mayer & Frantz (2004), connecting with nature may increase an awareness of the interconnectedness between humans and nature (Havik *et al.*, 2015). This could eventually spin off in personal transformation of environmental behaviour into stewardship (de Pater *et al.*, 2008). As WWOOF is a global phenomenon that is practiced on a local basis, the outcomes of the farm experiences may be taken with the individual to different parts of the world where it could inspire others to undergo a similar experience, or to bring one’s own environmental attitude into awareness. Additionally the WWOOFers may want to continue connecting to the farm environment through, for example, gardening. These may be essential aspects for nature managers to take into account.

Nature managers could include the farm environment in the landscape, for example, by allocating a plot of land to become a community garden. This has been applied in different countries already, even though not always by nature organizations. For example, in the city of Newcastle in Australia several community gardens are set up by the local council; citizens can garden here and they can also harvest different vegetables from the gardens to eat at home. Such places are great for ex-WWOOFers to continue practising what they learned on the farm and to carry on engaging with the farm landscape. Additionally, it’s a fruitful place for non-ex-WWOOFers, children as well as adults, to be involved in the farm landscape. Specifically for children it can be a fruitful opportunity to learn where the food that they eat comes from and to develop an appreciation and care for the garden.

Nature managers could focus on the integration of biodiversity and agriculture production, or land sharing (Fischer *et al.*, 2014). Such integrated sites may bring together the ‘untouched’ nature (Cronon, 1996) and the cultivated farm environment. Connecting through nature with food and being in the ‘great outdoors’ (Abma, 2003) can come together here. The presence of people and the types of activities may vary in such integrated gardens, which can in turn influence the individual

experiences. At the same time, the types of experiences in such places may be variable in context and individual. For example, harmonious experiences could happen when working together with others in the garden, or whilst resting in solitude on a bench in the shadow of a tree. It may be important for nature managers to allocate sufficient space for this diversity to come together; for example, if visitors want to meditate in a quiet place in the garden, they may not want to be close to a group of chatting people. The landscape can be designed in such a manner that it holds space for the different types of experiences and activities. However, since this is a potential project in which land sharing is promoted, integration of the different landscapes remains central. Creating space for the diversity in experience-seekers and activities through land sparing, in which agricultural activities are separated from biodiversity conservation (Fischer *et al.*, 2014), may be an alternative approach to fulfil the different needs and wishes of visitors.

Learning can play an interesting role in the establishment of community gardens. Learning may be related to interaction, to the self and to the farm. Such learning aspects can be included by nature managers in nature related activities. For example, farm learning may take place through the organization of a farming workshop that teaches the basics of farming. In addition, more advanced or topic specific workshops could be set up, such as pruning, permaculture practices or cob building. What has been learned may be applied in allocated areas in the community garden. Interactive learning can happen when people come together to work in a team, something which a community garden can fruitfully offer since it brings together individuals. However, proper management to create an opportunity for team work may be necessary, as otherwise individuals may still work separately in the gardens. Self-learning can take place through the performance of above activities, or simply by being in the garden.

There are thus remarkable opportunities that may be applied by nature managers through this research. Community gardens can be initiated through land sharing, creating opportunities for the individual to engage in a farm landscape. Such gardens are already growing in their numbers and smart management can make it into a success. In addition, it may be worthwhile to consider connecting individuals and gardens with each other on a larger scale, in order to establish a local sustainable network. Transition towns are an interesting inspiration for linking sustainability initiatives. These towns are moving into a direction that promotes local and sustainable initiatives (Merrit & Stubbs, 2012), for example, through non-monetary trade markets and community gardens, and aids to build up resilience for climate change and loss of access to oil for transportation (Barry & Quilly, 2009) by local resource provision and community sharing in a biodiverse environment. Transition towns are increasingly established in countries such as Ireland, England, New Zealand and Canada (Barry & Quilly, 2009).

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Appendices

In the below appendices, collected field data has been brought together in their original texts. This includes auto-ethnographic and participant observation notes taken on the WWOOF farm (appendix 1), (transcriptions of) e-mail and face-to-face interviews (appendix 2) and transcriptions of online investigation from videos, blogs and forum (appendix 3). The appendices are not complete in their collection; there is simply too much data to be brought into the appendix. Alternatively, in each appendix, one or two examples of data from the main field research methods can be found.

Appendix 1 – Auto-ethnography and participant observation

Farm name: New Permaculture School & Permaculture Farm;
Location: Anna Bay, New South Wales, Australia;
Farm host is member of WWOOF Australia;
Field data is based on own experience and observations made on the property.

Day 5 on the farm

It feels good to be busy with practical things and outside under the sky. I was thinking today of how fortunate it is to have sunshine now instead of the rain and wind of last week. It makes it possible to do things outside, to be outside all day basically. To have air. We did some pretty basic jobs, moving sand and sowing a pergola sheet. I felt these activities made my mind come to peace and brought me more into contact with that which is around. I also feel good about contributing something to the land, giving something back for me staying here. I get to know a little bit more each time about the land and how it works, if I can follow the whole story of the host at least. Sometimes I cannot follow him in the amount and speed of talk, and the connections he makes. Anyways, today he told me that the energy provided in the house mostly comes from solar panels. It is weather dependent, and when there is less sun he gets electricity from the grid. The shower is heated up through the solar panels too, and when there is not enough sunlight, the stove in the kitchen provides the heat via a system I did not fully understand.

I walked through the garden today and picked an orange to eat. It gave me such a fulfilment and joy, to eat that sweet and juicy orange from a tree here on the land. I thanked the earth for this beautiful orange that I was able to eat.

The pergola, where I worked today, is used for courses. It is the place where the course members sit down after having picked fruits and veggies from the garden to discuss theory on permaculture. These courses come up according to harvest periods, as in this time enough food is produced for multiple people to pick and eat. The host does not have a clock or a calendar how we know them; he works with an astrological calendar. This also is a calendar that begins and ends according to the days of the year. However, in this calendar the moon, the sun and the position of the different planets is included. So what happens is that planting periods are planned according to the phase of the moon and the position of the planets determine which type of plants are best to be planted. Usually this is from one to several days in a row. We missed to plant in the planting period when I came because of the rain. The next one is coming up this week (fruiting annuals) and I may be helping with that one. Furthermore, this calendar includes the different star signs and thus refers to

different energies in the system in the different times of the year. It also talks about small periods of time (grey areas) in which it is better not to take decisions, and then three times a year when there is a bigger chance of miscommunications. I feel that that period applies to me and the host (we are in this time right now). There have been so many moments in which we misunderstood each other. This didn't make the communication easy. It is a little tiring, actually.

The house in which the host lives is made of materials that were used before. For example, from houses that were to be broken down. It took him several years to build this house. There are many windows in the house; during the day there is a lot of light, and during the night there is mainly darkness. There are some colourful lights in the garden nearby the house, maybe five; they change colour every minute or so. For the rest there are no lights outside on the land during night time. The house consists of two floors: the ground floor consists of the kitchen, living room and bathroom. The first two are in one and the same room. There is a woodstove as well as a cooking stove. The food is heated up on the latter, and further ready made on the woodstove. The woodstove is lit when the sun goes down and burns the whole evening. There also is a fridge, which runs on either solar energy or on electricity of the grid. There is a table, a kitchen bench. The walls are mostly made of wood and earth colour bricks. On the outside the house is mainly blue with vertical relief. The solar panels lie on top of the roof. The bathroom on the ground floor has a toilet which does not use water; it is a dry toilet. When you have used the toilet, you throw in some wooden stuff. The host made a fan which blows air through this toilet, so the smell does not come up. The fan can be switched on and off any time. Opposite the toilet stands a washing machine, and on the side of the toilet hangs a poster on natural healing; practical guidelines what can help you in which pain or illness. These come from traditional medicines, homeopathy and others. The sink in the bathroom is a wooden bowl and the taps run cold as well as hot water. There is another bathroom which is attached to a small room with books. This bathroom has a bath and it has windows on many sides; when the sunlight comes through in this room, it gets heated up quickly. During the time I am here, this bathroom has not been used. In the living room, the astrological calendar hangs in between two windows. It is hardly possible to not see it.

