

**ENHANCING SELF-ESTEEM THROUGH NATURAL
OBJECTS IN *YOUR SOUL IS A RIVER***

THESIS



**UIN SUNAN AMPEL
S U R A B A Y A**

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FACULTY OF ADAB AND HUMANITIES
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SUNAN AMPEL
SURABAYA**

2024

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submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the bachelor's degree of
the English Literature Department Faculty of Adab and Humanities
UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

With a heart full of gratitude, I begin by praising Allah SWT, the Most Gracious and Most Merciful, for His endless blessings, guidance, and strength throughout my journey. Without His will, I would not have been able to accomplish this study. I sincerely thank my advisors, ma'am Itsna Syahadatud Dinurriyah and ma'am Rahmadhina Ulfa Nuristama. Thank you for believing in my potential and guiding me with wisdom and patience. I am very thankful for your advice, thoughtful insights, and constant support, which have been the framework of this thesis. Without you, I will not be able to finish this thesis. I will forever cherish the knowledge and inspiration you have shared with me. To all the lecturers of the Faculty of Adab and Humaniora lecturers at UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, thank you for being more than just teachers. Your passion, dedication, and words of encouragement have left an indelible mark on my academic and personal growth. I carry your teachings with me as a treasure for life.

No words can fully capture my gratitude to my beloved parents, who are the light of my life. Thank you for your endless prayers, unconditional love, and unwavering support. To my wonderful friends, *Wacana Ajadeh*, especially Hanny, Icha, and Harmony, thank you for supporting me during this journey. Our late-night discussions, brainstorming sessions, and endless support made this process not just bearable but memorable. You reminded me I was never alone, even in the most challenging times.

Lastly, I thank everyone who has supported me in any way during this endeavour, whether through prayers, advice, or acts of kindness. May this work contribute to English literature and inspire others in their academic pursuits.

Surabaya, 11th December 2024

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ABSTRACT

Parwoto, E. T. (2024). *Enhancing Self-esteem Through Natural Objects in Your Soul is a River*. English Literature Department, Faculty of Adab and Humanities, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Advisors: (I) Itsna Syahadatud Dinurriyah, MA. (II) Ramadhina Ulfa Nuristama, M.A.

This study aims to show the uses of natural objects to enhance human self-esteem in Nikita Gill's poetry *Your Soul is a River*. The researcher selects the poems relates with natural objects that symbolize our self-esteem such as *What You Are What You Are Not*, *Natural Lessons*, *From the River Banks*, *A List of Things to Come to Terms With*, and *Forest Set Aflame*. The natural objects found are wildflower, weeds, flower, roses, butterflies, ocean, lake, rivers, soil, earth and forest. Two problems are to be solved in this study: 1) the position of natural objects in the poems and 2) the relation between natural objects and self-esteem.

This research uses a qualitative-descriptive approach, which includes descriptive study of the textual material. The data were collected by identifying the poems in *Your Soul is a River* related to self-esteem and highlighting the narrative containing natural objects. The data analysis technique using reader response theory by Wolfgang Iser reception theory, especially implied reader, which focuses on the reading process, highlighting the understanding and interpretation of natural objects in the poems to enhance self-esteem. The interpretation take from the researcher's understanding through several steps, such as identifying the natural objects, interpreting the position of each natural object in the narrative, and the relation with self-esteem.

The results of this study show that the position of natural object weeds stands for resilience and self-worth, flowers stand for inner beauty, and wildflowers stand for staying true to oneself. The ocean, lake, and river represent deep emotions, self-awareness, and perseverance. The natural objects, soil, Earth, and the forest stand for the need for supportive environments and personal renewal. These natural objects can enhance self-esteem. The relationship between natural objects and self-esteem shows that Weeds show the importance of pushing through difficulties related to resilience and self-worth. Flowers represent inner beauty, helping individuals appreciate their value. Wildflowers highlight the importance of being true to oneself. Ocean, lake, and river relate with deep emotions, self-awareness, and perseverance, guiding individuals to understand and strengthen their feelings. Soil, Earth, and the forest reflect the need for supportive environments and personal renewal, showing how inner strength and external care support growth.

Keywords: self-esteem, natural object, confidence

ABSTRAK

Parwoto, E. T. 2024. *Meningkatkan Harga Diri Melalui Objek Alam di Your Soul is a River*. Program Studi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Adab dan Humaniora, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya. Pembimbing: (I) Itsna Syahadatud Dinurriyah, MA. (II) Ramadhina Ulfa Nuristama, M.A.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan penggunaan objek-objek alam untuk meningkatkan harga diri manusia dalam puisi *Your Soul is a River* karya Nikita Gill. Peneliti memilih puisi-puisi yang berhubungan dengan benda-benda alam yang melambangkan harga diri kita seperti *What You Are What You Are Not*, *Natural Lessons*, *From the River Banks*, *A List of Things to Come to Terms With*, dan *Forest Set Aflame*. Objek-objek alam yang ditemukan adalah bunga liar, rumput liar, bunga, mawar, kupu-kupu, lautan, danau, sungai, tanah, dan hutan. Ada dua masalah yang ingin dipecahkan dalam penelitian ini: 1) posisi objek alam dalam puisi-puisi tersebut dan 2) hubungan antara objek alam dan harga diri.

Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif, yang mencakup studi deskriptif terhadap materi tekstual. Data dikumpulkan dengan mengidentifikasi puisi-puisi dalam buku *Your Soul is a River* yang berhubungan dengan harga diri dan menyoroti narasi yang mengandung objek-objek alam. Teknik analisis data menggunakan teori respon pembaca oleh teori resepsi Wolfgang Iser, khususnya *implied reader*, yang berfokus pada proses pembacaan, menyoroti pemahaman dan interpretasi objek-objek alam dalam puisi-puisi tersebut untuk meningkatkan harga diri. Interpretasi akan diambil dari pemahaman peneliti melalui beberapa langkah, seperti mengidentifikasi objek-objek alam, menginterpretasikan posisi setiap objek alam dalam narasi, dan hubungannya dengan harga diri.

Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa posisi objek alam gulma melambangkan ketahanan dan harga diri, bunga melambangkan kecantikan dari dalam, dan bunga liar melambangkan tetap setia pada diri sendiri. Lautan, danau, dan sungai mewakili emosi yang mendalam, kesadaran diri, dan ketekunan. Benda-benda alam, tanah, bumi, dan hutan melambangkan kebutuhan akan lingkungan yang mendukung dan pembaharuan diri. Benda-benda alam ini dapat meningkatkan harga diri. Hubungan antara benda-benda alam dan harga diri menunjukkan bahwa Gulma menunjukkan pentingnya mendorong melalui kesulitan yang berkaitan dengan ketahanan dan harga diri. Bunga mewakili kecantikan dari dalam, membantu individu menghargai nilai mereka. Bunga liar menyoroti pentingnya menjadi diri sendiri. Lautan, danau, dan sungai berhubungan dengan emosi yang mendalam, kesadaran diri, dan ketekunan, membimbing individu untuk memahami dan memperkuat perasaan mereka. Tanah, Bumi, dan hutan mencerminkan kebutuhan akan lingkungan yang mendukung dan pembaharuan pribadi, menunjukkan bagaimana kekuatan dari dalam diri dan perawatan dari luar mendukung pertumbuhan.

Kata Kunci: harga diri, objek alam, percaya diri

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Your Soul is a River is a collection of poetry by Nikita Gill that delves into the complexities of the human experience. This collection is deeply personal and emotionally moving. People who read this book can connect with their feelings because it takes them on a journey through the heart, mind, and Soul. Gill, a famous Instagram poet, uses her platform to explore love, loss, heartbreak, and healing themes (Arbo, 2013). While the poems reflect her own experiences, they resonate with a wide audience.

The interaction of a text and its readers creates meaning. Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory helps us understand this process better by focusing on how meaning is created when the content of a text interacts with the reader's interpretation of it. Iser, (1978, p. 128) says that readers interact with the text by remembering parts from earlier and guessing what might happen next. Their understanding changes as they read because of this dynamic interaction. Iser's theory is based on the idea of "gaps," which are parts of the text that are not explained or are not clear. Readers use their own experiences, values, and beliefs to fill in the blanks. This makes each reading a unique and personal experience. This view is especially useful for this research examining how natural things in poetry can help boost self-esteem. Iser's framework is a great way to look at how metaphorical images of natural things connect with readers and make them feel good about their self-worth because it emphasizes the reader's role in figuring out what the images mean.

Nikita Gill's work is particularly intriguing in Andriani (2022) work titled "Figurative Language Analysis on Nikita Gill's Poems". In *Your Soul Is a River*, researchers look into how metaphors are used and how they can be understood. Researchers use semantic theory to examine what words, phrases, and sentences mean in language. This study uses a qualitative descriptive research approach, which includes content analysis of the textual materials. The discussion seeks to better grasp the beauty and meaning of Gill's poetry by analyzing the four types of figurative language utilized and the prevalence of similes that affect his poetry.

Gill's ability to connect with nature makes this book stand out. She uses images of forests, rivers, flowers, etc. These objects show different stages of life and feelings. A river, for instance, can stand for the flow of time and change, while a flower can stand for beauty. By using these natural objects, Gill helps readers grasp the emotion conveyed in her poetry. The book has different parts, each about a different part of being human. Some themes are love, loss, self-love, and searching for meaning. Gill writes in a way that makes people feel seen and understood, as if she speaks directly to their hearts. There is more to *Your Soul is a River* than just poems. It is a friend on the path of self-discovery. People read it to accept their feelings, be kind to themselves, and find strength in their weaknesses. Many readers love this book because Gill's words can heal, inspire, and lift others (Arbo, 2013).

