A Stylistic Study of Theme of Ultra-Earthliness in Wordsworth's Selected Poetry

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Abstract

Linguistic manipulation in the service of theme of ultra-earthliness in Wordsworth's selected poetry is the ultimate end of the study. The motivation behind this study is the spiritual stance of the poetry clothed in the stylistic craftsmanship of the poet that reminds postmodern individuals: ishrat-e- qatrah hai darya mai'n fana ho jana i.e. One's ultimate pleasure lies in merging and unifying with Allah (Ghalib, 2010). Mainly, the paradigm of qualitative research has been employed along with quantitative approach. Sampling has been collected through the selected poems with hand picking technique (Non-probability sampling technique) using textual analysis as a tool. Computational and descriptive statistics techniques have been used to present analyze and interpret the data. The study concludes that Wordsworth's poetry revolves around manipulation of humanizing metaphor, nature imagery, oxymoron and symbolism leading to theme of ultra-earthliness and is an antidote for fever and fret of the day as the frustration and depression of the postmodern individuals can be alleviated through his/her reconciliation with nature. His poetry is a spiritual healing as reading Daffodils; an Eastern reader starts 'Dhamal' (dancing in ecstasy) with the rhythmic movements of the flowers. Humanizing metaphor and nature imagery are key stylistic features that foregrounds ultra-earthliness in the poetry which have been exploited more than oxymoron and symbolism. The postmodern who is far away from religion and moral values can find betterment by developing spiritual understanding of life is the implication of the study.

Keywords: Linguistic Manipulation, Humanizing Metaphor, Ultra-Earthliness, Wordsworth, Stylistics

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1. Introduction

We can neither explain literature in depth without the close study of language, nor explain language in depth without the close study of literature (Leech (2000). In countries, like Pakistan, it has been observed that students feel difficulty in recognizing linguistic features relevant to aesthetic quality and thematic value of a literary text. If the learners, in such countries, manage to name the manipulated feature, they cannot express its literary significance. While, stylistic analysis is helpful in developing interpretive skills and stimulating reading between the lines through linguistic orientation (Carter, 1996).

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The stimulating problem arising researchers' curiosity to conduct this study is to identify the linguistic determinants of theme of ultra-earthliness in Wordsworth's poetry as various studies have been conducted stylistically on various themes on different writers in different genres yet the corner of Wordsworth's poetry was yet unexplored in this perspective. Moreover, the linguistic oriented study of the mystic poetry has special appeal unravelling the poet's ultra-earthly, transcendental and pantheistic ideology to conduct the study. So, this study is an attempt to explore the subjective and spiritual realm of the poetry on rather objective and systemic grounds via symbolism, nature imagery, oxymoron and humanizing metaphor.

1.1.1 Objectives of the Study

The study has been conducted under the following objectives:

i.   To know the natural objects mostly used and mystified by the poet
ii.   To study the theme of ultra-earthliness in terms of the poet's philosophy of pantheism-cum-mysticism
iii.   To identify the tropes/ linguistic manipulation contributing to the theme under study

1.1.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

i.   Which particular objects and symbols does Wordsworth employ in his poetry for the theme under study?
ii.   What type of metaphor has been exploited by the poet for the theme of ultra-earthliness?
iii.   Why does the poet manipulate humanizing metaphor, nature imagery, symbolism and oxymoron in his poetry?

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1.2 Operational Definitions

1.2.1 Ultra-Earthliness

Earthliness means relating to earth or its characteristics (Farlix, 2003). It means earthly as possible or imaginable as well (Merriam-Webster, 1828). So, ultra-earthliness means to be pertaining to the unimaginable and intangible that is mystification and idealization of nature in the service of spiritualism. It is to hear the unheard and listen to the silent voice of nature as *sakoot-e- lala o gul se kalam peda kr* (Iqbal, 2002).

So, discussions about mysticism regarding pre-existence, eternity, innocence, solitude and wonders of nature will fall under the umbrella of ultra-earthliness in this study.

1.2.2 Humanizing Metaphor

Humanizing metaphor is termed as the allocation of human characteristics to objects (Leech, 1969). Here, in the study, humanizing metaphor will be used in the sense of fusing soul into natural object and to the dead in terms of its mystification. Human soul keeps waiting for union with Supreme Soul before death (Barry 1999).

So, the same could be concluded as the undercurrent of the study and Wordsworth's poetry if we study it closely through its linguistic manipulation. The dead, shown living will also fall into this category of metaphor in the study.

1.2.3 Animism

Animism (technique) is the animate representation of non-human beings. (Leech, 1969). In the study, it is termed as the existence of God in objects of nature. To epitomize, through the technique of humanizing metaphor, nature imagery, oxymoron and symbolism, this study has been engineered to unmask the theme of ultra-earthliness through stylistics paradigm.