The spiral staircase that is located in the central room with the kitchen, leads us to the first floor. When we enter this floor, we have a small corner on the right where a work desk is located, and a special chair that is good for the back when sitting on it. When we bend to the left from the staircase, there are two sofas and a table creating a squared sitting area. The view from the sofas is to outside, as they face the big windows. Over the whole first floor there are big windows, almost the size of doors, which let in a lot of light. As these windows are at a higher position than the ones downstairs, it is possible to see the moon and stars outside. In the morning the sunrise can be viewed from up here as well. When we walk further left, behind the staircase there are two areas, divided by a wall in between them. These two areas have two beds in them. These can be seen as two bedrooms, even though there is only one wall that separates them and the front of the room is open. It still gives sufficient privacy to the different people who are using those rooms.

Power points are spread throughout the house but are scarcer than what I am used to. There is no power point in each corner; a few in each room. There are switches above each plug, and when not being used, the switches are always on off. This means that whenever after the water boiler, toaster or an empty plug is being used, the switch is turned back to off. The light facilities in the house are basic, there are a few main (peertjes) that do not have any decoration around them. These lamps

give a lot of light and the type of light is yellow. There is no internet in the house. The host has hardly used a computer; he speaks of another level of communication he has to connect to people, in which he does not need technology such as a computer. In the wwoof book, he therefore only has a phone number mentioned as contact detail and not an e-mail address. Indeed, he mainly uses his phone to contact people and for the rest it works through this other level he speaks about. Telepathy, timing and change may be related to this. He often plays music from cds in his stereo that is located in the kitchen. Some of the music I recognized as didgeridoo music. I wanted to let him hear some music yesterday, of which I thought he would appreciate it. I didn't get much reaction back though, so I am not sure what he thought of it.

When we were doing shopping a few days ago, I mentioned some recipes I would be able to make for him. I wasn't sure if he liked me suggesting these. Overall, he has been the one preparing the food. I have mainly been the assistant with cutting and doing the dishes. I feel a bit uncomfortable to just get food without asking. I have always asked if it was okay for me to eat this, or to pick that. Except from the orange today...I just picked it. I felt a bit insecure about this, not sure if that was okay for me to do. When he noticed I had picked this orange, he did not seem to care. He actually asked me if the orange came from this garden and if it was okay to eat, because there had been bugs in previous ones he ate. This one did not have any of these bugs. Contrarily, it was very very orange and juicy.

Day 6 on the farm

I worked in the garden today. It was lovely to be in nature. It made me feel lighter. We first cut the corn in the waterbeds, to be able to put oyster shells on top afterwards. This is to strengthen the bed as the water level is so high. The shells also increase the pH of the soil. Cutting the corn was done with whipper-snippers. I felt it to be quite hard in the beginning for the back, as I had to bend all the time. I also felt pressured, which made the process feel uncomfortable. This pressure I created myself, because the host was much quicker than I was. As soon as he disappeared, the pressure went down and I enjoyed the work on a lower speed. He did not put that pressure on me at all; that was what I did. When I finished the corn, the host brought me some water and a tangerine from the garden. He also told me what my next task was going to be. I first took a break and then started pulling out the grass from the waterbed, as he had told me to do. I felt resistance in the roots and often I did not manage to pull out the grass with the root included. I started using the shovel he had given me. To be sure it was the right plant, I compared the different leaves with each other. They looked very similar so I guessed I was pulling out the right one. I discovered a lot of red ants underneath the grass, in the roots. Sometimes there was also a big white larvae. I had a fear running through me when I saw this and a disgust. After I got used to the idea of the presence of these animals underneath my bare feet, I started to see how each had its own role in the system. It made me feel more appreciative towards them. After the first waterbed, I decided to take a short break, sat down in the grass besides the bed. The host walked up to me and I showed him what I had been doing. It appeared that I pulled out the wrong plant, no!! Luckily, and like it happens in permaculture systems, all gets re used. So he was happy for me to have pulled out this grass since he normally trimmed it and now he could use it for the worm bath. Anyways, I had to start over again...he apologized for not showing me which plant exactly it was, and now he made sure I knew precisely which one to take out.

The plant I took out of the waterbed is a bank stabilizer. It is a grass that grows horizontally over the soil and roots each distance or so. I took out half a wheelbarrow and replanted them on the bank which we filled with sand the other day. This bank had semi salt water on one side and salt water on the other. the salt water creek is linked to the ocean and is thus tidal. There are many mangroves growing in this system, and crabs that graze on these trees. The salt water leaks to the fresh water on the other side of the bank, and therefore it became semi salted. Coming back to the plants. The grass I planted is to stabilise this bank on either sides (the bank is not more than a meter wide). It is a common phenomenon that parts of a system are re used elsewhere in the system. This can be in the form of composting, replanting or otherwise. It is a closed cycle, keeping the elements into the system in different forms. It was already getting towards the end of the afternoon when I started with planting. I could feel it getting cooler and the moon was high into the sky. I could hear and see a big flock of geese in the distance. I enjoyed this moment of transition, when everything seemed to become more quiet. I felt a true connection with nature.

I am realizing that this wwoof experience has been a transformational process. Resistance turned into surrender and enjoyment. I can see how the transitional process of ego to spirit is active in me at the moment. I talked a lot about this with the host and it made me put a mirror to myself. Moreover, the time I have spent here has felt like a new breath. I felt the connection with nature again and came to a conscious realization how important this is. Moreover, that it is always there but that it can get blurred because of distractions. I have felt the ego fighting in myself, whereas the unconditional love of nature is always there. It is a continuous energy streaming through me. How can something as the ego be of significance then? It keeps me stuck in fears and in thoughts. I aim to be connecting with the energy of nature, because I feel it is good for me. Not to get distracted but to keep focussing on this. I know that in the world out there are a lot of aspects that can take me away from this. That is going to be a challenge, and always a choice. I can choose to be distracted or not. Even though this experience has brought me a lot to learn, I can see I am on a journey that does not stop here. Being here was a part of this journey and I can take its lessons with me.

We have talked quite a lot about traditional peoples and their connections with the landscape. The host works together with them and learns from them. It appears that he is also involved in numerous projects which involve the aboriginals. It focuses on taking care of them by respecting their rights and necessities as well as working together with them to create something that works. For example, there is a plan to build a university: one for arts, language and lore (aboriginal term) and that is built in a holistic manner. It takes into consideration the people as well as the land and the design symbolizes a circle coming from feng shui. The circles around the central circle symbolize different clans/groups and they come together in this central circle: the university. This university is based on practice rather than theory and the students walk through a personal learning process in which they themselves determine the pace and levels, according to where they are on their path. The elders can be seen as guides on these paths, and are symbolized as thunder. Furthermore, the circle consists of relationships (the earth), journey (water) amongst several others. This university is open for anyone to join in.

The host told me that not everyone is open for what he brings to the table. A shift in consciousness and the need to take responsibility for the land and for the people. He has experienced a lot of resistance. He sees it as a positive challenge, to sit around the table with people who have a totally

different opinion. And, he says, if he cannot find support, he goes somewhere where he can find that support and can make a difference.

Even though we both speak English, I have noticed that there is quite a difference in language between us. He uses a lot of expressions and words I am unfamiliar with. Sometimes he asks me if I know what it means, sometimes he doesn't. And it can be just that word that can make a difference for understanding what he is talking about. So I learn something new every day. For example, he does not call animals animals but quitters. Never heard that before...and I remember something about an expression with a towel...anyhow, besides language exchange, there is also cultural exchange. He asks me a lot about the Netherlands, for example, when the dikes were built and how the water influences the country. He, in turn, tells me a lot about Australian history, something I am not very familiar with. On top of that, a lot of aboriginal history. The other side of the coin, so to say. Apparently, the schoolbook version has a totally different perspective on the history, as it is the side of the English who do not want to admit or say much about what has happened from the aboriginal point of view. It is interesting to hear what the host knows and thinks. He also gave me some book tips for reading. Yesterday I discovered a map of Australia with all the aboriginal clans and their names. Apparently there are 500 of them, each with their own territory.