There are several chapters of *Your Soul is a River: The Cosmos, The Storm, Ache, Wild, Fire, The Earth, The Sea, and Heal*. All of the chapters, though, show how different and complicated the human experience is. They also highlight the importance of personal growth, self-love, resilience, and the search for meaning.

This poetry collection has several titles, such as *Natural Lessons*, *From The River Banks*, *A List Of Things To Come To Terms With*, *What You Are*, *What You Are Not*, and *Forest Set Aflame*. That is considered to fill the objective of this study because it aligns with the study's focus on self-esteem and natural objects.

Just as nature is a vast and intricate system of countless interconnected elements, self-esteem is a complex construct composed of various interrelated factors, including self-image, confidence, and an overall sense of worth. According to Greenier et al. (1995), self-esteem is a fundamental concept important in many areas of psychology, including clinical, developmental, personality, and social psychology. This understanding is the foundation for investigating how self-esteem influences human behavior and well-being.

A new study in the *Journal of Early Adolescence* expands on this basic idea by examining the complicated relationship between essential life outcomes and self-esteem. The study shows that self-esteem is a powerful motivator that can change a person's mental health and quality of life (Jordan et al., 2020). By showing how important self-esteem is in people's lives, the study shows why having a good sense of self-worth is essential for their mental and emotional health.

This study uses natural objects as representations of self-esteem to help people feel better about themselves, grow as people, and be more resilient. All of the poems used in this study are about self-esteem. The main idea of the poem *What You Are What You Are Not* is to accept ourselves as we are and know that our strengths and experiences, not our mistakes or other people's opinions, define us. Poem *Natural Lessons*, compared to natural changes and personal growth, this poem is about people accepting themselves and being themselves. The poem

From the River Banks is used as a metaphor for strength and resilience, and the poem encourages us to use our strengths to deal with the problems we face in life. The poem *A List of Things to Come to Terms With* talks about dealing with grief and loss while respecting yourself. It stresses the importance of respecting our feelings and self-worth no matter what happens around us. When the poem *Forest Set Aflame* talks about beauty and life, they compare a person to a forest full of life and wonder. These poems look at self-esteem and what it means for personal growth and development (Gill, 2016).

Using natural objects in poems focusing on self-esteem highlights a central theme. Natural objects found on Earth, such as rivers, oceans, flowers, and animals, play an essential role in poetic narrative. Within the study context, natural things perform a variety of purposes, frequently as communication for conveying themes, emotions, and symbolically rich concepts. The relationship between self-esteem and natural objects in these poems adds depth and complexity to their study of human experience and introspection.

1.2 Problems of the Study

This research aims to analyze the use of natural objects to enhance self-esteem in poems. So, the researcher formulates research questions:

1. How do the natural objects in the poems present their position?
2. How do the natural objects relate to self-esteem?

1.3 Objectives of the Study

In line with the problems of the study above, this study aims to

1. To analyze the position of natural objects in the poem.

2. To explore the relation between the natural objects and the theme of self-esteem.

1.4 Significances of the Study

This study explores the reader's interpretation of this poem's natural objects and how they enhance self-esteem. The central theme of Nikita Gill's *Your Soul is a River* poem's collections is the idea that the soul, much like a river, constantly evolves and transforms. It encourages the reader to embrace their pain, learn from it, and ultimately find strength and beauty in their journey. The researcher uses five poems with the theme of self-esteem, such as *Natural Lessons*, *From The River Banks*, *A List of Things to Come to Terms With*, *What You Are*, *What You Are Not*, and *Forest Set Aflame*. From the poems above, the researcher finds several natural objects like flowers, forests, rivers, oceans, roses, soil, butterflies, etc. This study is to encourage readers to gain a new understanding of the object under study, which could encourage them with the difficulties of low self-esteem, as the author's goal in creating this poetry is to heal and survive our problem.

1.5 Scope and Delimitations

The research explores how reader response and interpretation of natural objects are used in *Your Soul is a River*. In this study, the researcher applies Wolfgang Iser's reader-response theory, which focuses on the reader's experience with literary works. This study uses 5 poems: *Natural Lessons*, *From The River Banks*, *A List Of Things To Come To Terms With*, *What You Are*, *What You Are Not*, and *Forest Set Aflame*. These poems feature natural objects such as an ocean, wildflowers, flowers, soil, roses, forests, butterflies, rivers, and the Earth. While

Poetry offers a wide range of individual interpretations based on their personal viewpoints, life experiences, and cultural backgrounds, this study specifically limits its focus to analyzing how these natural objects are used to symbolize human self-esteem. It does not explore other interpretations of these objects beyond their connection to self-esteem.

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

To avoid misunderstanding the use of terms, research needs to give suitable meanings to the key terms. Some terms are defined as follows:

Natural Objects are materials that occur naturally without direct human invention or creation. These objects are formed through natural processes and are part of the physical world. Examples of natural objects include living organisms (plants, animals, bacteria), geological formations (rocks, mountains, rivers, soil), celestial bodies (sun, moon, planets, asteroids), natural phenomena (rain, wind, sunlight), elements and compounds (water, air, minerals) (Britannica, 2024).

Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation towards oneself, an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. It is similar to having respect for oneself, and it describes the level of confidence one has in one's abilities and qualities (Kendra Cherry, 2022).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Reader Response

A response reflects a reader's attitude toward a text, including their understanding, judgment, acceptance or rejection, and emotions about the content. According to the literary reception approach, Junus (1985, p. 72) argues that a text gains meaning only when it connects with the reader, as it requires the reader's response to exist entirely. Since responses are based on individual interpretation, they reflect their understanding of the text. However, not all responses fully capture the deeper meaning of the literary work. Some responses might miss key points or not fully address the text's more profound meaning. Tyson (2006, p. 169) adds that even when the same person reads the exact text at different times, their interpretations and understandings may change due to life experience and background. This means that the reader's perspective and the context in which they engage with the text shape reading as an active, evolving process.

Reader response further explains that a text does not have meaning. Instead, it requires interaction between the reader and the text to produce meaning. This interaction is essential as it allows readers to contribute unique interpretations shaped by their experiences. Tyson (2006, p. 170) highlights the reader's important role, noting that readers do not passively accept the meaning provided by the text. Instead, they actively participate in creating the meaning they interpret from the literary work.

Klarer (2004, p. 92) explains that the reader-oriented approach, developed in the mid-twentieth century, focuses on the relationship between the text and the

reader. The critical movements within this framework include reception theory, reader-response theory, and reception aesthetic. These concepts focus on the reader's point of view and highlight how individual interpretation plays a crucial role in literary analysis. With reader-response approaches, each text generates particular expectations, interpretations, and responses within the reader throughout the reading process. He suggests that reader expectations significantly shape their experience of a literary work, especially in specific genres where these expectations are more evident.

Several experts have influenced reader response theory. Louise Rosenblatt, Stanley Fish, Norman Holland, David Bleich, Gerald Prince, and Wolfgang Iser are key authors whose works emphasize the reader's active role in constructing meaning from a text. Each of these theorists offers a unique perspective on how readers interpret texts.

The Reader-response theory was first developed by Louise Rosenblatt (Griffin, 2017). *Literature as Exploration* (1938) and *The Reader, the Text, the Poem* (1978), two of her most important books, explain her transactional reading style. In this style, the reader and the text work together to make sense of the text. Rosenblatt says reading is an active process that involves thoughts and feelings. This means that readers can make meaning instead of just receiving it. She says there are two main ways to read: 1) efferent reading, which is read to learn something or finish a job. 2) Aesthetic reading means connecting emotionally with the text and liking the reading process. She does not think readers just take in what they read. They respond to texts by drawing connections and filling in blanks from their own lives. This process reveals the uniqueness of interpretation,

suggesting that different people can get different meanings from the exact text. She claims that ignoring the reader's role makes it harder to understand and enjoy literature. She also stresses that how a reader understands something depends on their cultural and social background. This means that the idea is not fixed but something that changes over time. Rosenblatt made essential contributions to literary criticism and education. He pushed for a broader view of how people experience and understand literature in different media and genres (Griffin, 2017, pp. 110–111).

Stanley Fish, An American critic who dwells in 17th-century English literary structures, says a reader has to grasp how language works, including syntax and meaning, to make sense of a written text as the reader interacts with it sentence by sentence. However, he admits that this approach is suited to those who enjoy texts that refer to themselves or their ideas, which may limit its scope to other types of literature (Selden et al., 2005, p. 55).

Norman N. Holland's Reader Response Theory focuses on the reader's psychological interaction with the text. Holland highlights how readers' personal experiences, emotions, and unconscious motivations shape their interpretation of literary works. He uses psychoanalytic ideas to say that reading is more of an active process than a passive way of taking in meaning. Readers project their mental states onto the text. This method emphasizes how subjective interpretation is, suggesting that understanding a literary work tells us more about the reader's mind than about the text itself. This means that Holland's work is less about analyzing literature objectively and more about looking at how personal and psychological factors affect reading experiences in more depth (Mambrol, 2016).