2. Literature Review

Stylistics can be categorized as attributional and literary one. The focus of literary stylistics lies on aesthetic appreciation while attributional one's on linguistic description such as frequency of certain linguistic items to explore the writer's linguistic use that becomes his/her linguistic 'thumbprint' (Leech ,2000).

Literary stylistics links linguistics with literary criticism. Further in the study, it is pointed out that literary stylistics investigates thematic as well as aesthetic values which are produced through linguistic exploitation, which in response, show the writer's attitude. This study covers foregrounding, deviation and repetition to highlight the theme of cat in the rain (Zhang, 2010).

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On the other hand, semantic as well as graphological deviations have been discussed on stylistic basis. The authors, further, have explored that T.S Eliot's works are rich in foregrounding by pointing out the writer's art of omitting punctuation marks, use of parallel structures, unconventional expression. They have discussed foregrounding by using an agenda of literary stylistics. To summarize, their major focus is on linguistic deviations and foregrounding. They put special focus on semantic and graphological deviations in the poem in their study (Baseer, Alvi & Zafran, 2011).

Stylistic features of the story incorporated by the pen of Pritchett have been examined. The authors, after giving analysis of stylistic features, disclosed the agenda behind this stylistic study of the story. The role of linguistic patterns has been explored as how these patterns affect the target audience to derive literary meanings of the text. They concluded that the story writer conveys feelings of the fictional characters convincingly through the use of adjectives, metaphors and personification majorly (Bilal, Laraib, Mustafa, Iqbal & Kundi 2012).

While a collective study, has analyzed the role of metaphor in a literary text. The authors considered metaphor to be the major feature of semantic deviation. Further they declared the semantic deviation to be a key feature of a literary work. In their study, they showed the importance of teaching literature through linguistic lenses as it required a reader's active involvement along with the teacher's one. They also suggested that teaching/reading a literary prose required more than just memorization of major themes; a task of stylistician, i.e. to be materialized through stylistics. They have argued that the study of metaphor helps the readers to unveil different layers of meaning and it develops critical thinking in literature students. To summarize, it is concluded that their major stress in this study is on metaphor and literary prose. It is in the perspective of teaching writing literary prose through metaphor (Murtza & Baseer, 2012).

Different stylistic features that contribute to the idea of darkness which means mystery along with obscurity and murkiness have been explored. The main stylistic features, discussed in the novel are: short passive, fronting, parenthesis, complex noun and sentences to imply concept and theme of 'darkness' in the target literary work. The present stylistic analysis has also revealed that the novel is symbolic as well as ambiguous, the language of the fiction is deviant and the ambiguous syntactic structures of the novel imply darkness. The study is helpful knowing how stylistic analysis is helpful to study literary meanings of a literary work (Nofal, 2013).

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A corpus-based study on humanizing metaphor supports metaphoricity and activity of the metaphor. Their study was grounded in Lakoff's Theory of Metaphor along with relational networks of Langacker. Results of the study confirm productivity as well as systematicity of humanizing metaphor (Cuadrado & Duran (2013).

The stylistic analysis of Blake's Night has explored stylistic devices under graphological, phonological, syntactic and semantic patterns. It helps understanding the propounded concept i.e. the contrast between this world and New World where there will be no distinction between prey and predator (Khan, Batool, Sandhu, Ahmed & Batoo, 2014).

Similarly, a study has noticed corruption, materialism and exploitation prevailing in Victorian era conducting stylistic study on The Happy Prince under lexical, grammatical along with stylistic aspects such as irony, symbolism and allegory (Saadia, Bano &Tabassum, 2015).

Graphological, morphological, phonological and semantic aspects of Daffodils glorifying past and nature have been elucidated as well. The results of the study reveal that figurative language tends to enhance impact and beauty of poetry affecting the reader's mind (Batool, Kiran & Azhar, 2016).

To recapitulate, lots of studies have been conducted on stylistics but Murtza & Baseer (2012) and Batool, Kiran & Azhar (2016) have explored linguistic manipulation in terms of semantic deviation in the perspective of transference of meaning which are rather helpful while Cuadrad & Duran (2013) have investigated humanizing metaphor discovering animism (rocks are human beings) which enhanced the researchers' knowledge. The present study intends to be conducted beyond the results of the study (animism) conducted by Cuadrad & Duran (2013) in terms of ultra-earthliness relying heavily on attributional and literary stylistics (Leech, 2000).