Today, a neighbour came by who had lunch together with us. He brought several things from his land for the host, such as macadamia nuts and tiger worms (red worms which are happy to live in areas where there is a lot of water and which reproduce quickly). The host and he talked a lot about ecological aspects of the land, which I could not always follow. It was about this species there and that potato, this growth process. It made me feel a real beginner. From this conversation I realized how much knowledge and practice the host has. He just does not share it all with me because I am not on the same level as his neighbour. The host mostly tells me basic processes that are taking place on the land. I feel I have a lot of basic questions as well. Just starting to come and take a look at all this that is happening on this land. The host showed me the roots of nitrogen fixing plants, they have small balls attached to their roots. These plants are mostly grown with plants that need nitrogen but that cannot fix it themselves. In permaculture you will never see a monoculture; it is the mixture and variety of plants that makes the system work. Properties of one plant may assist another plant and so on. Often, a tree a shrub and a lower plant are planted together. There are several 'golden combinations', but the host says that new combinations are constantly found, according to the experiments and finding of practitioners.

Permaculture can be applied worldwide; this is shown in the documentary of Bill Mollison, 'The Global Gardener'. He goes to areas with different climates, such as the tropics or dry land, and shows that in each place permaculture systems can be applied. In the whole movie the word permaculture is not mentioned, though. This is because there has been resistance towards it, especially in Australia. Since Bill couldn't find sufficient support in his own country, he went abroad to spread his message elsewhere. And with success: there are many permaculture design courses running in a big diversity of countries. I noticed indeed that hardly anyone I ask here in Australia knows what permaculture is. I thought this was strange since the concept was founded here in this country! Anyways, it is getting more and more popular abroad. Maybe the same will happen in Australia.

Appendix 2 – interviews

E-mail interview

Interview was held via e-mail with a response time of approximately two weeks; Interviewee is a Dutch girl who is currently studying permaculture farming in the Netherlands; This is one of four interviews that was held via e-mail; the text below has remained original as received answers from the respondent to the questions that were sent.

1. What kind of WWOOF experience(s) have you had? Which five words would best fit your experience(s)?

I have been wwoofing in the Algarve, Portugal, for one month over the summer of 2010 together with my boyfriend at the time - an eastern German punk family with two kids and three friends living along, all trying very hard to live outside the system, as self-sufficient as possible, making cheese from their goat stable, growing their own veggies, constructing their own houses from clay they dug from the soil, etc. In 2011, I went to Romania for one month with my sister and a good friend of mine where we lived on a family farm - a sweet German woman with angry French husband, a baby and a Romanian guy living there to help out on the farm - not sure if he was paid though. Here we helped the French guy in all stages of constructing a roof for a fire station for the village, from sawing the raw tree trunks, to making planks and then hanging in ropes to make the roof. Later on we helped his wife with gardening, taking care of animals, mowing, etc. In the same summer holidays I continued my wwoofing adventure in France for two weeks with two other friends, where we harvested tomatoes, courgettes, etc. for vegetable boxes.

I will speak about Portugal and Romania. Five words that would best fit my experiences are: inter-cultural (mis)communication, responsibility, self-reflection, knowledge exchange and (in)gratitude

2. Was (were) the WWOOF experience(s) in accordance with your expectations beforehand? How did this influence your experience?

Especially the expectations I had during my first wwoofing experience were not in accordance with reality. I realised over time that me and the seven other wwoofers were misused. We had to work too long, too hard and with insufficient provision of food/water in the hours of the day that it was most needed. We got too much responsibility and high expectations without proper explanations and no gratitude after accomplishing a task. I accepted the long and hard working days in the beginning as I was excited about finding out what it is like to 'live like a farmer'. This willingness gradually turned into annoyance and disappointment due to above mentioned reasons, which we - the group of volunteers - didn't really know how to communicate back to the hosts. It only increased the tensions until something really bad happened (see my answer to question 3) that made me decide to leave the place earlier than planned. At the time I felt really disappointed, as my romantic ideas and expectations were completely torn down, but nonetheless I felt like I had learned incredibly much in only a few weeks time. If I look back, I actually think the experiences I had on this farm have been more valuable and insightful to me than any other journey I had made before, exactly for the fact that it wasn't as 'perfect' as I had imagined and I needed to hold a mirror to myself and my moral standards.

3. What was your most beautiful moment and your most difficult moment?

Portugal: Most difficult moment was a moral one, when one wwoofer twisted her ankle when she and I were picking moor berries from a tree all day long. She could hardly walk any more, but the punk farm family just left her sitting at the kitchen table in the days that followed. They did not bring her to a doctor. She was lucky to have met a guy with some medical knowledge whom she called up and then came to check her ankle, and wrapped it in bandage. The craziest unexpected thing that happened two or three days after the accident, was when the hosts came to tell her that they were not sure if she should stay any longer, as she couldn't work for them any more, but was still eating from their food... Can you believe that?! She had been working for them for about 5 or 6 weeks already. This was the real limit for me, as well as for her, and most other wwoofers. So soon after I decided to leave earlier than promised. I was there together with my boyfriend at the time, whom I had to convince about leaving earlier. He enjoyed the work and did not have a lot of money to spend in the time left for travelling in Portugal. The moral unjustness of this case was lying too heavily on my shoulders though and I managed to convince him. These ungrateful bastards did not deserve volunteers any more!

Romania: Most beautiful moment was in the same time also a difficult moment. Me, my sister and a good friend of mine were set to work with the male host on constructing this wooden roof for a fire station he wanted to build for the village. We were hanging (dangerously) on a rope somewhere high with a beautiful view, doing something I would not have imagined being able/allowed to do in more formal settings, and especially feeling happy about being able to contribute something valuable to the community. Meanwhile the male host was a horrible person to work with, he did not want to speak English with us, stubborn as he was. I spoke only little French at the time, but definitely learned a lot of new swear words, that came in handy later in life... He was so annoyed by the fact that we were not French (speaking). (For some extra info: This family would normally also only take French speaking wwoofers so the French farmer could communicate smoothly, however they were so kind to make an exception for us when we contacted them and told that the original farm we would have gone to cancelled our arrival last minute due to some accident that had happened) I become so upset at a certain point, with the way he communicated (read: shouted) to us and similar to Portugal did not seem willing to show any gratitude for having free labour help him out with his grand project. I realised we were not professional roof constructors, but then he should not have put us up with this task in the first place. His expectations were too high and obviously led to disappointment. I almost cracked and wanted to convince my sister and friend to leave, as I did want to be treated again in such a ungrateful and harsh way. We decided to stay and help out his wife instead - simple work, nothing much could go wrong. It was a good turning point in something that would otherwise - again - have left me disappointed only. So the beautiful thing I guess was the chance to get to do something 'impossible' and valuable, with some shady less beautiful edge to it though.

4. What have you learnt during you WWOOF experience(s) and do you feel it has changed you? If yes, in which ways?

Portugal and Romania: Besides practical things, in these two wwoofing experiences I learned that honesty and open-mindedness in communication between worker and host is one of the very most crucial elements in this kind of work. It changed me in such a way that I know what wonders clear communication can do to bring happiness, gratitude and understanding into play.

Moreover, I remember myself as a naive girl romanticising farm life. What these experiences

have taught me, is that it ain't all *that* easy! This has actually strengthened my certainty about the importance of participation, of going through something that others go through in order to understand them, and in the end, also to get a little closer to understanding myself.

