MAPPING NATIONAL IDENTITY THROUGH PRISON POETRY: RADU GYR'S POETIC CYCLE *PRAGUL DE PIATRĂ*

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Abstract:

The feeling of national identity is the result of an intimate understanding of this concept, specific to each person, depending on the subjective representation of the identity landmarks represented by language, culture, history etc. It is a well-known fact that it tends to become stronger in the case of a threat. In Romania, such a threat was the totalitarian communist regime and poetic creation can be regarded as a means of resistance against it. Rady Gyr's poetic work can be considered an attempt to preserve the memory of all those people imprisoned unjustly during the communist domination for keeping the sacred belief of a Romanian and Christian nation. Rady Gyr himself, after almost 20 years of imprisonment, can be regarded as a poet and an apostle. The present paper is a brief outline of Radu Gyr's poetic universe in *Pragul de piatră* poetic cycle, presenting both the main themes and the stylistic characteristics of the poems, as well as emphasizing the antonymic structure which characterises some of them and pointing out the dichotomous-antonymic mechanism of thinking underlying it. At the same time, the present paper brings into light extremely important elements in guiding today's young generation, in an attempt to restore national identity.

Keywords: antonymic structure, dichotomous-antonymic mechanism of thinking, national identity, stylistic characteristics, thematic structure.

1. Introduction

In Gyr's poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*), the problem of limit, which can be interior and exterior, is fundamental. The inner limitation of the human nature to discover God is, by far, the most painful, whereas the external limitation imposed by the no less than three oppressive

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dictatorial regimes (i.e. that of Carol I, that of Antonescu and the communist regimes) leading to Gyr's elimination from the public life and to his many years of imprisonment is, at the same time, the trigger for writing these poems. Although the external limitation aimed at the poet's physical disappearance, it paradoxically contributed to the enrichment of his inner life, which became full of unknown meanings. Maybe, without these extreme situations in which he was put in, Gyr would have never discovered his profound being so thirsty of essence, of God. His entire inner world turns into a quest for God.

2. Focusing on the titles of the poems

The poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* contains 40 poems. As regards **the titles of the poems**, mention can be made of the fact that there are three types of titles: a) titles made up of a word; b) titles made up of a phrase; c) titles made up of a clause or a sentence.

a) Out of the total of 40 poems, 20 poems have titles made up of a single word. Out of these, 14 poems have titles expressed by a common noun (*Uşile – The Doors*; *Salcia – The Willow*; *Secol – Century*; *Silex – Flint*; *Singurătate – Loneliness*; *Reconstituire – Reconstitution*; *Purificare – Purification*; *Răzvrătire – Rebellion*; *Cavalcadă – Cavalcade*; *Rugina – Rust*; *Vânătoare – Hunting*; *Circuit – Circuit*; *Dor – Longing*; *Nuferi – Water Lilies*), 4 poems have titles expressed by a proper noun (*Prometeu – Prometheus*; *Phoenix – Phoenix*; *Harpagon – Harpagon*; *Tartuffe – Tartuffe*), one poem has a title expressed by a toponym (*Pont Euxin – Pontus-Euxinus*) and one poem has a title expressed by a verb (*Ziceam – I Used to Say*).

b) Out of the total of 40 poems, 14 poems have tiles made up of phrases with the following structure:

- noun + preposition + noun (5 poems: *Noapte de dragoste – Night of Love*; *Umbra de fier – The Iron Shadow*; *Pragul de piatră – The Stone Threshold*; *Manuale de geografie – Geography Textbooks*);
- noun + preposition + preposition + noun (one poem: *Salcâmul de lângă fereastră – The Acacia by the Window*);
- noun (in the Nominative) + noun in the Genitive (4 poems: *Moartea filosofului – The Philosopher's Death*; *Laudă suferinţei – Praise to Suffering*; *Cimitirul oraşului – The City Graveyard*; *Soldaţii lui Bonaparte – Bonaparte's Soldiers*);
- noun + adjective (one poem: *Ţapul sălbatic – The Wild Ram*);
- noun phrase (one poem: *Păreri de rău – Regrets*);
- adverbial phrase (one poem: *Din când în când – From Time to Time*);