3. Research Methodology

The present research is a mix method study as it is mainly qualitative but quantitative method such as corpus methodology has also been used in addition. The researchers have selected qualitative research method to answer the 'how, which & what' questions in the present project rather than focusing only on quantitative answers. Poems: *Tintern Abbey, To the Cuckoo, Lucy Gray, We are Seven, The Tables Turned and The World is Too Much with Us* are the universe of the study. A random sampling technique (judgmental one) has been used for the research for sampling. The soft copy of the poems has been adapted from

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Hartman's (1987) book on Wordsworth's poetry as the poet's romantic poetry has been collected in hard and soft formats for compilation of corpus of the poems under study.

Data has been analyzed and interpreted qualitatively as well as quantitatively using AntConc 3.2.4w. Content analysis is one of the tools used for the data analysis and interpretations as latent coding has been heavily relied upon for the present study. Computational and descriptive statistics techniques have also been used to present and analyze the data. The analysis has been conducted at two levels. First, the researchers classify data in terms of stylistic features and interpret it through mystic, spiritual and transcendental approach to discuss theme of ultra-earthliness in the romantic poetry under study step by step that is the formative analysis. Secondly, summative analysis is employed to summarize the whole data for the set objectives that determines the patterns of stylistic devices under the theme of ultra-earthliness. It shows the most striking stylistic feature used by the poet rendering the theme under study as well.

4. Discussion and Results

Wordsworth has great love for all objects of Nature but he is not concerned only with the sensuous manifestation that charms so many poets rather he treats nature as God. The divinization which started in the modern age at the Renaissance and developed during the 18th century reached its culmination in Wordsworth poetry. He seeks beauty in meadows, woodland and mountain tops and interprets this beauty in spiritual terms. Wordsworth conceived, as poet, that Nature was alive. He imagined into flower, stream or mountain, gave them each a soul of their own. Nature is holy, kind and teaches a lesson sound of love (Charles, 2008).

This is staunch belief of Wordsworth, discussed below stylistically.

4.1 *Tintern Abbey*

Tintern Abbey is the most philosophic poem of Wordsworth. In this poem, his idea of ultra-earthliness and ecological views find full expression. Wordsworth suggests that ultimate truth is attained through mystical insight that gives us extra ordinary sense of experience. The poet is of the opinion that mystical states may be due to the beauteous forms of Nature. More or less, he trusts on them. The poet manipulates visual imagery and humanizing metaphor (animism) to present theme of ultra-earthliness in the poem Tintern Abbey as the table given bellow shows:

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<div align="center">

Table-01:

Visual Imagery, Humanizing Metaphor and Ultra-Earthliness

</div>

Stylistic Feature	Instance	Frequency
Visual image	Body	1
Visual image	Eye	4
Humanizing metaphor	Living soul	1
Humanizing metaphor	Power of harmony	1
Humanizing metaphor	Power of joy	1
Humanizing metaphor	Life of things	1

Here is an idea with Platonism and neo Platonism that insight through natural beauty tends towards the beauty which is beyond the reach of ordinary senses (ultra-earthliness). While composing this poem, Wordsworth was a pantheist or at least had a pantheistic prone as manipulation of humanizing metaphor reveals. In deeper sense, Nature had spiritual meanings for him. In this poem, we do not test the language of sense but of spirit appearing within and outside man. The inner quality of nature can be perceived through ecstasy. Though its other qualities can be known through sense yet the soul of all mortal beings, gives its expression in the whole life of nature:

> "...-oh! With far deeper zeal
>
> Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
>
> That after many wandering, many years
>
> Of absence, these steep *woods* and high *cliffs*,
>
> And this green pastoral *landscape*, were to me
>
> More dear, both for themselves! and for thy sake!" (Tintern Abbey, line, 154-159)

In the above given discourse, the poet manipulates nature imagery to present theme of ultra-earthliness in the poem Tintern Abbey as the table given bellow shows:

<div align="center">

Table-02:

Visual Imagery and Ultra-Earthliness

</div>

Stylistic Feature	Instance	Frequency
Nature Image	Woods	4
Nature Image	Cliffs	2
Nature Image	Landscape	3

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The table shows the frequency of nature images mystified. This is a complex philosophical poem due to philosophy of ultra-earthliness weaved via nature imagery and humanizing metaphor, difficult to understand for a common reader. The deeper study of the poem discloses that Wordsworth was not giving the ultimate statement of philosophical view of life and man in this poem .He was basically concerned with the expression of complex totality of mood which included elements of knowledge and half knowledge. As a mystic, Wordsworth has strong belief in the omnipotence of the Supreme Being which he calls Nature. He believes that fate is crucial power. Fate and chance play vital role in human life. This all, he gathered from observation of boyhood and youth in the outskirts of country areas where natural objects always disclose the mysteries of Nature.