5. Would you go WWOOFing again and why? If yes, where would you go and what kind of experience would you look for?

YES! This will be the very first thing that I want to do after my recent graduation. I feel the strong urge to reconnect to nature, to the earth and to like-minded people, without anything formal that stands in between. With the latter I mean for instance an official contract and income, and hierarchy that often comes with these. I believe it is more healthy to not have such things stand in the way of the relationship between me as a worker and the farmer hosting me; it would corrupt it, create more tensions that might be out of our hands to solve. I would respect the privacy of the family or community hosting me, and do not expect to become friends with the hosts necessarily, if it is their wish. However, what I would be looking for is a hosting family or community that is open to exchange in all kinds of ways rather than seeing me as free labour only. I want it to be a place with people whom are eager to get to know me, just as I am curious to learn about their beliefs, ideals, knowledge. In other words, it shouldn't be a wwoofing farm where my presence is only used for brainless work - I want it to be a positively challenging experience, gaining more hands-on knowledge and skills in permaculture, ecological construction, taking care of animals, being more self-sufficient, etc. Moreover, I wish to find a place where my hosts would allow me some space/help me to find out more about myself, my connection to nature, to people around me. In a psychological or spiritual sense... So, I guess the country does not really matter to me as much as the kind of projects and the kind of people. I am thinking about France, as I want to improve my French a little more again. However, as I need to tick off so many more countries I have never been to yet in Europe, I might pick one of those ;-)

Face-to-face interview

This interview was taken on a land in the rainforest in eastern New South Wales in Australia. I stayed on the land for two days in which the Australian couple that is currently living on the land showed me around the property and in which we had conversations about a range of topics. They have much experience in travelling, wwoofing and housekeeping in different countries over the world.

Similarly, they take care of this land for the owner since a number of months, which can be extended to a couple of years. They are simultaneously doing a course in Permaculture in a nearby town. Even though the land has been organically treated by the owner before the couple came, there are certain new activities the couple has undertaken while staying there and it mainly involves practising organic gardening, in which they learn as they experiment. The course in permaculture offers them new insights to implement on the land. However, some of the work also just involves hard jobs such as clearing large fields of lantana, an invasive plant species that can easily overtake big areas. As the land is immensely big, a couple of hundred acres, and covered in rainforest and a creek, there are many parts of it which are yet to be discovered by them. They are now mainly working in the land around the house, for example growing vegetables.

Even though it is winter season, there are vegetables and fruits growing in the garden. They are used in the kitchen on a daily basis, and in addition the couple have products from the shops, such as

ginger and bread. The main cooking takes place on the woodstove which keeps the main room of the house warm. It is a slow but successful process of cooking. Nuts are roasted on the fire, water boiled, curries simmered. The couple has learnt to have a large stock of food in the house, since the creek can overflow with heavy rain and consequently can keep them stuck on the land.

In the following 45 minute interview I talked to one person of the couple about their wwoof experiences while the other was preparing dinner.

Researcher: so, basically, I am doing research about wwoof experiences, and wwoof stands for world wide opportunities on organic farms, or willing workers on organic farms. There are many different definitions but these two are the most used.

Wwoofer: Ah yeah, okay!

Researcher: I heard that you also had experiences with wwoofing, and I was wondering what it was like, where you stayed and what you did?

Wwoofer: ehm, we stayed at a couple of places. The first one was in Leguria, which was up in this beautiful hill town and it was really, really picturesque, pretty incredible. We couldn't believe that, you know, we had never heard of this place before. It was pretty magical. But also, that we got to stay there for free. It was mainly...they were a British couple so English, and they had a three and a half, four year old daughter, which we didn't know about at the beginning and that was, she was pretty trying...they were an older couple in the fifties and they just had this baby.

Researcher: oh wow, so they were older parents!

Wwoofer: yeah, they were older parents and set in their ways. You know, what you imagined you would be like at fifty, you know how you like your coffee, what tv you like to watch.

Researcher: yeah, so a kind of set style of things you do during the days, things you enjoy.

Wwoofer: yeah, you've been doing it for fifty years, so I think it was still a big challenge for them that there was this young human that was very demanding all their time and resources and everything so that was interesting.

Researcher: so, did they have a property on which they needed people to take care of the land?

Wwoofer: they had just bought, ehm, it was amazing, it was a really broken down olive growth, I think it may have been 90 acres or something.

Researcher: wow, that's a lot!

Wwoofer: yeah, especially for Italy. And so, it had a lot of old dwellings on it. There was a lot of old broken down, yeah, dwellings that the ones who would've been tending to the olives have lived there. So they had the ability to build them into guest houses which is their end game of turning it into you know some sort of health retreat, that kind of thing.

Research: okay, and so did they want to have multiple functions of the land? Did they want to build a retreat and also have olive production?

Wwoofer: yeah, and also, she was looking quite good at making olive oil products, so she made olive oil soaps and lipbalms and moisturizers and stuff like that. So more multi.

Researcher: that's a lot of different things.

Wwoofer: yeah, and so all the products for the retreats, the soap and everything, would be, they would supply a little bit to the people, a week supply, and if they would need a bit more they could buy it from their little shop and they would be all natural products that they made themselves. So it was very much in my thinking, it was a closed loop system, of you using as much products and resources from their property, essentially to make money but which in this era isn't a bad thing, eh, and yeah, to make it a functioning ability. And they also wanted to build it into something they can pass down, like, as a legacy.

Researcher: okay, so a financial security for their child for future. And, in what kind of activities were you involved in the farm?

Wwoofer: we dug a lot of holes, and we helped to build like stone, eh...dry stone mauling. They have them in England, and Germany and stuff..all over Europe. Stone walls that are just built of small bits of stone, wedged in together so that they create a wall.

Researcher: I think it is, eh, quite a common way to build in Europe.

Wwoofer: yeah! Eh, dry stone walls, cos all the property was terraced, so it was on a slope like that, the whole property (puts her hand in an angle).

Researcher: so, did they build against the slope?

Wwoofer: yes, against the slope to build, like, where we were building was going to be one of the fences all the way up, and you wanted to build a rock wall all the way around, so when people would walk up they would see rock wall and fence. So it's a really big project that they have, and they don't have anyone working on it except the husband, who is a builder.

Researcher: so they wanted volunteers to come help out.

Wwoofer: hmhm. Yeah, so that was why they wanted volunteers. It was so nice, like, they were considerate, they were good people. They definitely didn't overwork us at all. That was cool, you know, we worked and whatever. They fed us nicely, like Italian, you know, there was a lot of pastas and stuff like that, which was cool.

Researcher: did you have to work proper working hours, like 5 to 6 hours a day?

Wwoofer: no, no, no. We would wake up, a lot of it was based on their daughter, her schedule to get her off to school and things like that. No, they did not take advantage of us, at all. I didn't feel they took advantage of us. It would be like four hours, and what can we do today, get job satisfaction.

Researcher: did you have set days off?

Wwoofer: yep, we had weekends off, Saturday and Sunday, and there was a lot to explore, like a lot of the area was really beautiful and they drove us down to the ocean, and let us, you know, say we'll

come back in four hours or I've got stuff to do, so you know, we'll pick you guys up when we're done.

Researcher: ah, really nice, so they were really supportive, like, wanted to give you a good time as well?

Wwoofer: well, yeah, for us to have a good experience. Well, it was such a beautiful area, like, really really beautiful, so ehm, quite inspiring. But yeah, like enough time to come home in the afternoon and have a rest and go for a walk and explore around this beautiful medieval town which we were close to. It was really like, ohhh, wauw, haha.

Researcher: and did you feel like you learnt something of the experience, like things you didn't know before?

Wwoofer: they had the best olive oil that I've ever had. Them in particular. I said that from the start when we went to other places, and my partner did a blind tasting on me and I still picked that one. And that was where the, ehh, I guess I should say obsession with olive oil started from, because that's where we've had this amazing olive oil, that's where we saw a lot of olive growths, ehm, where they had a lot of literature which we both read. Really interesting books. You know, that was what our discussions were based on. You know, looking out over this amazing view of beautiful hills an olive growths and reading about it and stuff. We took a lot from that experience.

Researcher: so reading about it and also seeing it out in the field straight away.

Wwoofer: and living it!

Researcher: yeah. And what about the owners of the property, did they know a lot about it, of the oil making process?

Wwoofer: they were quite knowledgeable. They weren't so, they were very English in their ways, ehm, whereas the Dutch couple we stayed with they were very romantic about it. They were lovely. They were more into the tradition of going to the place to get it pressed. And you know, you're supposed to be there at two but you wait another three hours because it's Italy. You try everyone else's oil, and you hang out, you 'oh, that's really good oil that you've got this year, yeah wauw amazing'. This is the thing, pride that you have, this is my oil, please try it, you know, it's not mine whatever, I invite you to try my oil. It's a kinda pride for them.