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- complex phrase (one poem: *Dorul meu cu tunet mare – My Powerful Longing*).

c) Out of the total of 40 poems, 5 poems have titles made up of a clause or a sentence:

- one poem has the title expressed by a sentence made up of two clauses: a main clause and a Direct Object clause: *Ştiu că sunt lut* (*I Know I Am Made of Ashes*);

- 4 poems have the title made up of a clause: *Ziua-n oraş vin pădurile* (*The Forests Come to the City at Daytime*); *Puternice sunteţi* (*You Are Powerful*); *Adu-mi mârţoaga din grajd* (*Bring Me the Old Rip from the Stables*); *Atâta ştiu* (*This Is All that I Know*).

3. Insight into the thematic structure of the poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*)

As regards the **thematic structure** of this poetic cycle, generally speaking, it can be concluded that there are some prevailing ideas: the impossible accession to the divine core within ourselves which, sometimes, is not perceived at all and, some other times, is perceived, but this perception is extremely painful because people realize they can not expand this core to their entire being; the contemporary human inability to regain its divine human condition before the fall; extreme inner fights; the human lucidity regarding the inability to ascend spiritually enhances the internal drama; the tragic human condition which is self-limited.

Undoubtedly, most of the poems have a religious, meditative dimension: *Uşile* (*The Doors*), *Ştiu că sunt lut* (*I Know I Am Made of Ashes*), *Secol* (*Century*), *Singurătate* (*Loneliness*), *Din când în când* (*From Time to Time*), *Phoenix* (*Phoenix*), *Laudă suferinţei* (*Praise of Suffering*), *Cavalcadă* (*Cavalcade*), *Ziceam* (*I Used to Say*), *Purificare* (*Purification*), *Răzvrătire* (*Rebellion*). There are poems presenting the human condition after the fall: *Silex* (*Flint*), *Atâta ştiu* (*This Is All that I Know*), *Cimitirul oraşului* (*The City Graveyard*).

There are also love poems – *Dor* (*Longing*), *Dorul meu cu tunet mare* (*My Powerful Longing*), *Nuferi* (*Water Lilies*) –, poems that have a French theme – *Triptic molieresc – Monsieur Jourdain, Harpagon, Tartuffe* (*Moliere Triptych – Mr. Jourdain, Harpagon, Tartuffe*), *Soldaţii lui Bonaparte* (*Bonaparte's Soldiers*) – and poems that underline the poets's love for books – *Manuale de geografie* (*Geography Textbooks*).

Mention should be made of the fact that some poems are built on an antonymic structure which points out the dichotomous-antonymic mechanism

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of thinking underlying them. Such poems are *Din când în când* (*From Time to Time*), *Ştiu că sunt lut* (*I Know I Am Made of Ashes*), *Laudă suferinţei* (*Praise of Suffering*), *Phoenix*, *Cavalcadă* (*Cavalcade*), *Ziceam* (*I Used to Say*), *Purificare* (*Purification*), *Răzvrătire* (*Rebellion*), *Păreri de rău* (*Regrets*).

Din când în când (*From Time to Time*) is, probably, the most beautiful expression of a human being's longing for HOME, i.e. the privileged state before the fall. In this poem, the antonymic structure is established between the present state of the human being before the fall and the former state of beings before the fall:

The present state of the human being before the fall	**The former state of beings before the fall**
„carne înveninată" (embittered flesh)	„rai" (heaven)
„aş tot urca" (I would climb and climb)	„sus" (up)
„m-aş tot duce" (I would go and go)	„stele" (stars)
„crâncen dor" (terrible longing)	„cer" (sky)
„aprig dram nedus" (ardent still piece)	„jărăgai" (embers)
„am uitat" (I forgot)	„crâmpeie verzi din aripile mele" (green slivers of my wings)
„să urc" (to climb)	„sfere"(spheres)
„să sui" (to climb)	„în ceruri" (in heaven)
„rostogolire moale şi afundă" (soft, deep rolling)	„rădăcina" (the root)
„carnea mă scuipă" (the flesh is spitting me out)	„vocea mea uitată" (my forgotten voice)