4.2 *To the Cuckoo*

To the Cuckoo is a small poem by Wordsworth but clear example of his mystic ideology. Cuckoo is not only a bird in the poem but a symbol and a very important one. It is a threefold symbol of fantasy, youth and the eternity. The poet does not run after the sound of the bird anymore as he used to do during his childhood. The cuckoo also becomes the symbol of spring and spring itself is the symbol of youth. The same bird becomes the symbol of eternity as it is not bound to time and space. The poet listens to its voice as he used to hear in his boyhood. So, it is mystery as eternity is a mystery for mortal man. The poet does not know whether the cuckoo is a bird or a voice:

<p style="text-align:center">"O Cuckoo! Shall I call thee Bird,</p>

<p style="text-align:center">Or but a wandering Voice?" (To the Cuckoo, line 3-4)</p>

The bird has been mystified via humanizing metaphor and nature imagery in the poem. The table below further strengthens the point:

<p style="text-align:center">**Table-03:**</p>

<p style="text-align:center">**Nature Imagery, Humanizing Metaphor and Ultra-Earthliness**</p>

Stylistic Feature	Instance	Frequency
Nature Image	bird	3
Humanizing Metaphor	thee Bird	1
Humanizing Metaphor	Wandering Voice	1

The table shows the frequency of linguistic devices to be manipulated for the theme of ultra-earthliness. He (the poet) cannot see the bird; still, it is mystery for him:

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<div align="center">

"No bird, but an *invisible thing*,

A voice, a mystery" (To the Cuckoo, line 15-16)

</div>

In the above given discourse, the poet has mystified the bird by employing oxymoron in the poem. The table below illustrates the phenomenon:

<div align="center">

Table-04:

Oxymoron and Ultra-Earthliness

</div>

Stylistic Feature	Instance	Frequency
Oxymoron	invisible thing	1

The above given discourse and table reveal that this poem has a philosophical touch by suggesting that we wish to see many things but cannot. In the last stanza, again by employing, O! Vocative for the bird, it has been mystified, as it lends to humanizing metaphor for the mystification of the nature object; the cuckoo:

<div align="center">

"O blessed *Bird*! the earth we pace

Again appears to be

An unsubstantial, faery place;

That is fit home for *Thee*!" (To the Cuckoo, line 29-32)

</div>

The symbol of cuckoo has been manipulated three times in the poem in terms of mysticism, for detail (See 4.2). The figure below shows the concordance hits:

<div align="center">

Figure-01:

Symbolism and Ultra-earthliness

</div>
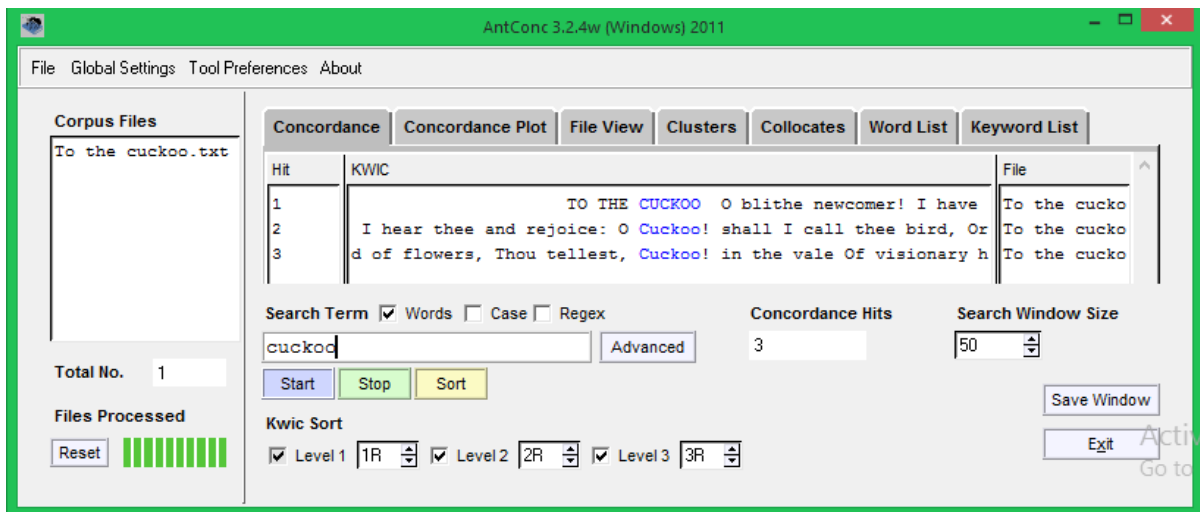
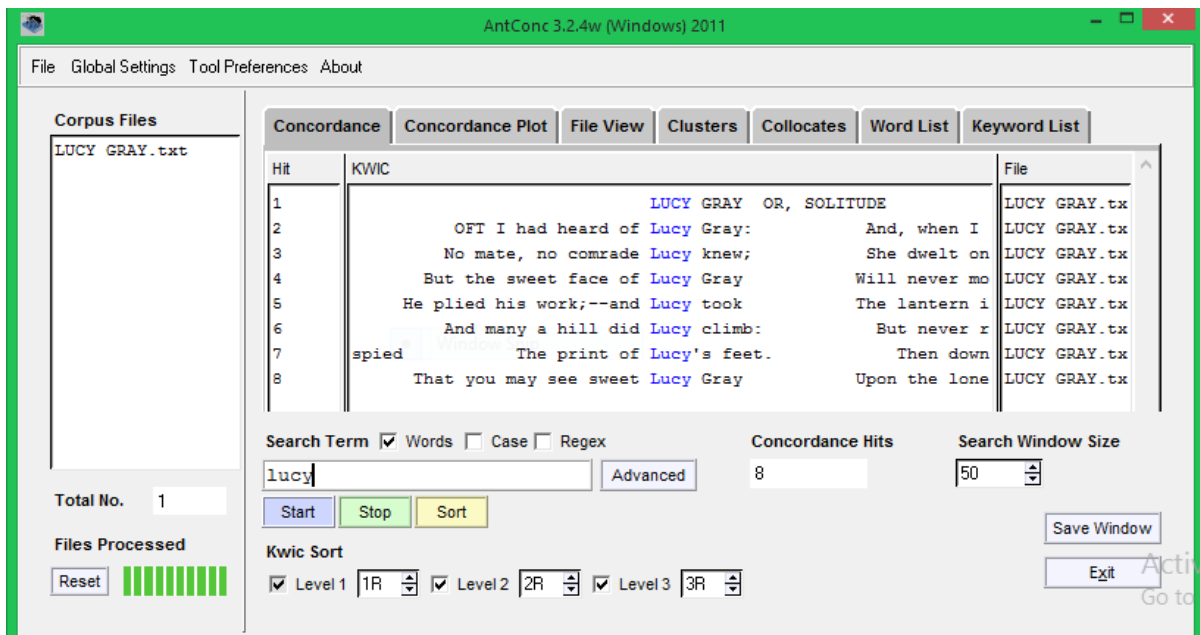The figure reveals the concordance hits of the symbol cuckoo in the poem in rendering theme of ultra-earthliness.

4.3 *Lucy Gray*

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Lucy is the symbol of innocence which human beings lose at early age. Innocence is loveable but short living and transitory. It fades away as man moves on the confused and crooked ways of life as Lucy is lost in a snow storm:

But the sweet face of Lucy Gray

Will never more be seen." (Lucy Gray, line, 9-12)

The figure given below shows the concordance of the symbol Lucy:

Figure-02:

Symbolism and Ultra-earthliness

Concordance hits of the symbol Lucy is eight times in the figure. The symbol has been manipulated for the theme of ultra-earthliness in the poem. The poems deals with the idea of pre-existence and poet`s personal comments on his cult of Nature. The poet also regards death as the beginning of eternal life as he says that Lucy is not dead rather she has become one with Nature using humanizing metaphor:

The poet employs various images like moor, heaven, fawn, snow, moon, mountain and wind to convey his philosophy expressing that, now, she is everywhere. The poet compares the small girl to the most beautiful flower nature has ever nurtured. The below given table shows frequency of the images:

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Stylistic Feature	Instance	Frequency
Nature Image	moor	2
Nature Image	heaven	1
Nature Image	fawn	1
Nature Image	snow	3
Nature Image	moon	1
Nature Image	mountain	1
Nature Image	wind	1

The table reveals that the particular thing that makes Lucy innocent, beautiful and loveable beside her childhood is solitude. She is alone in her cottage with her parents. She has no friend except nature as the above given images imply.

4.4 *We are Seven*

It is another simple and small poem of Wordsworth in which he gives the concept of pre-existence and eternity. He meets a little cottage girl and asks her how many brothers and sisters they are. She replies that they are seven sisters and brothers. Two of them are at Conway, two are at sea, and two of them lie in the churchyard. The poet thinks the girl has no idea of life and death but as the poem proceeds, the poet comes to know that the innocent girl has understanding of life and death more than even the mature men and the poet himself. The little girl lives alone with her mother near the churchyard. She has no playmates except the graves of her dead sister and brother. The poet seems to convey the idea that children are beyond time and space in their thinking as they are closer to nature and pre-existence. So, she refuses to cast her dead siblings out of her life. She accepts the change and continues to live among their graves and knitting and playing around them. The poet asserts by manipulating innocence of the girl through humanizing metaphor that the little girl never yields to the idea of death living close to nature:

> "But they are dead; those two are dead!
>
> Their spirits are in heaven!"
>
> 'Twas throwing words away; for still
>
> The little Maid would have her will,
>
> And said, "Nay, we are seven!" (We Are Seven, line 65-69)

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Further, the figure, given below supports the idea to be conveyed:

Figure-03:

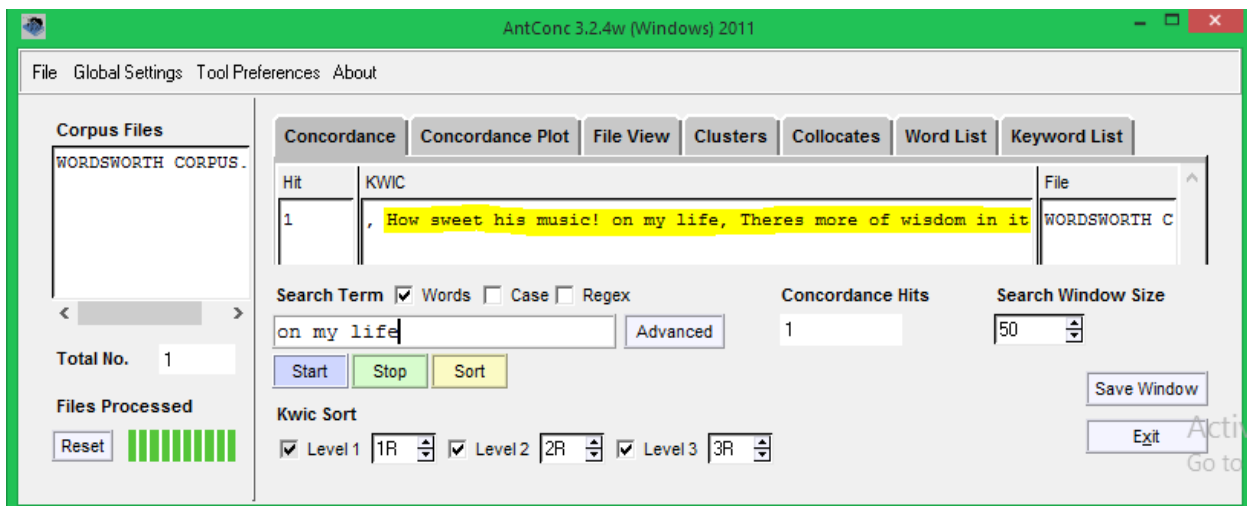**Humanizing Metaphor and Ultra-Earthliness**
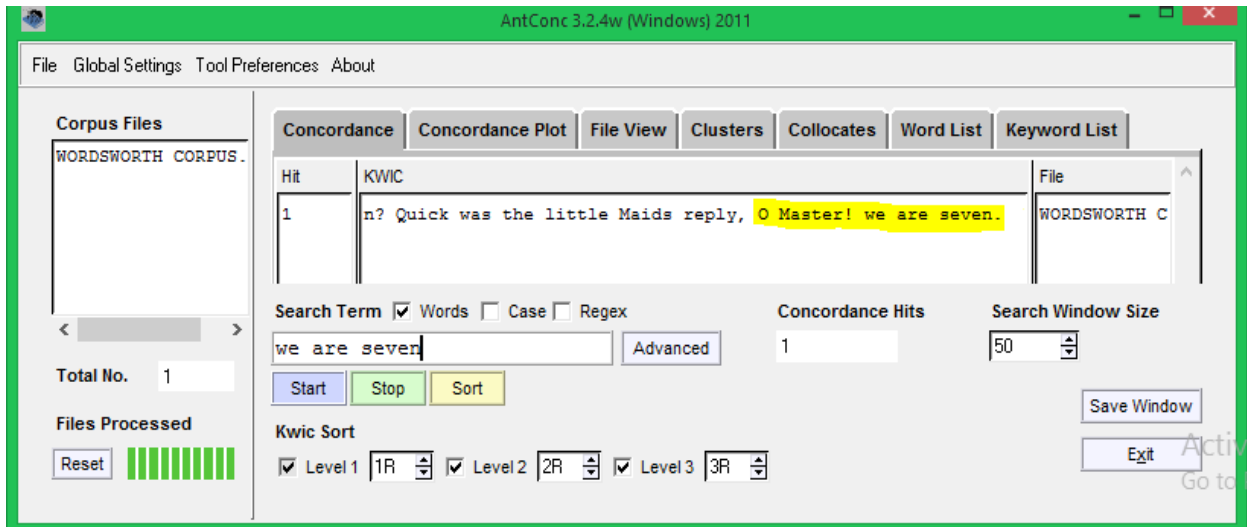
The figure reveals that the dead have been included among the living employing humanizing metaphor to foreground innocence to contribute to ultra-earthliness.

