

## Cultural rhetoric and metaphorical engine: The metaphor of *stone* in the social poetry of Gabriel Aresti

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**Abstract.** Our article is an attempt to study the peculiarities of cultural rhetoric as the classical science of discourse that connects, on the one hand, rhetoric with culture and, on the other, culture with rhetoric. Rhetorical discourse makes cultural peculiarities explicit by using different figures of language, including metaphor; We analyze the role of the activation of *metaphorical engine* in the process of understanding the metaphor of *stone* in the poetic discourse of the Basque poet Gabriel Aresti.

**Keywords:** Cultural rhetoric; metaphorical engine; social poetry; Gabriel Aresti.

### [es] Retórica cultural y motor metafórico: La metáfora de la piedra en la poesía social de Gabriel Aresti

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*I will always be on the side of man.*  
Gabriel Aresti

### 1. Rhetoric: cultural and historical dimensions

Born in Sicily as a way of verbal persuasion (Clarke, 1957; Kennedy, 1972; García Berrio, 1977-1980) and effective expression (Black, 1965), with parts of speech, such as *introduction*, *narration*, *argumentation* (with *proof* and *refutation*; Lausberg, 1966-1968; Pujante, 2003) and *peroration*, rhetoric passed from Sicily to Athens and later to Rome, expanded in different types of discourses, reconstructing *past*, explaining *present* and convincing the audience in the necessity of defining and planning *future* events, thus becoming the inseparable part of political discourse (Albaladejo, 2003) and political thought (As Paul Ricoeur put it, the ideology is the form of rhetoric (Ricoeur, 1997)). It formed part of Greek, Roman and Chinese cultures, being the main instrument of education: Werner Jaeger and Antonio López Eire indicate the role of Rhetoric in the formation of Greek culture and its teaching in the schools and gymnasiums in Greece (Jaeger, 1978; López Eire, 1996, 2006), Quintilian underlines the role of Rhetoric in the formation of Roman culture (Quintiliano, 1970), and Geoffrey E. R. Lloyd states its importance for ancient Chinese culture (Lloyd, 2010).

In the Middle Ages rhetoric was not only the effective instrument of literary expression, preaching and writing of letters, but it also brought together different sciences (Albaladejo, 2016a), which cultivated ideas and opinions concerning human nature (Ferrater Mora, 1941). From Baroque and Neoclassicism rhetoric lost its role of interpretative discipline and became converted into a historical one (García Berrio, 1984).

Only in the second half of the XX century rhetoric was reborn in its primordial form, presenting three different directions of scientific discourse: Rhetoric of argumentation (in the works of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca; Perelman, C. and Olbrechts-Tyteca, L., 1989), Structuralist Rhetoric (authored by Groupe  $\mu$ ; Grupo  $\mu$ , 1987) and General Textual Rhetoric (presupposed by Antonio García Berrio; 1984, 1989), described in details by José M. Pozuelo Yvancos (Pozuelo Yvancos, 1988). This resurrection of Rhetoric as the discipline

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indicates, as Francisco Chico Rico puts it, the necessity of reestablishing studies of classical sciences of discourse for better understanding related disciplines (Chico Rico, 2015a). Having passed from oral (of practicing oratory, emphasized by Cicero as art of exact speaking and thinking; Murphy, 1974) to written (Richards, 1965) and digital discourses (Albaladejo, 2007), rhetoric found its place in meta-communication (such as translation; Chico Rico, 2015b). Together with Poetics (García Berrio 1979, 1984), Rhetoric as the classical science of discourse is linked with Text Linguistics, offering the linguistic basis for textual investigations (works of Antonio García Berrio and Francisco Chico Rico; García Berrio, 1977; Chico Rico, 1988).

In the contemporary society, rhetorical discourse forms part of comic monologue: listening to the political discourses deprived of ethical component and delivered by politicians to different representatives of society, the comic actor generates strong critical approaches and estimations based on humor and laugh, aiming the formation of modern citizen (Gómez, 2017a).