David Bleich's Reader Response Theory is based on the idea that the reader's response is the text itself. This means there is no literary meaning besides what readers make of it. Bleich supports a subjective approach to literary analysis, saying that the meaning of a text depends only on how each reader responds to it, which is based on their feelings and experiences. He suggests that instead of adhering to a single, objective interpretation, readers should discuss and compare their answers to develop a common comprehension of the text. Bleich's theory stresses how important it is for people to interact with literature personally and how community approval shapes the meaning of literature (Selden et al., 2005, p. 58).

The Reader Response Theory by Gerald Prince is about the different kinds of readers and their actions when they read. He comes up with the terms “real reader,” “virtual reader,” and “ideal reader” to help group the different ways that people read and respond to texts. The real reader is the person who is actually reading the text. Conversely, the virtual reader is an imagined audience that the author may have in mind. The “ideal reader” idea includes the characteristics and abilities needed to understand and appreciate the text thoroughly. When Prince talks about this, he highlights that the text forms meaning and how these readers interact with the story (Selden et al., 2005, p. 48).

This study uses Wolfgang Iser's reader response theory to explore the reader's role in creating meaning through interaction with the text. Wolfgang Iser, born in 1926, is a famous English and Comparative Literature professor at the University of Constance in West Germany. He has also lectured at universities throughout Europe and the United States. He, along with his colleague Hans Robert Jauss, is

a leading figure in the German school of contemporary criticism, also known as reception theory. (Lodge & Wood, 2014, p. 188). Wolfgang Iser's theory mainly concerns how the reader interacts with the text. He highlights that meaning is not fixed but created during the reading process. The central of Iser's approach is the idea of the "implied reader," or the ideal reader, that a text expects to have the right attitudes and skills to engage with the work well. When reading, Iser says there are "gaps" or unclear parts that readers have to fill in with their ideas, creating a unique and dynamic understanding of what the text means. He says that reading is a temporal and non-linear activity in which readers constantly move between what they expect and how the story develops in the text, making their unique understanding based on their own experiences.

According to Iser (1978, p. 107), "the literary text is the work of the deliberate author, partially controlling the reader's response." This means the reader actively engages with the text and participates in the reading experience. However, Iser highlights that there are limits to how freely readers can interpret the text. The reader's role intersects two critical processes: retention and pretension (Iser, 1978, p. 111). Retention refers to the reader's memory, which includes their recollections, ideals, and thoughts as they progress through the text.

On the other hand, pretension shows the reader is excitement and eagerness to get into the text thoroughly. When people read a book, their points of view change all the time. They have expectations based on what they remember about characters and events, but as they learn more, these expectations and mental pictures change. So, what they see at any given time is not a single, important view but rather a series of changing points of view that change as they read the

text. Iser's reception theory is used in this study to examine how the reader's interaction with the text affects how they understand it.

2.1.1 Reception Theory

Wolfgang Iser's reception theory focuses on how the reader and the text change over time. It says that meaning is not built into the text itself, but comes from the reading process. He says that critics should not try to explain what a text means. Instead, they should look at how readers respond to it and how it affects them (Giangiulio Lobo, 2013, p. 23). Iser says in *The Act of Reading* that a text can come to life when a reader uses their qualities, beliefs, and experiences to interact with it. This interaction makes a back-and-forth effect: the text tells us how to understand it, but each reader's background also determines what it means to them (Selden et al., 2005, p. 52). The reading experience can influence or even change their perspective as they engage with the text.

Wolfgang Iser's theories are significantly influenced by phenomenology, and his approach to reception theory uses phenomenological concepts to explain how readers interact with texts. In Iser's phenomenological approach, he distinguishes between two aspects of a literary work: The artistic and the aesthetic. The artistic pole represents the author's original work, while the aesthetic pole refers to how the reader interprets and brings it to life during reading (Lobo, 2013, p. 42). Those are known as gaps or undefined elements in the literary text that require active reader participation to be filled. Iser says that those who fill these poles with their imagination and understanding. Iser emphasizes the reader's role in meaning production, arguing that the reader actively creates meaning rather than passively receiving the text (Iser, 1974, p.

xii). Iser underscores in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978) that one of the main objectives of a theory of aesthetic response is to encourage intersubjective discussions on personal interpretations of literary works. He highlights “gaps” in texts readers are supposed to complete, allowing more active participation with the content. Iser adds the idea of “articulated reading moments,” hypothesizing that the interaction between the reader and the text creates a dynamic process through which meaning is created rather than only reflecting a given reality (Iser, 1978, p. 128)

Iser views literary work as more than a representation of objects or events but as a constructed world that presents specific norms, values, and viewpoints, each affecting the reader differently. This interpretative process makes literary reading a collaborative and evolving experience. As Selden et al. (2005, p. 54) explain, “literary text always contains ‘blanks’ which only the reader can fill.” This interpretative act allows readers to bring their unique perspective to the work, reshaping their understanding with each interaction.

Iser views reading as an aesthetic process that changes over time and does not follow a linear path. As Mambrol (2016) notes, Iser describes reading as an experience that goes through stages of expectation, defamiliarization, contradiction, and sometimes disappointment. This interaction creates a two-way conversation between the reader and the text, in which meaning is built and rebuilt over time. As a result, the reader’s thoughts and feelings change as they read each part of the text—eventually, a final meaning forms from the reader’s entire reading experience.

Wolfgang Iser's subdivided the reader into the implied and actual readers. The implied reader allows one to examine how writers create works to direct reader interpretation, highlighting the interactive character of reading (Iser, 1974). The Implied Reader represents an idealized audience the author envisions during the writing process, a hypothetical reader who engages the text in ways consistent with her expectations. Following the cues and filling in the interpretive gaps in the text helps the implied reader highlight the intended themes and complexity of the work. In contrast, the actual reader refers to real-life individuals engaging with the text. The interpretation may differ from implied readers because they are influenced by various elements such as societal norms, personal beliefs, and previous experiences (Selden et al., 2016, p. 52). While praised for its analytical framework, Iser's is criticized for being abstract and lacking clear interpretation advice. Elshikh (2021, p. 24) claims that the implied reader and actual reader provide a helpful framework for understanding the relationship between the text and the reader. However, others say it should be more abstract and provide explicit interpretation advice. Nonetheless, Iser's Reception theory significantly affected literary criticism, particularly reader-response criticism.

To apply Wolfgang Iser's Reception Theory, follow a structured approach highlighting the interaction between the reader and the text. First, Identify the implied reader, which refers to the ideal reader the text is designed for. This involves understanding the qualities and mindset needed to engage with the text effectively. Next, Examine the gaps within the text areas intentionally left ambiguous or open to interpretation. These gaps invite the reader to actively participate in constructing meaning, using personal experiences and cultural

context to fill in the missing elements. Throughout the reading process, focus on how the reader's understanding of the text evolves. Track how the interpretations shift as they interact with different parts of the narrative, reflecting the dynamic nature of reading. Lastly, think about the text's overall communicative structure. Look at how the different parts of the story work together to affect how the reader reacts. This method looks at how literature creates meaning and how that meaning affects the reader.

The researcher wants to find out how natural objects enhance self-esteem by connecting with people on a personal level using Iser's reader-response theory. The reader who is supposed to understand this would probably see the relationship between the symbols of natural objects and themes of strength, self-worth, and personal growth. Getting them to actively fill in the blanks with their own experiences and beliefs enhances their self-esteem and makes the interpretation fit each person's experience. This theory supports an analysis that values how each reader interacts with a text uniquely. This idea makes it a great way to look at how poetic images of natural things can help you feel better about yourself and grow as a person.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Research Design

The researcher uses qualitative research to explore attitudes, behavior, and experiences in this research. Qualitative research seeks to understand and explain social phenomena comprehensively by collecting and analyzing non-numerical data, including observations, interviews, and textual analysis (Dawson, 2019). The researcher uses the Reader-response theory by Wolfgang Iser in this research.

3.2 Data Collection

3.2.1 Research Data

This study uses a selection of poems from the book *Your Soul is a River*. The researcher selects five poems entitled *Natural Lessons, which mentions the natural object Earth; From The River Banks, which mentions the natural object river; A List Of Things To Come To Terms With, which includes natural objects ocean, wildflower, roses, weeds, soil, What You Are, What You Are Not* which mention natural object ocean, and *Forest Set Aflame* which mentions natural object forest, butterflies, lake. This set of research objects shares the same theme, self-esteem, and includes natural objects. Secondary data sources used to get the required data include books, journal papers, and websites

3.2.2 Data Source

This research is divided into primary data and secondary data. The primary data source is a poem by Nikita Gill entitled *Your Soul is a River*, which focuses

on healing from trauma and becoming whole again. The secondary data sources from books, journal articles, websites, and past studies linked to this study

3.2.3 Data Collection Technique

The following are the steps taken to collect the data:

1. The researcher reads the entire poems of Nikita Gills' *Your Soul is a River* to gain better understanding about the poems.
2. The researcher identifies the poems in the book *Your Soul is a River* that contain natural objects.
3. After select the poems, the researcher highlights the natural objects in the selected poems that linked to self-esteem.
4. The researcher classifies the natural objects into several categories: flora, fauna, water elements, earth elements.