4.5 *The Table Turned*

In the poem *(The Tables Turned)*, the poet contrasts the barren light of reason available in the books with the sweet and freshening light of nature. The light prevents dullness and makes us see and experience. His poem *The Tables Turned* is a sound proof of humanizing metaphor and hold up of Wordsworth to be advocate of the magical influence of Nature that educates human mind. In this poem, in fact, the speaker rejects all human being's knowledge attained through understanding or reading books:

Figure-04:

Humanizing Metaphor) and Ultra-Earthliness

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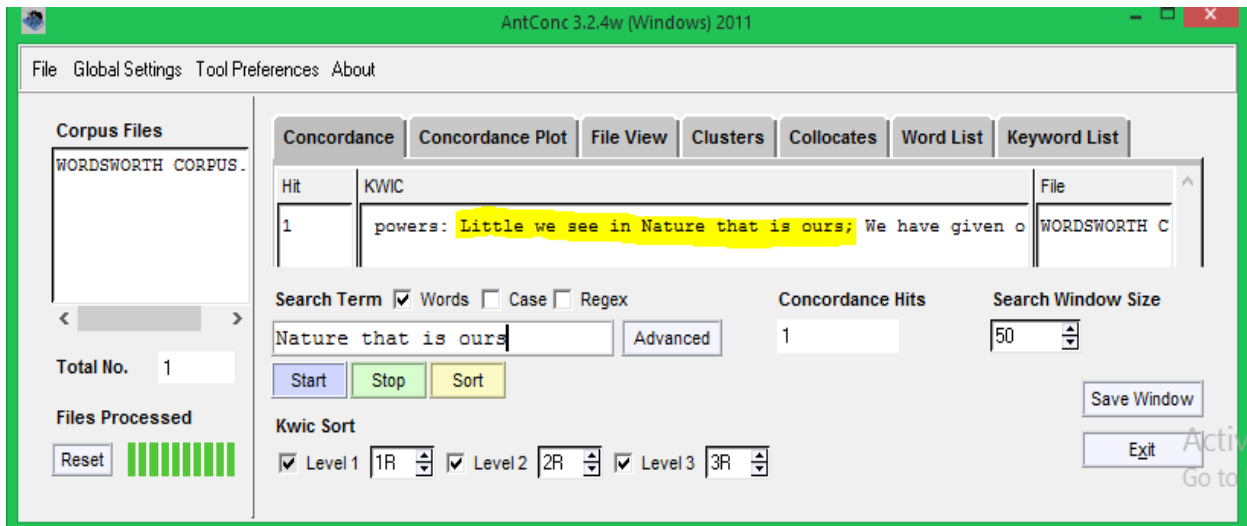
The given figure reveals that by using humanizing metaphor, the poet presents Nature as a living being, that is, mystification of nature contributing to ultra-earthliness.

4.6 *The World is Too Much with Us*

In, *The World is Too Much with Us*, Wordsworth is not happy with postmodern people's neglecting attitude towards. The poet compares the sea with man lying under the moon, the calm winds with sleeping flowers using humanizing metaphor in the poem. Further the poem exhibits Wordsworth's idea of pantheism. He views that soul in nature and the soul in man coexists having origin in God through the use of humanizing metaphor as the figure given below foregrounds:

Figure- 05:

**Humanizing Metaphor and Ultra-earthliness**

The figure reveals that the poet complains that we are earthly entangled (involving in socio-economic gains) and have nothing to do with Mother Nature. Using humanizing metaphor, nature has been presented as a living one (Nature). The love for solitude and contemplative attitude makes critics regard Wordsworth as mystic poet. Wordsworth is introvert. In his exalted trance, he feels sense of unity with the Supreme Being. In other words, pantheism is oneness that unites subject and object, Fusion of the individual into the whole. The poet feels that his particular life is being merged into the unified. Wordsworth is not only the poet who can be titled as mystic but there are so many other names in English literature that are captured by this mystic trance of ultra-earthliness. William Blake, Coleridge, W.B. Yeasts and John Donne are prominent figures in metaphysical poetry (Durrant, 1970).