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The present state of the human being before the fall	**The former state of beings before the fall**
„să cad" (to fall)	„glasul meu rămas în alte ere" (my voice remaining in other ages)
„iad" (hell)	
„cenuşa feţei mele de-altă dată" (the ashes of my face of yesteryear)	

As it can be seen from the above table, the present state of the human being before the fall is expressed by means of epithets („înveninată" – "embittered", „crâncen" – "terrible", „aprig" – "ardent"), of verbs („a urca" – "to climb", „a se duce" – "to go") and of adverbs („mai" – „still"). On the other hand, the lost heaven is mostly expressed by means of nouns („rai" – "heaven", „stele" – "stars", „cer" – "sky", „jărăgai" – "embers", „sfere" – "spheres", „rădăcina" – "root", „ceruri" – "heavens") and of epithets rendered by past participles („uitată" – "forgotten", „rămas" – "remaining") and of adverbs („sus" – "up").

The journey of the human being towards his former state is made up of innumerable falls and liftings. This idea is expressed by temporal phrases: „din când în când" („from time to time") and adverbs: „tot" – "still"; „greu" – "tough". The entire poem is built on pairs of dichotomies: the human being's lack of courage to get access to his former condition, on the one hand, his inner struggle resulted from the discrepancy wish/desire–ability/capability; on the other hand, the complacency in the fallen state vs. the pursuit of the desire consisting in reaching the state before the fall.

The poem has 6 stanzas, which are built in the following way:

I. The poet feels the desire to get back HOME, in heaven;
II. The poet tries to explain this feeling to himself;
III. -"-
IV. For just a moment, the poet starts to climb;
V. The poet's climbing and fall;
VI. The conclusion is the presentation of the dichotomy: „iad" – hell – (the poet's present world) – „rădăcina" – root – (which is still in heaven).

The idea of margin, limitation, is also presented by means of presenting the difficulty of the poet's pursuit:

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- bolovăniş (boulders) – noun;

- („să urc) pieptiş", „târâş", „pe brânci", „pe coate" ("to climb) up straight", "crawling", "on all fours", "on my elbows" – adverbials of manner.

The poem *Ştiu că sunt lut* (*I Know I Am Made of Ashes*), is built on the dichotomy human-divine. The poet seems to accept his human condition but there is always something that reminds him the fact that he is more than this. There are permanent attempts to regain his divine condition.

Human	**Divine**
„lut" (ashes)	„albine stranii" (strange bees)
„mărăcine" (thorn)	„mir" (chrism)
„bălării" (weeds)	„împărtăşanii" (communion)
„mofturi mici", „biete fleacuri" (small whims, poor trifles)	„minune vie" (living wonder)
„colţ" (corner)	„împărăţie" (kingdom)
„petic"(patch)	„taină" (mystery)
„baltă" (puddle)	„mări" (seas)
„zi" (day)	„veacuri" (ages)
„mă saltă de-o şchioapă" (plucks me up)	„urcă în cer" (rises to the sky)

As it can be seen from the above table, both the human and the divine condition are expressed mostly by nouns.

Laudă suferinţei (*Praise of Suffering*) is the poetic demonstration of a basic Christian idea, namely that without suffering, without accepting the "cross", nobody is allowed to have access to the divine world. Only by suffering one is purified by the negativity within himself and gets rid of passions. The very attempt to become a better man is, in itself, a suffering and the suffering is a pray, as Gyr says.The poet seems to be at a lack of words to praise the suffering: „Mi-e prea aspru graiul/versu-i de asfalt…" ("My voice is too hoarse,/ my verse is too much concrete…").