3.3 Data Analysis Technique

The researcher will analyze the data using the Reader-response theory by Wolfgang Iser, and the interpretation will be taken from the researcher's understanding. The data will be analyzed through several steps:

1. Positioning the researcher as the implied reader.
2. Find areas in the text that are ambiguous or open to interpretation about the position of natural objects in the narratives.
3. The researcher used her experience and knowledge about self-esteem to fill in these gaps and create meaning from the ambiguous to interpret the relationship of natural objects with self-esteem.
4. Analyze the natural objects that symbolize the self-esteem.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

4.1 The Presentation of the Position of Natural Objects in the Poems

The researcher selected five poems: entitled *Natural Lessons*, which mentions the natural object Earth; *From The River Banks*, which mentions the natural object river; *A List Of Things To Come To Terms With*, which includes natural objects ocean, wildflower, roses, weeds, soil, *What You Are*, *What You Are Not* which mention natural object ocean, and *Forest Set Aflame* which mentions natural object forest, butterflies, lake. The researcher select these poems because they all explore self-esteem in different ways. Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation towards oneself, an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. It is similar to having respect for oneself, and it describes the level of confidence one has in one's abilities and qualities. Each poem teaches how to accept oneself, grow, and stay strong during difficult times, which are essential for developing self-esteem (Cherry, 2022). The connection between self-esteem and the natural world can be seen in the way natural elements teach us important lessons about growth, resilience, and the beauty of acceptance. Just as the five selected poems explore self-esteem in various forms, the natural objects discussed in the poems serve as metaphors for different aspects of personal development. These natural elements, each positioned in their unique way, offer valuable lessons on how we can accept ourselves, embrace change, and continue to grow stronger, just as nature itself adapts and flourishes in diverse ways.

Weeds grow underground or in places where they're often ignored. They show us that even though something may seem unimportant, it can have hidden strength

and value. Wildflowers grow freely in fields and meadows, teaching us about freedom and beauty. They remind us that growth and beauty can happen naturally, without needing to be controlled. Flowers grow above the ground, bright and colorful, teaching us that beauty is temporary and we should appreciate it while it lasts. Roses, with their roots in gardens and thorns on their stems, show us that love and beauty can come with challenges, but they are worth the effort. The lake, calm and peaceful, reflects the sky and its surroundings. It teaches us the value of stillness and how being quiet can help us find clarity and peace. Butterflies, floating lightly in the air, symbolize change and growth. They remind us that change is a natural part of life and can be beautiful. The ocean, vast and wide, represents the endless possibilities of life. It reminds us to respect the world's mysteries and its great size. Rivers, flowing across the land, sometimes slow, sometimes fast, but always moving forward, teach us that life is always changing and we must keep going, no matter the obstacles. Earth, solid and steady under our feet, shows us the importance of having a strong foundation and staying grounded in our values. Soil, hidden beneath the surface, gives life to plants, teaching us that growth often starts in unseen places. Finally, the forest, with its many trees and life, teaches us about connection. It reminds us that everything is linked together, and we all have a role to play in nature.

Researcher discuss some natural objects classified into several categories, namely flora, fauna, water elements, and earth elements. The flora categories such as flowers, wildflowers, weeds, and roses. The fauna category such as butterflies. The water element category includes oceans, rivers, and lakes. The earth elements category such as soil, Earth and forest.

This analysis is conducted from the perspective of the researcher as the reader, aligning with the concept of the *implied reader* in literary theory. The interpretations presented reflect how the researcher engages with the poems, drawing on personal responses and connections to uncover themes of self-esteem. By adopting this approach, the study acknowledges the open and subjective nature of literary texts, allowing for multiple interpretations based on the reader's experiences and insights.

The poems are analyzed not through a fixed or absolute lens but through the flexible and evolving perspective of the researcher, recognizing that different readers may derive varying meanings. This open-ended interpretation highlights the collaborative relationship between text and reader, where self-esteem is explored through metaphors, natural objects, and emotional reflections that resonate uniquely with each individual.

4.1.1 Flora

The researcher discusses several natural objects in this section, such as flowers, wildflowers, weeds, roses. Natural objects, such as weeds, flowers, and wildflowers, are in the second stanza of the same poem, *A List of Things to Come to Terms With*. These natural objects have a relation to each other. *A List of Things to Come to Terms With* is a poem about grief, loss, personal growth, and healing “When someone decides the way you grieve, it is time to let them go. Your tears weren’t designed with a stopclock in mind, you are allowed to drain the ocean of them if need be. Do not allow them to be shamed into a painful, numbing silence (Gill, 2016, p. 72).” It shows how complicated relationships can

be emotionally. It highlights how important it is to grieve on our terms so that people can deal with their feelings without feeling like they must follow other people's ideas about how long or how they should grieve. The poem also talks about how relationships can change over time, significantly how one's view of a loved one can change, and the character encourages people to take back their self-worth even though this can happen. It also thinks about how loss affects everyone, recognizing that it is a very personal and painful experience that everyone goes through. The poem makes the point that leaving someone does not always have to feel like a battle or a war and that we can find peace in the process. It also shows how important it is to acknowledge why we opened up to someone and ensure the door is shut when they leave. The poem also acknowledges that not all relationships are meant to last because they may not provide the right conditions for growth. In the end, the poem shows how life and love are temporary. It teaches that loss is a normal part of being human and that dealing with it means accepting change and closure (Gill, 2016, p. 72). However, this section focuses on the second stanza, which has the natural objects of weeds, flowers, and wildflowers. These natural objects show how our ideas about things change over time. The weeds represent rejection, the flower represents temporary love, and the wildflower represents strength and unique beauty. This shows how important self-esteem is by showing that a person's true worth is inside them, not what others think or what society expects of them.

4.1.1.1 Weeds

Natural object weeds are plants whose growth is undesirable and generally detrimental because they can inhibit the growth of other plants. In the poem,

weeds are represented as something less valuable and desirable “If he tells you that the change in you has left you a shell of the person he once loved, remind him how he once called you a wildflower and how he always said that some people see them as flowers and others as weeds. Ask him when he became the latter (Gill, 2016, p. 72)” The character is initially seen as a unique, beautiful wildflower in the poem’s context. However, as the relationship changes, she begins to be judged undesirable and compared to weeds. Comparing ourselves to weeds makes us question our worth and less confident about ourselves. However, people’s perceptions of themselves do not determine their self-worth. The idea of being seen as weeds is an encouragement or reminder not to underestimate ourselves and always remember our value, even if other people’s opinions change.

The character is compared to “weeds” in the poem, which turns something usually unwanted or ignored into a sign of strength and survival. Before, the partner saw the character as a “wildflower,” something beautiful and admired. Now, they see them as “weeds,” something that is ignored or not taken seriously. By asking “when he became the latter, (Gill, 2016, p. 72)” the character questions this negative change in how people see things, implying that the change is unfair or not noticed. In this way, the “weeds” stand for strength and growth. It shows that value comes from within, not other people’s thoughts. The characters question why they are now seen as lesser when they once held a valued place in their partner’s eyes.

4.1.1.2 Flower

The natural object flower is mentioned in the same line as the weeds: “Some people see them as flowers and others as weeds (Gill, 2016, p. 72)”. Here, the

position of the weeds and flowers is roughly the same. The flower is viewed positively, but the position of the flower can reflect an experience of being admired or rejected. In the poem, the character was once called a flower. It could indicate a time when they were valued or admired for their aesthetic qualities or for fitting a particular image of beauty or desirability that the other person appreciated. However, if the character is seen as a flower in the past, it could suggest that the admiration was more based on appearance or what others wanted rather than a deeper connection. The transition from flower to weeds reflects a rejection, just as flowers are plucked and discarded when they are no longer in bloom.

In this context, the flower represents the character's natural beauty, which is valued for being unique. The beauty, grace, and life the flower represents stay the same even when things change. By reminding the partner of this past opinion, the character emphasizes that their value is not based on what other people think but on their beauty and worth. In this way, the flower represents class, strength, and timeless beauty, no matter how others see it.

4.1.1.3 Wildflower

Although flowers are still seen as precious and beautiful, they may not have the same sense of rarity or specialness as wildflowers. Typically cultivated in gardens or controlled environments, flowers are admired for their beauty, but they are often more familiar and predictable. In the poem, a wildflower is mentioned first. Wildflowers are not intentionally grown or planted by someone. They grow naturally independently, sometimes unnoticed by anyone, making the flowerless valuable. However, wildflowers grow and bloom whenever it is time. They pose,

survive, grow, and bloom. When the flower blooms, it gives beauty to the surrounding environment, even without touching human hands. Such is the picture of a woman when she is in an environment or place where, inevitably, she has to grow, survive, and also bloom. Wildflowers symbolize the strength within women, a power that comes from within themselves, just like wildflowers stand out in nature and can be admired for their individuality.

The wildflower is not a standard, especially for showing its beauty. It is a beauty that grows naturally and only in the wild. This positive view of the flower emphasizes that being true to ourselves makes us beautiful and valuable, not fitting into a specific mold. The flower represents the character's inherent worth and beauty, which cannot be taken away, even if the partner has changed their mind. It is a reminder that the characters are still beautiful in their way, like a wildflower, no matter how other people see them now.

4.1.1.4 Roses

On the other hand, natural object roses are found in the sixth stanza. The roses symbolize love and the potential for growth in relationships. Roses are often associated with beauty and love but require the right conditions to thrive. The position of the object roses in the line "Some loves do not have the right soil for roses to grow (Gill, 2016, p. 73)" represents love, which can only thrive when the proper conditions are met. Roses, commonly associated with beauty, romance, and elegance, represent idealized and flourishing love. However, their growth depends on the "right soil," representing the emotional foundation, mutual understanding, and nurturing environment necessary for love to thrive.