Researcher: so you got to experience that more in the second place where you were, with the Dutch couple, and not so much with the English couple.

Wwoofer: the English couple were sort of more cut an' dry, that it was more of a, it wasn't a journey, it was a destination with them. They get it pressed, bring it home.

Researcher: yeah, north Europeans can be more like that. Whereas the south Europeans can be more relaxed. Although, that's interesting because the people you stayed with were Dutch.

Wwoofer: yah, Dutch people can be like that, but this couple was old, 65 70. I think they were really enjoying the points in life. The process.

Researcher: and, ehm, how much time did you spend in the first place, and how much time in the second? Was it kind of similar amount of time?

Wwoofer: originally it was for two weeks, oh sorry, for three weeks, and then...which worked out perfectly because we committed for three weeks but then living with this child it was a bit different to what we had expected. Because we didn't prepare ourselves because we didn't know that there was gonna be a child.

Researcher: so they didn't put it in the advertisement, or they didn't know that there was going to be a child?

Wwoofer: ah, yeah, strange, especially because she is very strong of character, so it wasn't a timid little child.

Researcher: so it would've been nice to know about it beforehand, instead of discovering it afterwards.

Wwoofer: definitely! It was really wow, huh. So it was kinda falling on the back foot originally. We were supposed to stay for three weeks and then we were gonna go on workaway since that was what we were getting on, for a couple of months. And then, we approached the lady in Tuscany, just to talk to her. And then she approached and said, would you like to housesit my house for, I'm going to Sicily for a week, would you like to come and housesit? And just the time rolled perfectly and the couple said, oh, do you only wanna stay for two weeks cos they decided that it was the best for them, two weeks with wwoofers, two weeks without wwoofers, cos obviously, it can be quite stressful having other people around all the time and stuff.

Researcher: yeah, so basically they rostered two weeks for themselves in between the experiences.

Wwoofer: yeah, to give themselves some breathing, so that was perfect.

Researcher: were you also experiencing that yourself, like that you would've liked that as well, some space?

Wwoofer: definitely, yeah. That's why this worked perfectly, because when we left, and they were lovely and everything was fine and perfect. Then we went to Tuscany, to housesit with this dog. The lady picked us up and left the next morning. So we had the house for ourselves for a whole week, so that was our downtime. So it was perfect, yeah. So, we had that time of a week and she was really lovely, she had prepared us all those amazing meals and frozen them in the freezer for us. She was also English and she had a really big beautiful old colonial style house, Tuscan villa, with this big giant Schnoutzer, is that what they're called? Oh you've got to google it, it's so funny. And seeing my partner, walking in the Tuscan hillside with this big funny giant schnoutzer was pretty funny, haha! So yeah we took this dog for walks and ate and drank wine and had this holiday. Totally like a holiday. But then, when she came back, she was fine for the first couple of days and then, she was old, she was 65 as well and so she was, you know, she had just been on holidays. You know what people are like when they go on holidays together. They can be quit demanding. And you know, some people just they so everything they go go go.

Researcher: they don't really have a relaxing time.

Wwoofer: yeah. We don't do a shit ourselves, but a lot of people do. she was fine for the first couple of days when she got back and then you could tell she just wanted her house for herself.

Researcher: she was kind of like you looked after it now you can leave, or something like that?

Wwoofer: yeah. A little bit like that, a little bit like, ok.

Researcher: did you discuss that with her beforehand?

Wwoofer: no, she knew that we were gonna stay for another week afterward and then, but yeah, it just kinda got, she just got a little bit standoffish. Whereas in the beginning she was really warm, really nice and she was gone for a week, we looked after the place really well and the dog was really happy and everything. It was great. The first day after she came back it was good and then, she just wanted her space back basically.

Researcher: and was that an indication for you to leave?

Wwoofer: definitely. We read between the lines real quick and said ok, how can we get out of this situation. And then, we had it lined up with the Dutch couple, cos we knew that we needed it to roll quite well cos we didn't have any money, so we didn't have a night in a hotel here, or something like that. Ehm, and then the Dutch couple were really fine, they, the pickup was perfectly organized and everything, and then for them they had separate apartments, like they have their house which is really nice and they have three apartments that are a bit away from the house so we had our own apartment, on their land. Bathroom, shower kitchen. Exactly what you need, yeah.

Researcher: did you also stay there for a longer time?

Wwoofer: we were scheduled to stay there for two weeks but we stayed there for a month, and we could've stayed there for longer easily, and they would've had us stay for longer but we ehm we wanted to sell olive oil to relatives and a friend. So that's why we had to leave. Make a little bit of money.

Researcher: so this Dutch couple, were they mainly focused on olive oil production or were they also focused on other things?

Wwoofer: they, that was, oh we did heaps of stuff, we painted their whole apartment, ehm, yeah that was a pretty good job, painting all the apartments, but still, only five hours a day. Ehm, but on the weekends they would take us on total driving trips like family holidays types of stuff. Put you in the car, drive you to some amazing different towns, or oh there is an art exhibition going on or the whole region opens up their vineyards, you pay five euro and you get to go to all these different vineyards. Taste all of their wines, eat all of their foods. You know, they were the best hosts you could ever have asked for. Lovely food that you're picking out of the garden or you know, lunch would be a big spread and dinners. You know, in the afternoons we would have white wine and look at the sun and talk and catch up and then have amazing dinners and make homemade breads for breakfast.

Researcher: so they were one of the things that made you feel more at home there?

Wwoofer: they were so welcoming. Yeah, the sharing of food together. And yeah, they just had a really good attitude. Like, nothing was too much, or they didn't have unrealistic expectations of what they thought we should do. They would just tell us what jobs they wanted us to do and do them. [to partner, who walked into the room] after we painted the apartment, what else did we do?

Wwoofer 2: build a rock wall.

Wwoofer: ah, yeah, my partner built a stone wall and whipper snipped a huge area of the olive growth.

Researcher: so the whipper snippers that you use here is not the first time that you used them?

Wwoofer 2: haha, no.

Wwoofer: he knows how to do it! And I did heaps of like munching, eh mulching.

Wwoofer 2: haha, you did munching?

Wwoofer: yeah, heaps of munching, haha. But also I did, I found this really cool really really pretty old iron, it could've been a bookshelf or anything, it was about this high [holds hands approx. 80 cm from the floor] and it had three shelves on it and it was old and rusting and horrible, so then I got it sanded and all back and then put this rust free stuff on it and then and then painted it a couple of times in this really beautiful lavender colour which matched the whole house and stuff so then it was there for them to put it somewhere and fill it with stuff. So it was varied work, definitely. But it was hard work at times, but it was so rewarding because they were so lovely and the food was so good and there was so much wine, you know, they would buy a big twenty litre casks of wine, so it wasn't they opened a bottle of wine at dinner, they had seven or eight bottles of wine in the fridge, so it was really fun. It was like, oh you wouldn't have to open another bottle, it was like, do you want to have another glass. No I'm fine, oh no I want another glass. They were really, they were really good hosts. They were very fair.

Researcher: do you feel like that you also learnt something from them? Did they share some sort of knowledge or something?

Wwoofer: they were fascinating, so fascinating! We learnt so much about, they were judges! We learnt heaps about family law, different standards in Holland ang ehm, different things that were going on in their lives cos they had two, Niels and Lotte, were their children's name.

Researcher: ah, yeah, Lotte is my second name.

Wwoofer: oh, really! Lotte is so pretty!

Researcher: it's a really Dutch name.

Wwoofer: yeah right! Never heard of it before. So, yeah, they just told us about their children.

Researcher: so it was also getting to know a little about Dutch culture and about Dutch society, even though you were in Italy.

Wwoofer: yeah, it was becoming more, coming more into, oh wow, the Dutch prison system. How you guys really try to ehm that people don't just go to prison and that's it, you know. To be fair and just, and to say that people make mistakes, second chances and that their lives can become better. That's what I took from your prison system as opposed to Australia and the States especially.

Researcher: ok, that there can also be a more mild way in which the judge can work basically.