## 2. Cultural rhetoric as a constituent part of *Studies in culture*. Metaphor as a cultural-rhetorical notion

The thorough study of the historical development of rhetoric and its components is useful for understanding the relations between rhetoric and culture. On the one hand, rhetorical discourse possesses a cultural-rhetorical component that is formed by cultural elements and aspects, and on the other, culture is composed and expressed by different sorts of discourses, which possess the rhetorical nature. Culture lumps all five elements together, which are functional in the rhetorical framework: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, *actio* or *pronuntiatio* (Lausberg, 1966-1968; Albaladejo, 1989: 57-64) with *intellectio* (Chico Rico, 1988, 1998). The rhetorical nature of discourses or *rhetoricalness* (Martínez-Dueñas Espejo, 2003; Ramírez Vidal, 2004; Albaladejo, 2005; López Eire, 2006) demonstrates the relation of rhetoric with literature, detecting the role of a *cultural-rhetorical* component with the *communicative cultural-rhetorical code*; the latter connects semantic message of discourse with the cognitive abilities of recipients being decisive for composition and transmission of political discourse (Albaladejo, 2014a).

The rich history of the interactions between culture and rhetoric, as well as the complex understanding of rhetorical functions (*narration* as the statement of facts, *argumentation* as the main framework of discourse, *introduction* as the mode of its presentation, and *peroration* as the final part of discourse), make possible the interpretation of culture in infinite and continuous ways, and the formation of the phenomena of *interculturality* in different fields of science and culture. Following this way, rhetoric may logically be related with, on the one hand, scientific disciplines, such as text linguistics (works of János S. Petőfi, in particular his Text-Structure World-Structure Theory, developed later by Albaladejo into TeSWeST I and into TeSWeST II, and semiotics, based on syntactic, semantic and pragmatic implications of text) and, on the other, with *Studies in Culture*, distinguished from the adjacent corpus of *Cultural Studies*.

As classical sciences of discourse, rhetoric and poetics are connected with text linguistics (García Berrio, 1978) relating it with different other sciences, such as pragmatics or sociolinguistics. The orientation of referent towards the text and the text towards the referent are supported by different channels of communication, which are responsible for the comprehension of textual message using distinct contexts, such as rhetorical, cultural, political, etc. TeSWeST construction offered by Petőfi is based both on linguistic and semiotic approaches as it is centered on the text, taking into consideration a semiotic composition of the world based on semantic constitution, and syntactic representation without forgetting the pragmatic projection of knowledge and our understanding of the world (Petőfi, 1975, 1978).

As the TeSWeST represents the system where producers and recipients appear with clearly defined perspectives of synthesis and analysis, the understanding of the recipient's role as a person who analyses scientific or cultural discourses, conditioned the necessity of enlargement of Petőfi's model, and resulted both in the formulation called extended TeSWeST (E TeSWeST) and the separation of theoretical and metatheoretical levels, as well as in an appearance of a representation component within the text model (Albaladejo, 1981).

E TeSWeST model was later extended based on the role of the pragmatic component forming part of both the general part and the representation component of the text model (Albaladejo, 1983). As Albaladejo noted, "[...] the pragmatic component overlaps the text grammatical component (text intension component), the world semantic component (text extension component) and the lexicon component in the general part of the model, whilst the representation pragmatic component inside the representation component involves the representation text syntactic component, the representation extension-semantic component and the representation lexicon component" (Albaladejo, 2019a: 99)

The relation of Petőfi's model and rhetoric is based on two main grounds as it is highlighted by Francisco Chico Rico: "1) the verification that the linguistic-textual theory has its most solid foundations and precedents in rhetorical theory [...], and 2) the suggestion, made by Antonio García Berrio, to build a Textual General Rhetoric as a general science of discourse from two essential demands: a) the complete recovery of historical thinking about the two classical sciences of discourse – Rhetoric and Poetics –; and b) the close collaboration between the latter and the two modern sciences of discourse – Text Linguistics and Linguistic Poetics – (García Berrio 1984; 1989, 140-179)" (Chico Rico, 2019: 113).

Another domain where the role of rhetoric is prominent is culture, mainly modern approaches of specialized studies of different cultures and cultural components. *Studies in Culture* is a wider way of dealing with the examination of different epistemological and methodological instruments used by distinct scientific schools which include, among other fields, *Cultural Studies* (School of Birmingham). Some other disciplines could be anthropological and ethnographic studies in culture (represented by works of James Frazer), philosophy of culture (studies of Ernst Cassirer), history of culture (ideas of Johan Huizinga), semiotics of culture (Lotman and School of Tartu), critics of culture (works of Wlad Godzich) and cultural rhetoric (studies of Tomás Albaladejo; Albaladejo, 2009, 2013, 2014a, 2016b, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019e, 2019f, 2020).