Roses are known for their vibrant colors, delicate petals, and enchanting fragrances, but their beauty comes at a cost. They are delicate and require special care. Roses require fertile soil, plenty of sunlight, and consistent care to thrive. Without these conditions, they will wither or fail to bloom completely. This natural reliance on their surroundings reflects the dynamics of love in relationships. Like roses, love has the potential to bloom beautifully, but it is also susceptible to its surroundings.

The use of roses in this context emphasizes how temporary and conditional love is. It means that love cannot grow in a place without care, understanding, or compatibility, no matter how promising or beautiful it looks. The comparison suggests that relationships, like roses, need work, focus, and a strong base. Without these things, love has difficulty staying alive, let alone growing, and dies.

The line also reminds us that not all love is destined to bloom. Some relationships need what it takes to keep the love going, just like some soils are too dry, rough, or not right for roses to grow. This brings out the sad truth about love. Its beauty is undeniable, but its survival is conditional, and its development depends entirely on a nurturing and supportive environment.

4.1.2 Fauna

The researcher finds natural object butterflies in the poem entitled *Forest Set Aflame*. The poem's central theme is the vulnerability of beauty and life in the face of destruction caused by others. It compares a person to a magical, strong forest full of life and depth until someone's irresponsible or harmful actions start a terrible fire. The poem shows how external factors, like betrayal or trauma, can significantly affect even the most beautiful and strong souls (Gill, 2016, p. 48).

4.1.2.1 Butterflies

Butterflies are essential in this poem as symbols of vitality, transformation, and enchantment. In the line “Your lungs are filled with butterflies and wonder (Gill, 2016, p. 48),” butterflies evoke a fleeting sense of life, beauty, and delicacy, implying that the character has an inner world entire of wonder, fragility, and constant movement. Due to their life cycle, butterflies are often associated with transformation, and in this context, they can also represent the subject’s ability to change, grow, and be renewed.

The position of the butterflies in the character’s “lungs” highlights their role as life-sustaining elements, linking them to breathing. This implies that butterflies are essential to the subject’s identity and essence, contributing to its magical and unique qualities.

4.1.3 Water element

The researcher found water elements such as oceans, lakes, and rivers. The natural object ocean is found in the poems entitled *What You Are, What You Are Not*, and *A List of Things to Come to Terms With*. In *What You Are, What You Are Not*, the object ocean is placed in the second stanza. This poem is about taking control of our lives, accepting how complicated we are, and knowing our worth. It uses images from space and nature, like galaxies, storms, oceans, and stars, to show how big and deep the character is. The poem makes the point that all of life’s experiences, good and bad, shape that person and make them strong and unique (Gill, 2016, p. 28).

4.1.3.1 Ocean

The object ocean is described as “untamed” and “powerful”. It reflects the vastness and complexity of human life and emotion. The phrases “full of storms” and “quiet starry nights” depict an ocean as the duality of life and show how the ocean contains all aspects of life, like chaos and peace. The full storms represent life’s challenges, while the quiet, starry nights suggest moments of peace. The ocean, which is full of storms, suggests that these experiences are not easily controlled; they are wild and intense, just like the ups and downs in life. It also reflects that experience can profoundly shape us, just as the ocean can shape coastlines through erosion and storms.

The ocean’s entire starry night (peaceful moments) means that the person has been through difficulties and a moment of calm and reflection. The poem later emphasizes that the person is not “apology” or “mistake.” The ocean, which represents the person’s experience, shows that even though they have faced the storms of life, they are still worthy and valuable.

The second poem, *A List of Things to Come to Terms With*, discusses respecting one’s grief and emotional process without letting others tell us how it should go. It shows that grief is personal and should not be rushed or pushed down (Gill, 2016, p. 72). The object of the ocean found in the first stanza represents our feelings, especially grief. Just like the ocean is vast and deep, our grief can feel overwhelming and endless. The poem says it is okay to cry as much as we need, even if it feels like we are draining an ocean of tears. There is no set time limit for how long we should feel sad. The ocean shows that our emotions are complex and important, and no one should tell us when to stop feeling them.

The poem encourages us to grieve without feeling guilty or pressured to move on too quickly, reminding us that our feelings are natural and deep, like the ocean.

Moreover, the ocean concept contrasts with the idea of shame. The ocean represents freedom and irresistible force, while shame represents silence and strange emotions. The poem *A List of Things to Come to Terms With* elevates the value of authenticity and the power of emotional expression by proposing the idea of the ocean's freedom to confront shame. In addition, the natural object of the ocean represents the idea of persistence and timelessness.

4.1.3.2 Lake

The researcher found a natural object, a lake, in the poem entitled *Forest Set Aflame*. In this poem, the lake symbolizes emotional depth and inner peace. It is described as "hidden" in the forest's heart, representing a person's most private and essential emotions, a quiet, calm place full of beauty and life. As a result, the lake represents the core of someone's emotional world, something sacred and vital that others frequently overlook.

Lakes are naturally occurring sources of life. They provide water for plants and animals, contribute to ecosystems, and reflect the world around them in their stillness. Lakes are alive beneath their surface, supporting various kinds of life. This relates to the poem's imagery of the lake at the heart of the forest, quietly supporting everything around it while also representing a person's ability to reflect and hold deep emotions.

4.1.3.3 River

The researcher finds natural objects and rivers in the poem *From the River Banks*. In this poem, the natural objects are mentioned in several stanzas. In the

first stanza, “The river has taught me more about my soul than any person I have ever known (Gill, 2016, p. 82)” the river can symbolize self-reflection and self-discovery. Just as one can see their image in the water, the river mirrors our emotions and thoughts. When the character looks at the river, they might reflect on their own life, discovering aspects of themselves they had not noticed before. This self-reflection leads to deeper self-awareness and understanding.

The river teaches the characters about their soul in a way that people may be unable to. While human relationships can provide support and insights, the river represents a constant, natural source of wisdom. The character may find that observing the river’s flow, changes, and resilience helps them better understand their emotions and experiences than conversations with others.

In the third stanza, the natural object river is portrayed as unapologetic and confident in its action. “I have never heard the river apologize for taking something that did not belong to her (Gill, 2016, p. 82)” Suggests that the river takes what it needs without guilt or regret, reinforcing its natural power. A river carves its path through the land, forming valleys and changing the landscape without anyone’s permission. It does not pause to apologize for its strength or the changes it causes in its environment. Similarly, the river represents living purposefully and confidently in the poem, taking what is necessary without self-doubt. This idea encourages the character to live without apologizing for their desires and actions, illustrating that humans, like the river, can confidently and continuously claim their path. In nature, the river is often seen as a force that reshapes the Earth, pushing forward in the face of obstacles, and this reflects the strength of the individual who moves through life with the same boldness.

The natural object river, which appears in the fourth stanza, represents patience and emotional strength, with no signs of weakness or regret. “I have never heard the river cry or feel bad about herself when things do not go her way” shows how challenging the river is. In nature, rivers face problems like rocks, droughts, and floods, but they keep flowing and find ways to deal with them. When bad things happen, the river does not cry or feel sad. Instead, it flows around things in its way and keeps going. This shows what the character thinks about how strong people are. Do not feel sorry for ourselves or regret what we did when things do not go as planned. Instead, keep moving forward. The river in nature represents the ability to persevere in adversity, adapting to obstacles rather than being stopped by them. The poem suggests that, like the river, people should face challenges with calm determination, refusing to be overwhelmed by the circumstances. It teaches that emotional strength comes from moving forward in the face of challenges, just as the river never stops on its journey, regardless of the obstacles.

In the final stanza, the natural object river is a force that takes what it wants and overcomes anything in its path, emphasizing its status as a symbol of strength and commitment. The phrase “The river takes what she wants, does what she wants, and washes over anything that stands in her way (Gill, 2016, p. 83)” highlights the river’s constant power in nature. It does not seek permission or compromise. It simply flows, shaping the land to its will. The poem expresses the idea of living purposefully and clearly, expressing one’s needs and desires without hesitation. The river’s unstoppable force in nature reflects the human ability to pursue goals with determination and confidence while overcoming obstacles with

resilience. The river does not stop or retreat. It continues to move forward, shaping the world around it. In this way, the river in the poem teaches the reader to pursue their desires with solid commitment, take what is necessary, and overcome any obstacles. Like the river, people are encouraged to maintain focus and determination while constantly adapting and progressing toward their goals.

4.1.4 Earth element

In this section, the researcher discuss natural objects, soil, Earth and forest in the poems *A List of Things to Come to Terms With* and *Natural Lesson*.

4.1.4.1 Soil

The first natural object to discuss is soil, found in the sixth stanza. The position of the object soil in the line “Some loves do not have the right soil for roses to grow (Gill, 2016, p. 73)” represents the foundation or environment required for love to thrive. In nature, soil is the primary medium that provides nutrients, stability, and a support system for plant growth. In the context of this line, soil metaphorically represents the underlying conditions required for love to flourish, such as emotional compatibility, trust, understanding, and support.

The use of soil in this line emphasizes that not all relationships have the proper “foundation” to support love. Love, like plants, cannot thrive in infertile or unsuitable soil. The metaphor implies that love is not self-sustaining. It depends on external factors, as roses require growing rich and nurturing soil.