In short, Wordsworth weaves a tapestry of art which gives shades of spiritual aspects

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of human life. He seems to convey the idea of co-existence. The pantheistic philosophy can be detected if one makes strife to the interpretation of manifold semantic tools rendered in his poetry. Further, findings are given below graphically:

Figure- 06:

Graphical Representation of the Discussion and Results
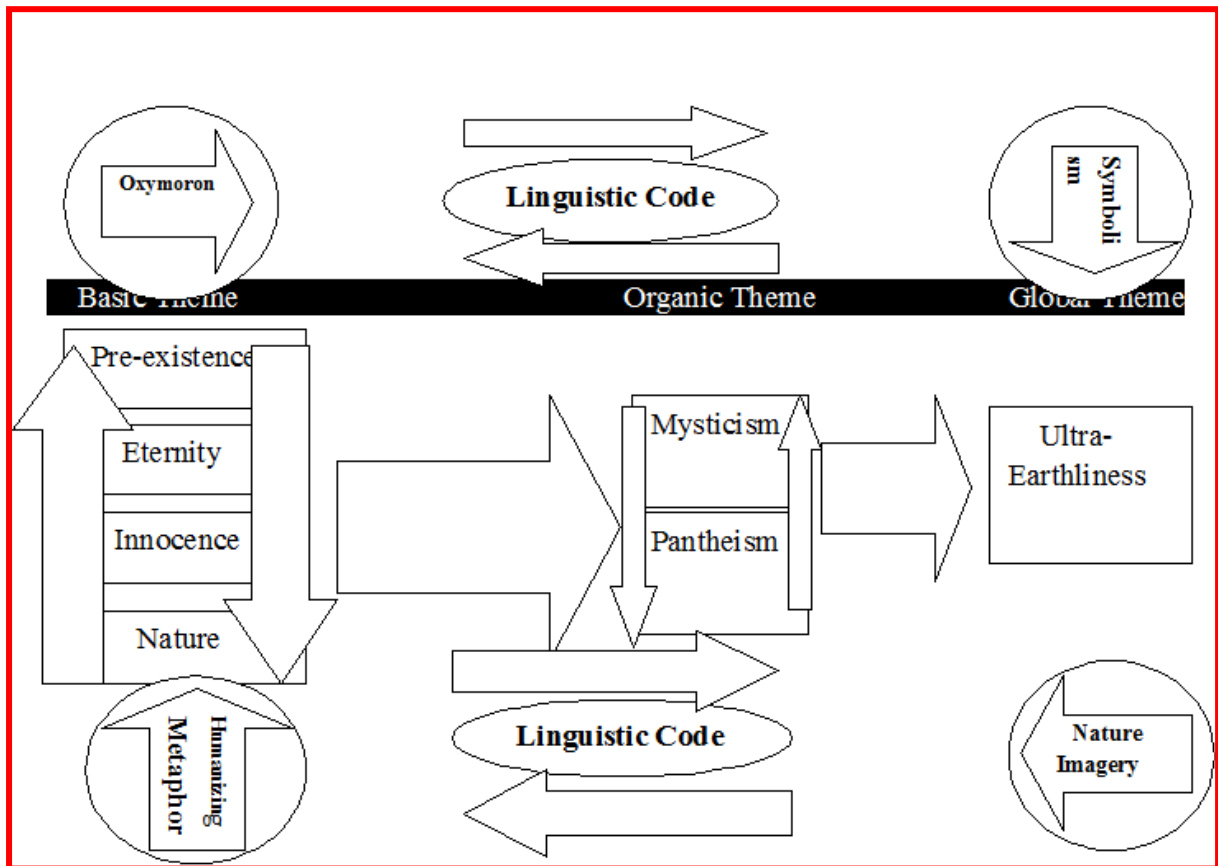
The figure reveals that by using linguistic codes such as oxymoron, symbolism, nature imagery and humanizing metaphor, the poet has weaved certain basic themes such as pre-existence, eternity, innocence and nature intermingled with one another contributing to the organic themes such as mysticism and pantheism that finally lends to the global theme of ultra-earthliness.

5. Concluding Remarks

Wordsworth's poetry is replete with natural images of beauty liberty and infinity creating the impression of joy, pathos, love and faith. He often portrays flowers, clouds, stars, moon and the sun to symbolize truth, beauty, love and faith in nature. He weaves a tapestry of art which gives shades of spiritual aspects of human life. Animism and humanizing metaphor are closely related in his poetry. Humanizing metaphor has been used in Wordsworth's poetry to contrive animism; a technique employed to position soul in natural objects for

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mystification of nature phenomena along with symbolism, nature imagery and oxymoron. He studies nature as the mystic did the scriptures making no interpretation and passes through it towards spiritual interpretation (Simpson, 1987).

Invitation to have intimacy with nature has been prescribed as an antidote for the fever and fret of the day that can heal us spiritually. Wordsworth is a great poet of ultra-earthliness as his poetry has little concern with socio-political development rather uplifts us spiritually. His mystic philosophy through linguistic manipulation is half illusive. Supernatural presentation of natural objects seems to be mission, vision and policy of the poet suggesting kissing (love of nature) that is missing is the sole solution of the Earth issues.

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