Based on the described above, Tomás Albaladejo emphasized the connection of rhetoric with culture and proposed the notion of *cultural rhetoric* to study, on the one hand, cultural characteristics of rhetorical discourse, and on the other, the role of rhetoric in the formation of culture (Albaladejo, 2009). In an article published in 2013, Tomás Albaladejo describes the relation between rhetoric and culture in a following mode:

Rhetoric is part of the culture and a reflection on culture that does not pay attention to discursive communication and its study is not conceived; but, in addition, culture is necessary for the functioning and effectiveness of human communication, to the extent that it is carried out by producers and recipients, who must be united by a communicative code and must be aware of the context and the need for adaptation to it. Rhetoric and culture are united and cannot be understood without the other. (Albaladejo, 2013; translated by Eugenio-Enrique Cortés Ramírez y Juan Carlos Gómez Alonso; cited in: Cortés Ramírez and Gómez Alonso, 2020: 96).

Thus, cultural rhetoric represents a methodological system which aims to study rhetorical components in different cultures, representing a set of instruments for understanding and analyzing culture based on the aesthetic and discursive peculiarities; Cultural rhetoric is supported by the cultural-rhetorical component of the rhetorical system that makes possible the analysis of different classes of discourses, such as political, literary, philosophical ones, etc. This is the novel form to study culture, to describe its elements and to make possible the analysis of *rhetoricalness* of language:

Cultural rhetoric is a methodological system with a comparative basis which aims at the study of literature, discourse and culture considering their perlocutionary components, mainly those related to persuading and convincing. Thence, cultural rhetoric is oriented to the analysis and the explanation of the function of culture in the pragmatically oriented constitution of literary works and other kinds of discourses as well as literary genres and non-literary kinds of discourses, always from a comparative perspective (Albaladejo, 2019a: 101).

Cultural rhetoric, its methods and approaches are applicable for a wide range of linguistic and literary studies which are multidisciplinary by their nature (Albaladejo, 2009, 2013, 2016b; Albaladejo y Chico Rico, 2022; Chico Rico, 2015a, 2020; Jiménez, 2015; Gómez Alonso, 2017b; Martín Cerezo, 2017; Fernández Rodríguez, Navarro Romero, 2018; Cortés Ramírez, Gómez Alonso, 2019, 2020; Fernández Rodríguez, 2019; Rodríguez Santos, 2019; Gallor Guarín, 2020a; López Sánchez, 2019, 2020a, 2020b). One of the main devices, which may be studied in this framework, is *metaphor*, a figure that has long been the subject of interest among researchers of different fields of sciences, from classical theories to modern and contemporary approaches: Aristotle (2011), Fontanier (1821) and Ricoeur (2003) had discussed it from different perspectives; Richards (1965) characterizes metaphor from a linguistic point of view, meanwhile Lakoff and Johnson put emphasis on its persuasive peculiarities (1981). Newmark (2010) detects six types of metaphor (dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent and original), Bobes Naves (2004) – three (linguistic, of everyday use and literary) and Steen (2014) offers its new type – *deliberate metaphor*. Hjelmslev (1980) characterizes metaphor as a figure which possess both connotative and denotative values, the view which coincides with Eco's (2000) opinion according to which metaphor is the source for projecting indirect meaning. Different authors point out the cognitive function of metaphor (Díaz, 2006; Arduini, 2007a, 2007b) and Black (1968) indicates the substitutional perspective of metaphor. Another group of studies relates metaphor with culture and describes it as the component of Cultural rhetoric (Albaladejo, 2019c, 2019e; Gómez Alonso, 2020; Luarsabishvili, 2021).