The poem emphasizes the importance of the environment in shaping relationships by identifying soil as a determining factor in the growth of roses (a symbol of love). If the soil is barren or deficient, the roses (love) cannot bloom, implying that love’s survival and success depend on the right conditions and

mutual effort. This interpretation highlights the conditional nature of love and the importance of creating an ideal setting for it to grow and develop.

4.1.4.2 Earth

In the poem entitled *Natural Lessons*, the researcher found a natural object, the Earth. This poem uses natural imagery to encourage self-acceptance, resilience, and personal growth. It compares human experiences with elements of the natural world, illustrating how the sky, moon, stars, and Earth continue their cycles without apology or hesitation. Just as the sky changes shades, the moon hides, the stars shine regardless of others' desires, and the Earth evolves continuously, the poem urges readers to embrace their emotions, take time for themselves, shine unapologetically, and keep growing.

The fourth stanza focuses on the symbolization of the natural object, the Earth, a powerful metaphor for resilience, progress, and the natural course of life. Earth is the centre of all life in nature, and it is always moving and changing. Things like tectonic shifts, seasonal changes, and how plants and animals live their lives keep ecosystems going and changing. Earth moves, grows, and changes all the time. This shows that life is always powered by something that lasts and never stops. This means that life, like the Earth, is constantly changing, and to do well, you need to be persistent and adaptable.

The poem uses Earth as a natural object to show how strong humans can be. Earth is constantly moving, growing, and changing, even though there are problems. This shows us that we should also keep moving forward in our lives. Things on Earth do not have to be just right for them to move. It just moves forward, changes, and gets used to the place where it is. Also, people should be

willing to go with the flow of life and know that problems often come with progress and growth. It proves that the Earth always does the same thing. The fact that it does not change its path based on what someone wants or what is happening to them backs up the idea that problems should not stop changes and growth.

People should look at how the Earth can change and grow. Life's ability to start over is like the Earth's ability to recover from problems. This poem is a good reminder that even when things go wrong, sticking with something will help you grow. The poem shows that even though change can be difficult, it is necessary for personal growth. It encourages us to accept that life is constantly changing and find inspiration in how the Earth changes.

In this context, the natural object Earth reminds us that life is ever-changing. Like the Earth, individuals should continue to shift, grow, and evolve. Life is constantly in motion, and personal development is an ongoing process that requires embracing change. The poem encourages us to take this lesson to heart and keep moving forward despite the circumstances because growth is essential to the human journey. Using the natural object Earth as a metaphor for life, the poem reminds us that personal development requires resilience in the face of challenges and the willingness to adapt and evolve with the ever-changing flow of life. Individuals should recognize that their journey, like the Earth's, requires patience, persistence, and adaptation.

4.1.4.3 Forest

Furthermore, the researcher found a natural object forest in the poem entitled *Forest Set Aflame*. In this poem, the natural object forest represents the character's

inner self. Forests in nature are full of life, growth, and beauty. They are full of trees, plants, and animals, all contributing to a beautiful and dynamic environment. The poem represents the same complexity and abundance but is contained within the character's emotions and soul. It is described as magical and alive, with "butterflies and magic" in the lungs and "the souls of a thousand ancient trees" living beneath the skin. These images show that the character's inner world is a whole of wonder, strength, and wisdom, just as a natural forest is full of life and energy.

In nature, forests are intrinsically connected to the Earth. Tree roots dig deep into the soil while branches reach the sky. This natural balance makes forests solid and long-lasting, but it also requires everything to work together for survival. Similarly, the poem implies that the character's inner self is beautiful and deeply connected, possibly to memories, emotions, or other people. The phrase "ancient trees" could represent the character's wisdom, experiences, or history that developed over time, much like a forest grows slowly but steadily over the years.

Forest fires are destructive, but they could have another purpose. They clear up deceased plants to make room for new growth. The ashes left behind can enrich the soil, allowing the forest to heal and regenerate. Although the poem focuses on the devastation caused by the fire, the natural role of forests implies the possibility of renewal. Even after experiencing harm or loss, the character may eventually find a way to rebuild and grow stronger, much like a forest that regenerates after a fire.

The forest in this poem symbolizes much more than just beauty and life. It reflects the character's emotional depth, resilience, and vulnerability. Like a

natural forest, the inner self is complex and robust but vulnerable to external harm. Its place in nature reminds us that forests, like people, endure, grow, and sometimes recover in the face of great difficulty. Using the forest as a metaphor, the poem captures the human spirit's richness while emphasizing its delicate balance of strength and fragility.

4.2 The Relation of the Natural Objects to the Symbolism of Self-esteem

In this section, the researcher, as the implied reader, is exploring how these natural objects connect to self-esteem. According to Cherry (2022) Self-esteem is a positive or negative orientation towards oneself, an overall evaluation of one's worth or value. It is similar to having respect for oneself, and it describes the level of confidence one has in one's abilities and qualities. The section then discusses about the relation between the natural object in the previous sub-chapter with self-esteem. There are natural objects weeds, flower, wildflower, roses, butterflies, ocean, lake, river, soil, earth, and forest. These natural objects offer metaphors that align with key elements of self-esteem, such as resilience, transformation, stability, and self-love, showing how nature can inspire and enhance our sense of worth and confidence.

4.2.1 Weeds

In this way, the "weeds" stand for strength and growth. It is associated with strength and growth because weeds frequently grow in abandoned areas. They need no special treatment to grow bigger. Therefore, they represent strength and growth since they sustain themselves independently in an abandoned area. Weeds also represent subjective judgment since they have no specific use and are

considered useless plants. In the context of self-esteem, weeds reflect personal resilience in which someone needs to endure criticism and external judgment.

Moreover, weeds also represent that someone's judgment does not define one's value. The external factors can challenge self-esteem. To neglect the external factors that challenge self-esteem, weeds become the item that symbolizes the reclamation of self-worth.

According to Digle (2014), the article entitled *Learning to Love Your Inner Weeds: Could You Accept Them Instead of Pull Them Out?* focuses on mental health and therapy services that aim to help individuals with issues like eating disorders, body image concerns, anxiety, depression, and trauma. This article uses the metaphor of weeds in a garden to represent personal flaws or struggles. Rather than trying to remove these "weeds," the article encourages readers to accept and love them as part of their personal growth and healing process. It highlights self-acceptance and empathy, providing a therapeutic approach to developing healthier relationships with oneself.

The metaphor of weeds as symbols of strength and growth connects strongly with the themes explored in the Kate Daigle Counseling article. Weeds grow naturally in some places that do not get any special care. They symbolise strength and flexibility, like people who get through hard times and grow. The fact that they can care for themselves shows how strong they are in dealing with criticism and judgment from others, which are common causes of low self-esteem. Also, the idea of weeds as "useless" plants shows how subjective judgment is important for determining value. It reminds us that other people's opinions do not determine our worth. When discussing self-esteem, using the weeds as a metaphor helps you

reclaim your worth by focusing on your growth instead of getting approval from others. This fits with the idea in therapy that you should accept your flaws and learn to love yourself.

4.2.2 Flower

The natural object flower is a powerful symbol of the character's natural beauty, emphasizing the value of self-esteem based on individuality. It shows that actual value comes from recognizing one's unique qualities rather than seeking external validation. Just as a flower blooms uniquely, the character learns to value their intrinsic worth despite societal expectations. The relation between the flower and self-esteem highlights that personal strength and timeless beauty come from self-acceptance and love. Bradley (2023) defines self-confidence as "belief in one's abilities, qualities, and worth." It helps people to face life's challenges with resilience. As a result, the flower becomes a metaphor for self-empowerment, representing how accepting one's uniqueness can lead to a deep sense of self-worth, regardless of how others perceive it.

Moreover, natural objects and flowers often have deeper meanings beyond their beauty. These meanings have to do with self-worth and inner beauty. In art and literature, a flower can stand for a character's natural beauty, praised for being unique instead of fitting in with social norms. This idea is similar to self-esteem because it says that a person's value comes from how they see their beauty and worth, not from what others say. A flower might stand for class, strength, and timeless beauty, all of which last no matter what others think of them (Boeckmann, 2024). From this point of view, people are encouraged to be themselves and understand that their worth is not based on what other people

think but on their qualities. In the same way a flower blooms on its own, people can enhance their self-esteem by recognizing the unique things they bring to the world.

4.2.3 Wildflower

The symbolization of the natural object wildflower can enhance self-esteem because it shows how unique, strong, and beautiful each person is. It blooms and grows independently, without anyone caring for or growing it. This independence shows that self-worth comes from the inside and does not depend on what others say about us. As 9cv9 (2024) says, “Your self-worth is rooted in your intrinsic qualities, your character, your kindness, and your authenticity, not just how others perceive your achievements.” Realizing this can help people feel good about their skills and worth, even when they have problems or do not have anyone to help them.

The wildflower enhances self-esteem by showing how beautiful it is to be ourselves. There is something beautiful about wildflowers that makes them stand out. The fact that they grow in their shape makes them unique. People are more likely to be themselves and understand that they do not have to be like everyone else to be liked and valued. Awareness of the beauty in what makes them unique can give someone a stronger and more positive sense of self.

Another characteristic that wildflowers relate to self-esteem is their toughness. Wildflowers still do well and bloom even though they grow in wild and unpredictable places. Being resilient means dealing with problems and adapting to new situations. If someone thinks they can get through hard times and grow from

them, they see themselves as stronger, which can greatly enhance their self-esteem.