Wwoofer: yeah, exactly. When you're putting someone in prison in the States it's pretty much saying good luck, condemning them, as opposed to like, they're kinda like ok you've done something wrong and you've got opportunities to make something better, that's up to you. And I think that that was a really positive approach what I saw and learnt.

Researcher: that's a beautiful thing to learn from the judges, beautiful life learning lesson. It's not only something from your own system, but also something you can learn from for your own life.

Wwoofer: exactly. Nothing ever ends, you can still move forwards and turn it around and learn from it, really positive, yeah. They were really great and they just had a really beautiful property and they just wanted people to share it and enjoy it. Work needed to be done.

Researcher: how did you feel like the property, and the land and the nature that was on there?

Wwoofer: oh, fascinating, it was so, it was really special. There was 5000 year old Tuscan caves, right backed on to, from here to the kitchen, that's where we would have dinner. So right there you could see and that's where the wine cellar was and few of their food was and stuff, but it was really, you could see the connection, there have been stuff happening here for so long, longer than you could even phantom in your mind. And just the establishment, they had a huge fig tree. It didn't even fit in this room. It was this massive amazing tree that has been living there for so long, you know, living, its roots been in the ground. You'd walk far away from it and look down and see a little bit of its roots that had come up and then going back down in. it just goes forever! Where does it all end and where does it begin? An apricot tree that was sooo plentiful. In the middle of nowhere, like surrounded by other things and overgrown and you'd just look up and then there's these apricots, so many, so amazing. It would take a day to pick them all.

Researcher: so, what did you do? did you pick them or did you sit under the tree and meditate? Haha.

Wwoofer: eh, I did some picking and some meditating. Just, there was so much to appreciate every day. Like lookout over the land and just, everyone was up to their own thing, like the husband and wife they were doing their own thing, on the internet chatting with the children and grandchildren, or doing different types of works. You know, he was 70 years old, he was doing this or doing that or building something. Or strolling around, observing things.

Researcher: did that make you feel that there was no pressure to do things?

Wwoofer: there was no pressure.

Researcher: were there any things you had to do in particular, could you do things at your own pace?

Wwoofer: do things at your own pace was definitely the vibe while it was also just like so welcoming place and of what the desired end result was. So they would be very clear on what the path was they wanted to get done and so then they were very open to the way you would do it.

Researcher: ok, so they would also be open to learn about your way. And not like, you're the teacher and you have to do it my way.

Wwoofer: yeah. I've heard that a lot of people have had that sort of experience with wwoofing and I'm very much there is more than one way to skin the cow. That's how I've always felt in life cos the way that I do something, I'm only five foot tall, was going to be completely different to the way a six foot boy would do it. We would go about do it differently, so physical attributes. And I feel that there is room in the world for us to be able to be like that. I need to do things my way and you need to do things your way.

Researcher: so in this wwoof experience you could actually apply that because there was space for it.

Wwoofer: yeah, they were open, totally open for it.

Researcher: yeah, that makes a big difference.

Wwoofer: freedom.

Researcher: yeah. And overall, like, do you feel that from these experiences that you've had, that it changed something in you, that it made you grow in certain ways?

Wwoofer: ehm, it opened, it definitely opened me up cos I've never really been one to do that. I mean, I can be quite social and stuff, but also I can be a little bit shy.

Researcher: yeah, and is that like especially in the beginning when you don't know the circumstances and people?

Wwoofer: yeah, and you don't know what to do and that sort of thing or you never want to upset anyone. So it definitely made me more outgoing in that sense but it was just, yeah, it was really opening to see how kind people can be and how much better it is for travel because you already have a solid base. You have people who can show you around, or who can show you the nicest pizzeria, or where the best ice cream is. And oh, this is the nicest view and stuff like that. It almost like being taken out on dates, or something. They were really like that.

Researcher: I can imagine that like shyness can turn around in such a place, and into so much appreciation! Like, love for the situation and the person!

Wwoofer: totally, yeah. I still think of them now and that was two years ago, oh no, a year ago. And I still think of them and I think that they're just wonderful. I would recommend them to anyone but I would think twice of recommending someone and be like are they good enough for the Dutch couple. You know what I mean? Like, I hold them in such high esteem, they were so lovely, so generous. And just really interesting. Just sitting at a table with them at dinner time, and just sitting around for hours. Eating, talking, drinking, laughing, philosophizing, scrutinizing, just everything. That was just really interesting. You know, my partner and I were a thirty year old couple,

unmarried, no children, no profession sitting with a 65 and 70 year old ex-judge Dutch couple. It was pretty funny, haha. And it was just good! We got along all the time. they didn't push any views on us. The asked questions to us.

Researcher: and did you feel comfortable enough to be open to them?

Wwoofer: yeah, definitely. They just wanted to know, there was no judgement or anything.

Researcher: yeah, so it was just out of interest.

Wwoofer: yeah, just asking questions and building relationships. And then when we came back to Australia we were really broke. We'd organized to stay, to housesit a place just outside of Nimbin, which is really beautiful, just op and in the hills, far away. And they were a family of four, the husband and wife and two children. And that was really intense, like really full on.

Researcher: so you were housesitting a house with the people still there?

Wwoofer: it was more like us to stay there for a week to work out housework and these things, like if you guys were gonna housesit for us we couldn't just go like, you just stay for one night and then leave the next day. You not only need to know where stuff is, there also is a property you need to know. How do you pump the water out of the dam to make sure the water's still full. Just learn how to use stuff and how to utilize it, and what jobs needed to be done and stuff like that. So we had the one weekend over but then there was two weeks, because they made a mistake with the passport.

Researcher: ohh, that was the one going to Japan, those guys!

Wwoofer: yeah, they were supposed to go to Japan but because their son was only five or six or something, you have to get your passport more regularly because you change so much. So they hadn't realized that the passport had expired or that there was not enough time on it or something. When you think about it it's not that dumb but at that time we were like oh, god. But what would we know, we have no kids. But they were super interesting people. What was that flute she played? [asking her partner]. She made some amazing Japanese flute. And that's why they were going to japan, for her to go and have lessons, play with other people and buying flutes, like, really, that was an amazing holiday, for them to be able to take their children. It was really, I was quite impressed, you know, we're just going on holiday, but you know. She was Swiss, not going to Switzerland to visit family or something, but oh, we're going to Japan to play flute. Like, whow!

Researcher: and is her husband from here?

Wwoofer: no, he is English, she was Swiss, but they met in Sydney in Australia. But they were really interesting cos she was maybe late thirties, and he was 65, 68. So he already had three children, ex-wife, all that kind of stuff. Divorced. He is an amazing musician as well, piano, an amazing composer. He does stuff in this area, like sold out shows, like really really interesting.

Researcher: and did they also have permaculture experience, or did you did you get your permaculture inspiration from previous experiences, like where did that start, when did it start to grow?

Wwoofer: well, we started, when we were in France wwoofing, and were looking into stuff. We were wondering what to do and we wanted to start to grow our own food. Probably six years ago, for me, when I came back from South America, I wanted to do the permaculture course in Nimbin, I was really drawn to it, I really wanted to do it but I couldn't make it for three months because I just got a place in Byron, and I didn't have a car back then. So it wasn't the right time, cos I hadn't met my partner yet. So it had always been in the back of my mind, that's what I wanted to do. You know, cos there's something out there that's really big in which you go into together. So then we came back to permaculture and I was still excited about it. He was really interested as well. He has been raised in a more of an alternate way than what I have and so then we decided that permaculture was it! And so we tried to base our stuff that we did in Italy, tried around permaculture but wasn't really possible.

Researcher: ok, so you tried to find places that had to do with permaculture. And the places you went to, was it nothing to do with permaculture?

Wwoofer: no, they didn't know anything about permaculture in Italy, in the places where we stayed. But they were a lot older.

Researcher: probably the older generation, like the same as Bill Mollison, who started permaculture.