The study of different discourses, of their composition and differences (i.e., literary, philosophical, historical, etc.), demonstrates strong connections between text linguistic and cultural rhetoric, and proves the necessity of application of interdiscursive analysis and different cultural-rhetorical notions, such as the recently proposed theoretical model of *metaphor*. As the central and acting component of the mentioned model is *metaphorical engine*, it consists of several components, such as 1) component of the metaphorical series (metaphor, symbol, catachresis, metaphorical network, allegory and other devices of translational basis such as simile or comparison), 2) component formed by different mechanisms which interact during the metaphorical construction, 3) component consisting of metaphorical engine, and 4) component formed by context and society, where the creation and reception of metaphor take place and are visualized as cross cultural processes in different systems of communication. The construction and reception of metaphor are related with cultural

elements, supported by the knowledge of producers and recipients of cultural texts (Albaladejo, 2014b, 2019c, 2019e).

In special literature, the concept of ‘figure engine’ is proposed from the concept of ‘metaphorical engine’, which, besides the metaphor, includes other tropes and figures and aim to explain “[...] the dynamic foundation of all the mechanisms which alter normal language usage, identified by rhetorical theory as figures, on any of the natural language text linguistic description levels, from the phonetic-phonological one to the semantic-intentional or lexical-semantic one” (Chico Rico, 2019: 118).

An example of literary studies where the cultural-rhetorical methodology is useful is the concept of *ectopic literature*, which describes the study of the texts composed out of the proper *topos* (Albaladejo, 2011, 2019d; Luarsabishvili, 2013, 2020, 2022a, 2022b; Hellín Nistal, 2015a, 2015b, 2019, 2022; Amezcua Gómez, 2014, 2016a, 2016b; Amezcua Gómez y Martínez Moraga, 2022; Rodríguez García, 2016; Doucet, 2017; López Sánchez, 2017; Gallor Guarín, 2020b; Mora López, 2020). In the framework of ectopic literature, one may study both separate authors (or texts) and literary groups and literary movements, as it was demonstrated in case of *The Bilbao Group*, founded in Madrid in October 1996, and formed by writers in Galician and academicians who supported different initiatives of the group members (Doucet, 2017).

Another useful notion which describes the rhetoric as part of the rhetorical and cultural heritage is *rhetorica recepta* (Albaladejo, 1989) relating rhetoric with the *recovery of historic thought* (García Berrio, 1984, 1992). From this perspective, rhetoric, archival studies, and ectopic literature may fulfil the conditions of historical reconstruction on different crossroads of the history of mankind (Luarsabishvili, 2017, 2020, 2022b).

### 3. Stone as a metaphor in the social poetry of Gabriel Aresti

The post symbolist thought cultivated in the Basque literary system during the 30s of the past century represented the hegemonic poetic way of self-expression and was based on puristic attitudes in order to avoid the influence of Spanish cultural system. From 50s the situation changed in a radical way: social protest against Franco’s dictatorship found its way in literature. Social poetry which used not only popular but colloquial style of expression together with irony, changes in poetic register, and metaphorical language has changed the whole cultural system, reflected the injustice, and loss of moral values of society. One of the authors which conditioned the development of social poetry and demonstrated its symbolistic roots was a Basque poet Gabriel Aresti.

Born in the family with conservative beliefs and familiarized with the social and economical characteristics of his time, Gabriel Aresti has developed a critical approximation to reality, especially evident soon after his marriage to Amelia Esteban. New geographical environment where young couple lived (the district of Basurto in Bilbao), as well as literary contacts established at the café La Concordia in the years 1955-1962, determined an amazing evolution of poetic imagination, started with the publication of rhapsodies and sonnets, continued by the creation of a large poem (consisting of almost 2.000 lines and 222 verses) with clearly defined symbolist roots (*Pendiente abajo (El final de la historia de Miren y Joan)*), and ended in elaboration of political text (*La Justicia Prohibida*). The elaboration of political poetics included the personal meeting with Blas de Otero and the strong influence received by reading his texts, the fact that preceded the creation of social trilogy (Kortazar Billelabeitia, Kortazar, 2021).