The wildflower shows that someone is valuable alone, not because others notice or appreciate them. This idea in the poem reminds the characters, and by extension, the readers, that how other people see them does not change their value. Even if someone changes how they see them, they will always have value. Realizing this can help people keep a stable and positive view of themselves, no matter what others think or what is happening. People can build a healthier and more confident sense of who they are by internalizing the meaning of the wildflower: its independence, authenticity, resilience, and unchanging value. The wildflower is telling us that we are strong, unique, and valuable like we are. Knowing this can make us feel better about our self-worth.

4.2.4 Roses

Roses are often seen as symbols of beauty, romance, and elegance, representing love. But just like roses need the “right soil” to grow, love needs the right emotional foundation, things like mutual understanding, care, and trust to thrive. Similarly, a person’s self-esteem depends on the emotional foundation they build within themselves and in their relationships. When someone takes the time to nurture self-love, care, and understanding like the right soil, their self-esteem is more likely to grow strong. This shows how a healthy, supportive environment whether within ourselves or in our relationships helps us feel valued and improve our self-worth.

4.2.5 Butterflies

Butterflies' transformation from caterpillar to chrysalis to butterfly represents personal development and resilience. This transformation can inspire the subject to view their life journey as progress and evolution, creating a sense of accomplishment. As people overcome personal challenges and emerge more substantial, like butterflies, they recognize that their self-worth is not fixed and can grow and improve with effort and time. This transformational process reinforces a sense of personal worth and helps people accept their flaws and imperfections as part of their unique development, enhancing their overall self-esteem (Longstaff, 2023).

Butterflies represent beauty and uniqueness, which are essential for developing a positive self-image. Their beautiful, colourful wings and graceful movements make people think about how beautiful their differences are and encourage them to be proud of the things that make them unique. People who are drawn to butterflies may understand their worth and value and know that their uniqueness should be cherished rather than hidden. Butterfly wings' freedom and lightness make me think that self-esteem includes personal growth and expressing oneself freely and honestly, which enhances confidence and self-worth.

Also, butterflies represent hope and renewal, suitable for our self-esteem. When they are around, people often feel hopeful and sure that even when things are bad, good things can happen. Many people find this meaning helpful when things get tough. It can make them stronger and more determined. The thought that butterflies grow after being weak as caterpillars is similar to how people get through hard times. This comparison can help people see their problems as

chances to start over and change, enhancing their self-esteem and confidence in their ability to get through challenging situations.

Additionally, butterflies' short lives teach us to enjoy the present and find joy in the moments that pass quickly. This point of view tells people to think about their strengths and accomplishments instead of what they think are their flaws. Researchers have found that people can show gratitude by recognizing how beautiful and short life is. This natural object has been related to higher self-esteem (Unanue et al., 2019). Embracing this mindset enables people to shift their focus from external validation to internal fulfilment, resulting in a stronger and more lasting sense of self-worth.

4.2.6 Ocean

As a natural object, the ocean stands for healing and experiences that enhance self-esteem. In the same way, the ocean's rough waves shape coastlines, and life's challenges shape people by teaching them to be strong and flexible. We can all overcome hard times and become more assertive on the other side. Awareness of this link raises self-esteem by encouraging people to see problems as opportunities to learn and grow instead of setbacks.

The poetic metaphor of an “ocean of tears” emphasizes this metaphor, which suggests that feelings, including grief, are normal and necessary. Letting ourselves cry while the ocean rises and falls shows how important it is for personal growth to express your feelings. Honouring their feelings without feeling bad about it enhances their self-esteem by recognizing and validating their feelings. The ocean’s size reminds us that our feelings, no matter how strong, are part of a more significant process that helps us heal and get stronger.

Furthermore, according to Kustelski's article (2024), the ocean's constant movement shows the importance of being strong and open to change. Its tides represent a continuous process of self-improvement and adaptation. In *Your Soul is a River*, the natural object represented by the ocean, encourages people to embrace their uniqueness and inner strength by following the ocean's rhythm. This perspective allows people to face life's challenges confidently, knowing that every experience, like every wave, helps them grow. Here, the ocean is a potent metaphor for building self-esteem through toughness, being honest about our feelings, and changing ourselves.

4.2.7 Lake

The natural object lake highlights the importance of appreciating one's emotions to build and strengthen self-esteem. According to Antonopoulou (2024) states that "Integrating self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy enables individuals to navigate their social environment effectively, rendering emotional intelligence (EI) a precious asset in both personal and professional domains." This quote highlights how integrating critical components of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy, can help people navigate their social environments more effectively.

Being able to do these things is good for our mental health and helps us do well at work and in our personal lives. The metaphor of the lake, which shows how important it is to value our feelings, shows how this quote is related to self-esteem. Lake's calm depth and reflection show how important it is to know and understand our feelings. Emotional intelligence starts with being aware of yourself, which can only be done through this process. A big part of building self-

esteem is being aware of your feelings. They help you understand yourself and your needs better, like how we love the peace and depth of the lake and how we love our feelings. It helps people feel good about themselves and keep their emotions in check.

Self-control is important for people who know how they feel. People who are in charge of their emotions can deal with stress, solve problems, and stay emotionally stable as the lake does. When people can handle their feelings, their self-esteem goes up. This makes people feel more sure of themselves and accountable for their actions. In addition, the lake's role as a mother to all living things has something to do with motivation. People are more likely to improve themselves and reach their personal goals if they understand and value their emotions. Having a sense of purpose and drive helps us feel good about ourselves and boosts our self-esteem.

Finally, empathy is an aspect of emotional intelligence that involves understanding not only one's own emotions but also the emotions of others. The lake's calmness reflects the world, demonstrating how understanding one's emotions can lead to greater empathy and connection. This empathetic connection enhances social interactions and self-esteem by building deeper relationships founded on mutual respect and understanding. Furthermore, valuing one's emotions, as represented by the lake, is essential for developing self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy. These characteristics are essential for emotional intelligence, which (Antonopoulou, 2024) describes as a valuable asset for successful life navigation. Individuals who develop these aspects of emotional

intelligence improve their ability to manage social situations and their self-esteem, leading to a more fulfilled and successful life.

4.2.8 River

Kloppers (2024) states, “When individuals rely on themselves for guidance and support, they develop the confidence to make independent decisions and take responsibility for the outcomes.” This quote relates to the symbolism of the natural object of the river for guidance and support. The river represents self-reflection, confidence, and purposeful living, essential for developing self-reliance. Individuals who take the time to reflect on their emotions, actions, and experiences, like the river, can better trust themselves. Because they trust each other, people can make decisions independently without seeking approval from others. When they reflect on themselves, people can see their strengths, understand their needs, and ensure that their actions align with their values.

Although there are many problems along the way, like rocks and environmental changes, the river’s journey continues. This is a powerful metaphor for how people can deal with the problems they face in life. Like the river, self-reflection helps people learn to handle problems calmly, firmly, and determinedly. Of course, they know that problems are a part of life and that getting through them is a big part of growing. People who think this way are more likely to own up to their mistakes because they know their decisions have effects.

Thinking about our lives and feelings can help us understand ourselves better, making us feel more confident. They can handle life's challenges better because they listen to their thoughts instead of what other people tell them to do. People become more independent when they learn to trust their judgment and skills. As

they depend on themselves, they have more faith in their ability to handle issues, grow, and learn from their mistakes. Being independent helps them not only make decisions but also deal with the outcomes of those decisions. This makes them emotionally stronger and gives them more confidence. Finally, the river's journey shows how important it is to have self-confidence, be independent, and take responsibility for building strong emotional and lasting self-esteem.

4.2.9 Soil

Soil symbolizes the underlying conditions necessary for love and self-esteem to flourish. For roses to grow well, the soil must be full of nutrients. Similarly, a supportive and healthy environment is suitable for our self-esteem. This comparison shows that self-esteem, like love, does not last independently; it needs outside factors like trust, understanding, support, and emotional compatibility to keep going.

Regarding self-esteem, soil refers to positive outside influences and self-care habits we regularly practice. Healthy “soil” can be the support you get from important relationships, supportive feedback, and a sense of belonging. Srinivasan (2022) stated, “The main component of a healthy environment for self-esteem is that it needs to be nurturing.” It suggests that self-esteem does not grow in isolation but instead thrives in environments where people feel valued, understood, and encouraged. A nurturing environment offers emotional support, including love, empathy, and encouragement. Furthermore, such an environment provides a safe space where people can express themselves without fear of being judged.

In addition, the metaphor shows how internal and external forces interact. Support from others is important, but the person must also “the right soil,” which means they have to work to become resilient and compassionate with themselves. The soil symbolizes how one’s environment and inner self are linked when one realizes that self-esteem grows from caring relationships and taking responsibility for one’s actions. Ultimately, this view of soil boosts self-esteem by proving that everyone deserves a good base. It makes people want to find or make supportive places and help them grow. Soil is a reminder of the things needed for self-esteem and how everyone is responsible for ensuring those things happen.

4.2.10 Earth

Using Earth’s natural objects as a metaphor for qualities and lessons people can learn to build a positive sense of self can help enhance self-esteem. The Earth is a powerful symbol for building self-esteem because it is strong, flexible, and able to connect with others. It shows the importance of keeping going even when things get hard because it can withstand quakes, storms, and other natural disasters. It heals and grows back, just like Earth does. People can learn to see problems as chances to get better and learn. When we look at things this way, we stop focusing on our failures and start focusing on our strengths, which are suitable for building our self-esteem. Being resilient is a skill that people can work on by realizing that they can handle life’s problems just like Earth does.