Wwoofer: yeah, so they were a lot older and didn't really know. And then we came to Australia and stayed with this couple. The lady had done a permaculture course the permaculture course in Nimbin that I wanted to do. and she, ehm, she had a permaculture garden. she'd done it all before she had children. So by the time the children came along, slowly, she got lazier, oh busier I guess, lazier isn't the right word. Busier with other things. And so they had raised beds, because they had a problem with clay as well, clay soil. So they had a permaculture garden, food growth, cabbage and pawpaw and stuff. So, we did a lot. We did some hard work there. Really. She built a chicken wire fence around because they had a lot of wallabies. But they didn't have a whipper snipper so they never got to the grass by the fence. So they had grass as tall as me on both sides of the fence. So we pulled the whole fence out and did the grass as well, hard work, we ended up crying, haha. It was crazy. There was chickenwire everywhere so we couldn't get there with the lawnmower, and that kinda stuff. So that was definitely hard work.

Researcher: so was there like, was there a specific reason why you chose to go to olive places instead? Was there really no place in permaculture, or was it not in the region you wanted to go to?

Wwoofer: [to partner] we couldn't find any permaculture places in Italy we wanted to go to? They were all more, we were really specific. We didn't want to go to places where there were going to be lots of people.

Wwoofer 2: yeah, and when we went to the first place, that inspired us to go to more places with olive growth.

Wwoofer: but we were very particular about where we would go, where we would stay and that sort of things, whom we would wwoof with.

Wwoofer 2: we didn't wanna be with a huge other group of wwoofers. We wanted to experience something, be with the family, not just be another face. Oh he, you, do this!

Researcher: make it more interactive.

Wwoofer 2: yeah, definitely. And we wanted to have nice accommodation too. We didn't just wanna have something crap.

Wwoofer: or sleep in a tent.

Wwoofer 2: we were quite selective, yeah.

Wwoofer: we weren't thinking about, we didn't want to experience a community or something like that. We wanted it to be more one on one.

Researcher: would you wanna go to another olive oil producing farm again?

Wwoofer: my partner would want to have one himself!

Researcher: would you wanna go to Italy again then?

Wwoofer 2: I'd love to go to Greece. Do some volunteering in Greece, for sure.

Researcher: to a place with olive oil production?

Wwoofer 2: yeah, we'd like to continue.

Wwoofer: cos we never got to harvest. Harvesting season is at the end of autumn. We had to go back to Australia, so we never got to do a harvest in Italy and take it to the press and stuff. So that's definitely something that we would do in a couple of years, to have that experience, you know. Quite possibly and probably, we would do it with this Dutch couple. They were so cool and lovely and that kind of stuff.

Researcher: who knows, maybe you find your own property there and get to produce olive oil yourself! You could also try and find interesting places in Portugal, cos there's lots of oil production there as well. I haven't looked into it much, but there are just olive trees and properties everywhere.

Wwoofer: mm, yeah sounds lovely. I would really like to go back to Portugal.

Appendix 3 – online investigation

Video- WWOOFing on a Hare Krishna Farm in Australia

This video has been transcribed according to the spoken texts and visual imagery;
It was found via the video search engine You Tube;
For references to the data collected online I refer to the bibliography of this thesis.

Video begins with music (a woman's voice sings slow and in a high tone). A picture of an older man appears. Photos of landscape.

[text appears on video screen]

At the foot of Mt. Warning
wwooofing on a Hare Krishna Farm

Photos of a house in the forest in the mountains' of people sitting in a circle with their eyes closed and with candles in the middle.

Video of someone playing the guitar sitting opposite someone else with a candle in their midst. They sing a song about Hare Krishna. The song continues whilst the video is directed towards a camp site and a toilet block with people inside and outside.

The song stops and a video appears of a house and a door with in front a sign saying 'Please be quiet – yoga-massage in progress'. Above the door a sign saying 'yoga hall'. In front of the door is a collection of shoes. A man comes out of the house and shouts something. He smiles, walks to the shoes and puts on a pair.

The music starts again. A tent in the forest is filmed from which a bloke exits. He puts on his shoes and runs away. A concrete square in front of a building with people gathered in front. People are interacting with each other; walking and standing around.

Now a video appears of people standing in a circle on a grassfield. The music has stopped; instead the people are singing and clapping their hands: 'every little cell in my body is happy, every little cell in my body is well. I'm so happy, every little cell in my body is well'. Then an older man in the circle shouts: 'yeah, goodmorning!' and the people reply the same back to him.

Now a girl appears. She is kneeling in the garden and starts to talk.

WWOOFer 1: My name is x and I am from Italy. I have been here two weeks already and I'm really enjoying this experience, I really like it. I think it relates to me. I am giving yoga classes and, eh....you know, we have all these garden veggies for free so it's wonderful. What I'm doing at the moment is weeding, which I don't really like, I mean, it's not my favourite activity. But, you know, someone has to do it. We need to take care of the field and of the garden. So, we're just spending sometimes like that [smiles].

Another girl appears in the video. She is working in the same garden as wwoofer 1.

WWOOFer 2: Hello, my name is x, I'm from Italy. I've just arrived but I stayed here one month ago for two weeks. And, I really enjoy this place because you can, also, yeah, take care of the fields and learn how to produce your own veggies. But also you can learn about Hare Krishna consciousness and participate in all the activities they give us for free like yoga, like, ehm...Krishna classes. And it's beautiful because it's a big community with other WWOOFers like me. We are with around 30 people so that's good, you can meet people from all over the world. So, that's great.

Now a young man appears in the video. He is standing on a grassland with some bushes and trees in the background.

WWOOFer 3: Hi! I'm x, I'm 29 and I came here to do my 88 days for my second year visa. Ehh, I sort of picked this place because of the idea of no cruelty, was something very important to me. I'm not so much a spiritual kind of fellow but I know that the Krishna's are, you know, fairly good people. Like I said, it's all about the sustainability for me. And that's what this farm is: everything is organic, everything gets reused, I get to build stuff every day which is really cool. I go round finding pieces of wood building fences, reinforce things, fix things that are broken, build fires, and I live in a treehouse! Which is great fun.

[video switches to wwoofer 3 sitting in the treehouse]

WWOOFer 3: a year ago a Belgian guy, who was a bit of an action man, massive rigid beard, big arms, and eh, he just got sick of the Italians! And so he just built a treehouse to be away from everybody. And it's just been passed on from him to a girl and to her friend. Then onto a guy, who was one of the best friends of me here. And then onto me! Who knows who it will go onto next.

I choose this Krishna farm because it was less likely that I would be exploited here. It was less likely that the environment would be exploited, or the animals, or anything like that. And so far that has rang true.

Music starts to play and three people come into the video, one pouring a drink for the others and himself.

Three men, one older and two younger, on the land with a wheelbarrow and shovels. The older man starts talking about Napoleon.

A man comes into the video. He is working on the land with a shovel.

WWOOFer 4: so we take the cow shit and put it in our field.

He starts working with his shovel.

The video switches to a young man standing on a grassland with forest bush and tents in the background.

Wwoofer 5: Hi, my name is x an I am from Hamburg, Germany. I've been here for a couple of weeks now and probably stay a few more. [video switches to and from him sitting on a bench with another guy, talking and laughing.] what I like about this place is the community here. They actually have a proper community in which the genuinely believe in the same thing, genuinely help each other, and ehm I guess they provide many travellers, the opportunity to get their second year done. I mean it

doesn't get easier than this, if you want you 88 days and you want your second year, then it's probably a smart idea to come here. What I don't like about this place is that ehm, ehm...[laughs] there are heaps of lunatics here, to be honest. Some of them are making it very easy for themselves. They walk around and chant Hare Krishna and believe that everything will be alright when they do that. Some of them are not great at acknowledging other peoples existence. They don't say hello, they just walk past you, not even give you little nods of appreciation or anything like that. And they sometimes treat us the wwoofers as if we were peasants which I don't think is alright. And I guess most of the devoties up there should come down here for a bit, do some work in the fields and see what we're actually doing here, how much we are helping them and that if the wwoofers wouldn't be here all of this would fall apart.

Music starts to play and video switches to a patio where people are sitting next to each other on the floor, eating and talking. [music plays: let's fall in love again, with music as our guide]. Woman walks around with large bucket and poors people drinks.

A young woman appears on the video screen. She starts talking.