In a recently published article, Jon Kortazar indicates that from 1962 Aresti started the elaboration of the imaginary about a *stone* as a metaphor indicating the resistance of a Basque society against Francoist dictatorship in political and social life (Kortazar, 2021: 179). Gabriel Aresti’s social trilogy published in 1964-1970 is considered as one of the main poetic expressions describing basic human values and criticizing social injustice dominated in the Basque society (Aulestia, 1982; Río Gabiola, 2006; Kortazar, 2010, 2017; Luarsabishvili, 2010, 2011, 2014). Three separate volumes – *Stone and Country (Harri eta Herri, 1964)*, *The Basque Stone (Euskal Harria, 1967)*, and *The Country of Stone (Harrizko Herri Hau, 1970)* represent poet’s contemporary society and are filled with the sense of respect to men, homeland and interpersonal relations. To achieve the above mentioned, Aresti intentionally used *figure engines* in general and the *metaphorical engine* in particular, in its intentional-semantic and extensional-semantic dimensions.

In the whole text of social trilogy, the homeland –Basque country– is metaphorically perceived as a *stone*. In special literature there are several assumptions about the origin of Aresti’s idea to metaphorize the country as a *stone*. Professor Jon Kortazar in his book on Aresti synthesizes them in the following manner: he mentions the indication of Angel Zelaleta about the friendship between Gabriel Aresti and Jorge Oteiza, as well as Aresti’s letter to Koldo Mitxelena making emphasis on the word ‘litofilia’, and the poet’s comment on the topic while describing the ‘stone’ as a symbol of Basque people. Zelaleta also mentions that Aresti himself had noted that the *stone* analogy was invented after seeing twelve stones, which symbolize twelve villages placed in the circle near the hermitage of Salvador in Abadiño. Jon Juaristi connects the metaphor of *stone* with Oteiza’s sculptures and José Miguel Barandiarán’s archeological works (Juaristi, 1987). The relations between Aresti’s work and Celso Emilio Ferreiro’s book *Longa noite da pedra* is also indicated, the question which is discussed by Gustavo

Nanclares Gómez in his book *Tras el reino de piedra*. Kortazar also mentions Jon Juaristi's indication, which puts together Aresti's metaphor of *stone* with the poem of Miguel Hernández "Vascos de la piedra blindada" (Kortazar, 2003: 96) or of Blas de Otero's "España, patria de piedra" (Kortazar, 2021: 180).

Aresti's metaphorical innovation has a double composition: on the one hand, the image of *stone* has substituted the image of *tree*, being the latter the form of representing the Basque nation; on the other, *stone* makes links with pre-historical period – with Stone Age, where some modern anthropologists as Juan Aranzadi identify the non-historical conception about Basque people (Kortazar, 2003: 98). Here we can observe both the *present* and *absent* expressions of *metaphor*, which becomes possible by the activation of *metaphorical engine* deeply rooted in the cultural phenomenon: the interaction between *present* – Basque nation, and *past* – nation's relation with its non-historical conception (taking into consideration the original syntax of Euskera, different from romance languages), – produces the metaphorical significance as a result of dynamic combination of *present* (or *manifested*) and *absent* (or *hidden*).

In the poem *The Basque Stone* Aresti makes emphasis on the metaphorical change which he realizes substituting the *tree* with the *stone*: "piedra que ha tomado la figura del árbol... Tú, árbol, piedra vasca" (Aresti, 2012, p. 13). The same theme is developed in the poem *Capitan Piloto* in which the poet indicates that the house in which he lives is very old and was built using first stones of the Basque mountains: "La casa en donde vivo es tan vieja... Fue labrada con la primera piedra de las montañas vascas" (Aresti, 2012, p. 29). His house, which is the metaphorical representation of the poet's homeland, is the part of the old and historical world, inhabited by Basque people. In the second half of the poem Aresti observes the demolition of the old house, which he is not going to abandon as the captain can't abandon his sank ship; he refuses to swim in the Latin Sea: "Yo, este capitán piloto, nunca abandoné el barco que se hundía, y ahora seguiré debajo del tejado de la vieja casa... Sin salir al mar latino" (Aresti, 2012, pp. 29-30). The *metaphorical engine* is activated based on the sharing of the communicative cultural-rhetorical code between poet and readers, that makes possible the interpretation and comprehension of the metaphor of *stone*. The reader's cultural imagination enables the metaphorical activation in its interpretative mode, as well as the process of poetic creativity enabled its activation in its poetic mode. Cultural-rhetorical technics of poetic creation made possible the production of the semantic message, as well as its reception by readers: "Mi casa, viejo barco anclado entre montañas; roble Navarro, teja cántabra, piedra vasca... Aunque me muera abrasado entre tus llamas" (Aresti, 2012, p. 30).