The Earth is constantly changing and growing, which is another way that constant personal growth can help boost self-esteem. The fact that ecosystems can grow back and the Earth’s seasons show us that growth is a natural process that never ends. People in this cycle are more likely to see their journey as ongoing

and see setbacks not as failures but as chances to learn and grow. This way of thinking removes the need to be perfect and helps us focus on our strengths, which are suitable for our self-esteem. People can have a more positive and helpful view of themselves when they put progress over perfection. Adopting a healthier mindset means accepting that we are not perfect, setting goals we can reach, and practicing self-love. This method makes it easier to deal with unrealistic expectations, which leads to a better view of oneself. Williams (2023) says that focusing on progress instead of perfection builds confidence and a sense of having done well over time. Like the beautiful but flawed things in nature, our growth is about accepting change and evolving instead of demanding perfection. This lets us love ourselves just the way we are.

Another important lesson from Earth that can enhance self-esteem is adapting. The Earth is constantly changing, with climates and landscapes shifting. This shows us how important it is to be flexible in our lives. People gain confidence in handling different situations when they learn to accept change and uncertainty. Being able to adapt helps people feel more confident in their abilities, making them think they can handle the challenges of life. Rather than seeing change as a threat, seeing it as a chance to grow makes us feel better about our self-worth.

The Earth also shows us how important it is to have a purpose and connect to other people. These are both good things for our self-esteem. Everyone and everything in the world is vital to the ecosystem because it depends on them. People feel like they belong and have a purpose when they realize everything is connected. This boosts their sense of self-worth. Connecting with something bigger than ourselves makes us value what we do and who we are more, which is

good for our self-esteem. By learning this lesson, people can find value in their relationships and the difference they make.

Being able to keep doing what it is doing is a good example of how working hard and waiting can improve our self-esteem. Mountains slowly rising from the ground and rivers slowly carving their paths show that big goals take time and much hard work. This determination shows how important it is to grow as people over time. Being patient and dedicated helps us feel good about our worth, which reminds us that sticking with something for a long time often pays off.

The Earth makes us feel better about our self-worth because it stands for strength, growth, connection, persistence, and flexibility. By remembering these lessons, people can develop a strong, adaptable, and sure sense of self. The Earth is a metaphor for our growth because it shows us that life is a journey that never ends and is full of chances to connect, grow, and succeed. If we work on these traits, there is a strong connection between how we feel about ourselves and how our lives go.

4.2.11 Forest

As a metaphor for self-esteem, the forest highlights the significance of patience in the face of adversity. Just as a forest survives extreme weather, wildfires, and natural disturbances, an individual's self-esteem can be shaped by challenges and setbacks. Even though they are hard, these external problems make us more substantial on the inside, like how a forest gets more potent after a storm. This helps people remember that their self-esteem is strong even when things go wrong, and it can get even stronger as they learn to deal with problems. People should see difficulties as chances to grow and start over instead of failures, just

like the forest does when things go wrong. In this way, the forest metaphor supports a growth mindset, meaning self-esteem changes as we go through life.

The forest also stands for complexity and integration, which shows the range of self-esteem. There are many trees in the forest. It is a vast ecosystem where everything works together to keep things in balance. Self-esteem is also not based on a single trait but on a person's experiences, characteristics, and relationships that contribute to their sense of self-worth (Leary, M. R., & Tangney, 2011) cited in Carolin J Showers, Christopher P Ditzfeld (2018, p. 1). Realizing the different parts of their lives, like their strengths, weaknesses, past experiences, and possible futures, can help them see themselves as complex and valuable, like how a forest has many different types of trees. Knowing this makes us more aware of our self-esteem, how complicated we are, and what affects our sense of worth.

Furthermore, the forest metaphor develops self-love and recognizes vulnerability as a natural part of growth. A forest constantly changes, with old trees dying, new shoots growing, and the landscape evolving. Individuals can also learn to accept their imperfections and mistakes, recognizing that they are not faults but somewhat necessary components of self-development. When people go through bad things or fail, they can rebuild their self-esteem, just like a forest can grow after losing something. The forest as a metaphor shows that it is okay to be weak and flawed sometimes because these flaws give us chances to heal and change. People can enhance their self-esteem by loving themselves and accepting their flaws.

This is how the forest represents endurance and how self-esteem development is an ongoing, changing process. People can feel better about their worth by

recognizing how complicated their journey is and realizing that problems are often chances to grow. The forest shows us that building self-esteem is an ongoing process. Like a forest, people can change, adapt, and renew their sense of who they are. Lastly, the forest metaphor tells people to see their growth potential no matter where they are on their path and to value the balance of strength, vulnerability, and resilience that makes them unique.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The goal of this study is to find out how the natural objects in *Your Soul is a River* enhance reader self-esteem. This analysis is conducted from the perspective of the researcher as the reader, aligning with the concept of the implied reader in literary theory. The poem uses weeds as a natural object to show how strong people are and how they can survive even in challenging situations. The poem uses the weed as a metaphor to remind people that what other people think does not define their worth. Instead, it helps people accept themselves and reclaim their worth by helping them grow and be strong. The flower in the poem is a natural object that stands for beauty that lasts, individuality, and value that comes from within. The character in the poem beats societal expectations and outside judgments by recognizing their unique qualities. This shows how important self-esteem is for accepting yourself and empowering yourself. The images of wildflowers enhance self-esteem by showing how important it is to be true to oneself. The wildflower's ability to stay alive and grow despite problems encourages people to be themselves and see their worth, no matter what others think or how society sets standards. The natural object roses, just as roses need the right soil to grow, self-esteem thrives when nurtured with care, love, and a supportive environment, helping individuals build a strong sense of self-worth. The butterflies are natural objects that show how the subjects can grow and renew themselves even when things go wrong in the outside world. The bright and beautiful way they look makes the reader want to embrace their uniqueness and

see their growth as a source of strength. People feel more confident when they remember that they can get through tough times and that their sense of self-worth changes over time. This leads to higher self-esteem.

In the second stanza, the ocean stands for how big and complicated our feelings and experiences are. The poem uses the ocean to show how strong, persistent, and emotionally deep it is. It wants readers to accept their flaws, value their feelings, and see their struggles as chances to grow. This view enhances self-esteem by acknowledging that everyone is different and has worth based on their experiences. The natural object lake represents the center of a person's emotional world. People can build self-control, purpose, and empathy by understanding that their emotions are necessary and life-giving. This builds a strong base for self-esteem. The natural object river is a metaphor for self-reflection, confidence, and strength in the poem. Its flowing nature is like the process of finding out more about ourselves. It makes us think about our feelings and strengths. The river teaches us the value of persistence and emotional strength by being patient and flexible. It also shows us that problems are chances to grow. Like the unstoppable force of the river, this metaphor enhances self-esteem by encouraging people to be independent, trust themselves, and work hard to reach their goals.

The natural object of soil represents the environment and conditions necessary for self-esteem. "Some loves do not have the right soil for roses to grow (Gill, 2016, p. 73)" is a figure of speech that means love and self-esteem need a caring and supportive environment to grow. In the same way, soil gives plants nutrients and stability. Self-esteem needs support, trust, and understanding from others, as well as strength and care for oneself. The poem uses the natural object Earth as a

metaphor for resilience, progress, and the natural flow of life to enhance self-esteem. The Earth's constant movement, growth, and adaptation show how life changes as it faces problems. The Earth does not stop to wait for perfect conditions. It keeps going and renews itself, showing how important it is to be strong and adaptable. This point of view encourages a positive view of oneself by pointing out that personal growth is a lifelong process that starts with being patient, persistent, and accepting oneself. . The natural object forest is a metaphor for renewal that shows how problems and setbacks can help you grow and become stronger. The character's self-esteem changes as they go through hard times, like how a forest grows back after a fire. This shows that change and growth are standard parts of being human.

5.2 Suggestions

Future research could investigate the symbolic role of other natural elements not covered in this study, such as animals, deserts, and mountains. These objects may have different symbolic meanings that add to self-esteem, strength, and growth literary themes. For example, mountains can stand for toughness and endurance, deserts for solitude and self-reflection, and animals for bravery, loyalty, or the ability to adapt. How these elements are used in poetry and other types of literature might help researchers learn more about how natural imagery shows and affects emotional and mental growth. This study would add to the field of literary analysis by showing how nature can be used as a mirror for the human experience in subtle ways.

Looking at natural metaphors through the lens of different cultural perspectives is another possible direction for future research. Different cultures

may use forests, rivers, or oceans as symbols to show their beliefs, values, or world views. In one culture, a forest might stand for mystery and spirituality. In another, it might mean danger or the unknown. Comparative studies could help us understand how cultural settings affect how self-esteem and personal growth are portrayed in literature. They could also show us the common and unique ways nature is used as a literary device across cultures. The results of this research would help us learn more about how natural imagery affects our emotions.

A multidisciplinary approach that combines literary analysis and psychological theories might also help us learn more about how natural metaphors affect people. To find out how these metaphors change readers' feelings and thoughts, psychologists could use ideas like "resilience-building" and "self-actualization." Researchers could learn more if they combined literary and psychological points of view by looking at the relationship between poetic representations of nature and how they help people grow emotionally. This multidisciplinary approach would improve literary studies and help us learn more about how poetic and symbolic language can help people's minds.

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