WWOOFer 6: Hi, I'm x, I'm from Brazil, ehm, I've been here in this farm for three weeks now, today is my last day and it's pretty sad to leave, it was a really good experience for me. I was at the Gold Coast with a friend at the restaurant that they run, and I saw the brochure and I really wanted to be part of it. So I contacted them and now I'm here! It was a really really nice experience, I think in three weeks I can see that I changed a little bit which is good. At the farm I had different jobs, ehm, the first job that I started doing was planting. And then they swapped me to another group so I was harvesting and now my last day I am just gonna help to cook! So really nice to go do different jobs and go learn a bit more of everything.

Two young women appear in the video. They are both working in the kitchen.

WWOOFer 7: I am roasting the seeds, the pumpkin seeds, to put them in the salad and I think we are going to roast the pumpkin in the oven, yeah, what else...we have the peas, tomatoes...I'm gonna put cellary on the pumpkin, so maybe a bit of cinnamon, ehm, so we will have the potato salad. What else, oh, yeah, we're gonna grate the cabbage to go with the couscous and peas. So we're probably gonna put that in the salad. It all comes from garden, organic, you can taste the difference. The taste is unbelievable. And WWOOFer 8 is gonne explain the bread!

WWOOFer 8: I'm a French baker and master chef. And today I'm going to bake some bread. [he starts explaining the process of making bread].

The video continues by showing how wwoofer 8 continues the baking process and how the food is cooked in the kitchen, and then people starting to eat. The music plays [what you gonna spend you free life on..]

Video switches to man standing next to a sign of krsna village yoga community. The man starts talking.

Man: so, my dear friends, we began Krishna village with a dual purpose. The first purpose was the natural thinking, to provide a reservoir of people power for the farm. For construction, for the temple, for the school, for all the different aspects of the farm community, especially the agriculture.

And our second purpose was to give all of our guests, our devoties, our spiritual seekers, all the different people who stay here, a place for them stay, almost like a retreat, like, instead of paying for a retreat where you get yoga classes and really healthy food, sunshine and a beautiful atmosphere, life coaching, spirituality classes, fresh juice, organic veggies, all these kind of things, just like on a retreat. But instead of paying, you just come and do your work. So you work a few hours each day and the rest of the day you can play sports and relax and go for a swim, go for a walk, take a yoga class. This was the idea; to create a people power army for the farm and also to create a retreat and a beautiful rejuvenation space for our guests and wwoofers and volunteers.

Video switches to a young woman in a room in a building. She is holding a broom. She starts speaking.

WWOOFer 9: My name is x, and I have been here for two months and a half. I'm here for my second working holiday visa and I'm a cleaner. I clean here, I make juices and I take care of the horses, this is my job here and I love it. I'm gonna stay here for one month and a half, and that's it.

From this point on only fragments are transcribed.

Man (volunteer): (...) and this is a great place, I love it. I really like the people here, it's a great place, everyone is friendly. Ehm, being out in the country, I love the country. I've had enough of the city, it's time to enjoy myself now and do a little bit of service. I work with commissioners up in the temple and this is temple food, go up to do the celebrations occasionally and they're very interesting! It's a great place to be. On the downside it's a little bit far from town but that's probably not really a downside, it's probably just as good. I'm here foregood now, this is my home!

WWOOFer 10: Hi, my name is x and I'm from England and I've come to the Krishna farm for my second visa. I've picked the Krishna farm over fruit picking because I thought there to be a better sense of community, nicer people, and I imagine I was right. I like it here, I like the three meals a day, they're good. I don't really like it's all vegetarian but unfortunately that's the way the Krishna. So, yeah, it's a nice sense of community, nice people and a great outdoors. And believe it or not, sleeping in a tent ain't too bad, so I got kinda used to that. So yeah, to sum it up, it's quite a good place to come! Quite spiritual.

Woman: I'm doing one of the sayings of the Krishna farm: 'those who worship the demy gods will take birth among the demy gods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors. Those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth amongst such beings. And those who worship me will live with me.' And I've just decorated it with all the flowers that are in the farm, that are canelas and these, ehm, other leaves that are around. And, ehm...its so beautiful, the nature here, and I've just tried to represent it here in this art work.

People sitting in circle, legs folded and eyes closed. A woman starts to talk.

Woman 2: just intensify this colour, intensify this feeling. Pure ecstasy. Make it so strong that you are bursting in this moment with ecstasy and when you are ready again go back to your anker point, squeeze it strongly. And anker that ecstasy, hold that feeling of ecstasy. Hold it for when you're squeezing for like five seconds, and then let go.

Or if you remember, your favourite childhood food that your mum cooked for you. When you get that smell, it instantaneously reminds you of that situation with your mum. Or somebody having a certain tone of voice with you, for example a certain slight twitch in their voice that you heard when somebody was putting you down. Ten years later different person different circumstances; you hear that tone of voice and you immediately go into that defense mechanism. So there's all sorts of anchors, all the time in life that we get and links and outside trigger to an inside (...).

WWOOFer 11: Hi, I'm x and I came from London, originally from Italy, and I came here to extend my visa and I chose the Hare Krishna farm because it's more closer to my interest on yoga. So I do yoga, meditation and hatha yoga so I decided to come here. What I love about the Hare Krishna farm is that there are a lot of activities, I teach yoga and at the same time I go to the temple and I love chanting. I go in the morning, and what I love about this place is ehm there are a lot of wwoofers from all around the world and met the most amazing people, ehm, here in this village. And I go to the temple quite often, I met the devoties, I helped the temple. And what I like here is the food, the people, it's like a paradise. It's beautiful.

WWOOFer 12: Hi I'm x, I'm from Cambridge, England and I'm currently looking after the Alice garden. It was a bit neglected, so I decided to take it on as a little project. So I'm working on it by myself at the moment. I'm currently planting some new capsicums and zucchinis for the, I guess for the Spring. And ehm yeah, I really found love for gardening, I never had any interest in gardening. I'd never tried it before, everything I've learnt I've learnt from the people here and it's going really well!

WWOOFer 13: Hi I'm x and I come from Sweden. I have been on the farm for 10 months because I was quite tired of backpacking. I just felt I needed to reconnect with what I wanted to do in Australia. And, yeah, here I am ten months later, haha. What happened was pretty much that I started to help more and more and then I was offered to take over the juice team, which I've been doing since. Selling this jeeva juice, and I've also been doing massages here, and doing some office work, help out. What's been really valuable for me on the farm is to take a break from the stressful life in cities and everyday life. I've also been working a lot on myself since I came, I've been to coaching classes, going to yoga I've been up in the temple...so, this experience for me has been amazing, being here, and meeting all of these people from all over the world. I will stay on the farm for another three to four months, and then I will go up to Sweden to meet up with my family, but I'm hoping to be back on the farm quite soon again.

WWOOFer 14: Hello, I'm x and I'm from Japan. I come here to WWOOF. I love drawing and I teach and practice yoga.

The video shows the WWOOFer practicing yoga.

Back to WWOOFer 3: So that's it for me here. I've done 93 days, that's five over the 88 that I needed, but it's definitely time for me to leave this place. I've learned a lot; I think it's been a very important experience in my life. Certainly one of the overwhelming positive ones. I've learnt a lot about myself, about other cultures, other people, farm work, religion, spirituality, but at the end of it I've come to the conclusion that if there is someone keeping moral check and moral score of me, in and out bad situations, in good things, it's not a spirit or a deity, it's me. And, I couldn't've reached this conclusion without this place. It's really special and the people here are what make it.

Appendix 4

Codes for analysis

Below the codes for content analysis can be found. These served to discover similarities and differentiations in the data. Eventually they aided to distinguish different types of experiences and outcomes, which can be found in the results chapter of this thesis.

- Learning
- Growth
- Challenges
- Adaptation
- Awareness
- Change
- Connectedness
- Sense of place
- Privacy
- Support
- Sharing
- Social interaction
- Safety
- Persuasion
- Meaning
- Perspective
- Belief
- Affect
- Symbolism
- Spirit
- Intuition
- Food
- Animals
- Nature
- Activity