In the poem *A un profeta (Queriéndoselo explicar a Jorge Oteiza)* Aresti describes the importance of four prominent figures in the Basque history: Lizardi, Orixe, Lauaxeta and Loramendi, relating their names with the country of *stone*, who continue living for Basque people after the death, inspiring Aresti to take the hammer and wake up the Cantabrian sea and to take the viola and play the precious melodies of Basque mountains: "tomé en mis manos de nuevo mi martillo para golpear el mar de Cantabria" (Aresti, 2011, p. 69). Connecting history with present enables Aresti to form the entire cultural-rhetorical ambience, as well as detect cultural elements, which form the cultural dimension, and strengthen its poetic and interpretative functions, as in case of *nation* and *stone* or *hammer* and *viola*. The extensional-semantic configurations of metaphors are promoted by relation of the *present* and *absent* modes of expression, of the *past* and the *present* of the Basque nation. Past and present are also connected in the poem *Amarga: Dulce: Salada* where the prominent figures of the Basque culture (in past) are related with Aresti's contemporary writers, translators and researchers, and determine with their work and life the development of Basque language: "Antes vosotros, Cardaveraz, Mendiburu, Haraneder, Duvoisin, Añíbarro. Ahora nosotros, Salvador Garmendia, Mikel Lasa, Dominique Pellen, Juan San Martín "Otsalar", conmigo, Aresti. Luego? Lo sabe Dios" (Aresti, 2012, p. 44). As to the *hammer*, another very impressive poetic realization is observed in the second part of the book *Stone and Country* where Aresti relates it with poetry: "Dirán que esto no es poesía, pero yo les diré que la poesía es un martillo" (Aresti, 2011, p. 48). In the poem *Fino cristal* Aresti once more identifies the *nation* with the *stone*: "Corteza de encima de mi pueblo, cristal policromado que cubre la piedra, ahora limpia y claramente te desharé... [...] te desharé... (Con un martillo o con una viola?)" (Aresti, 2012, p. 33) – Probably, Aresti speaks about the tree of Guernika and with the word "cadena" wishes to indicate the symbol of oppression.

Metaphorical composition of Aresti's social poetry is a consequence of his literary evolution. Preceded by texts rich in word play, changes in poetic register, conceptual play, and approximation to oral tradition, and influenced by texts of Blas de Otero, Gabriel Celaya, Ángela Figuera and José María Basaldúa (Kortazar, 2021), Aresti cultivated poetic thought of a renovated form, demonstrating the suffering of Basque society in Franco's epoch, and offering a new perspective for the development of the nation. It was a successful modernization of Basque poetry, based on the historical development and cultural traditions of the nation: the Basque cultural system was irreversibly changed by Aresti's poetic mystification.

#### 4. Conclusions

The rich history of the development of *Culture* as a discipline has its origins in the ages when the first forms of communication between men, societies, and ethnic groups were established. This resulted in the formation

of different cultural traditions with distinct cultural histories. During the contact, cultures interchange the information – cultural practices – which are formed during centuries and are accumulated and kept in the form of cultural memory.

Rhetoric is one of the branches of culture which keeps the cultural characteristics in its discourse. At the same time, culture is developed by placing rhetorical activity as the main element of the proper structure. In other words, different elements of rhetorical discourse are borrowed by culture and are introduced in the distinct fields of human activity, such as education, politics, philosophy, etc. That is how cultural rhetoric is formed – introducing and analyzing cultural elements in rhetoric. Rhetorical discourse contains different discursive elements – including metaphors – which make it more acceptable and understandable for the recipients and/or readers. Thus, cultural rhetoric may be converted in a tool, which conditions the reinvention of society through language (Cortés-Ramírez, 2019).

The social poetry of the Basque writer Gabriel Aresti is based on the metaphorical understanding of cultural texts. The activation of *metaphorical engine* is conditioned by sharing of communicative cultural-rhetorical code. The cultural tradition, which is known for Basque readers, makes possible the metaphorical connection of nation's past with its present, thus decoding cultural elements during reading. The cultural imagination of reader activates the *metaphorical engine* in its *interpretative* mode of action and enables the understanding of the poetic message encoded by the poet.

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