Therefore, this poem is based on the dichotomy between a world based on humanly passions and an existence purified by passions by means of suffering:

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A world based on humanly passions	**An existence purified by passions by means of suffering**
„laudă săracă” (poor praise)	„urcuş sfânt” (holy climb)
„imnul plăpând”(puny hymn)	„vârf arzând” (burning peak)
„aspru graiul” (rough speech)	„cerul” (the sky)
„versul-i de asfalt” (its concrete verse)	„raiul” (heaven)
„amurg sur” (ashen sunset)	„pisc înalt” (high peak)
„târâtorii jnepi” (crawling juniper)	„omăt pur” (pure snow)
„colţi de stânci” (rock cusps)	„şoimii albaştri” (blue falcons)
„vechiul sterp noroi” (the old barren mud)	„culmi” (summits)
„zgură” (scale)	„tânără zăpadă” (young snow)
„lut” (clay)	„alb şi sfânt Negoi” (white holy Negoiu)
„mlaştini” (bogs)	„creastă pură” (pure crest)
„humă” (loam)	„bulgăr străveziu” (pellucid ball)
„zdrenţe” (rags)	„fraged aer” (tender air)
„jugaştrii” (field maples)	„nămeţi” (snow-drifts)
	„transparenţe” (transparencies)
	„rană înaltă” (high wound)
	„aurora” (aurora)
	„jar” (embers)
	„marea creastă” (the great peak)
	„urc pe brânci” (climbing on all fours)

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	„las fâşii din mine” (leaving strips of myself behind)

As it can be seen from the above table, in order to express this dichotomy, poet resorts mainly to nouns and epithets.

Phoenix is a reference to the capacity of human nature to reborn from its own ashes just like the bird Phoenix from mythology i.e. the humans' permanent renewed attempt to reach the divine world after repeated failures. In this case, the dichotomy is built between discouragement/aspiration:

Discouragement	**Aspiration**
„lutule înveninat” (embittered clay)	„petic” (patch)
„zdreanţă”(rag)	„schele noi” (new scaffolds)
„scrum” (ash)	„noi seminţe” (new seeds)
„prăpăd” (calamity)	„mare foame de credinţă” (great hunger for faith)
„ereţi” (pigeon hawks)	„pofta de a lupta” (the lust for fight)
„rană” (wound)	„alt cer” (another sky)
„aripi frânte” (broken wings)	„alt zbor” (another flight)
„prăbuşirea ta” (your collapse)	„văzduh” (heaven)
„lut” (clay)	„aştrii” (stars)
„molozul” (the rubble)	„re-nvie” (resurrect)
„praful” (the dust)	„să răzbaţi” (to break through)
„scama” (the lint)	„zdrenţele nădejdii” (the rags of hope)
„frângeri” (breakage)	„dezmăţata lăcomie” (the filthy greed)
„căderi” (falls)	
„teama” (the fear)	
„să nu mai speri” (do not hope)	

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„să nu mai creşti noi pene" (do not grow new feathers)	
„tăciuni" (cinders)	
„aşchii" (splinters)	
„frânturi" (pieces)	
„smârc" (quagmire)	
„putredă lene" (rotten idleness)	
„spaima" (the fright)	
„hârburi" (clunkers)	

As it can be seen from the above table, in order to express this dichotomy, poet resorts mainly to nouns and epithets.

Cavalcadă (*Cavalcade*) presents the difficulty of choosing and keeping the right path in life, the sacrifices, the struggle against discouragement and intimidation: „şchioapăt" – "limp", „împroşcat cu smoală" – "splashed with tar", „cad în fiece vâlcea" – "I fall in every glen", „las zdrenţe în fiece scaiete" – "I leave rags on every thorn", „leg altă rană" – "I bandage another wound", „julit" – "grazed". One should never abandon his/her ideal: „Cred într-un crâmpei de stea." – "I believe in a sliver of a star". In the case of this poem, the dichotomy is built between two adverbs/adverbial phrases: „în urma lor" ("behind them") – „'naintea lor" ("before them"). This dichotomy is a religious one and it points to the fact that "the last shall be the first". No one should be discouraged by that fact that, in this world, seems to be an outcast because he/she lives according to God's Ten Commandments.

4. Insight into the stylistic structure of the poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*)

As regards the **stylistic structure** of this poetic cycle, we can underline the fact that Gyr does not make use of figures of style in excess. Even if, from the point of view of number, the epithets prevail, however, the comparisons are, by far, the most interesting and intriguing. Here are a few examples of such **comparisons**:

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- împăcarea „ca un mir" – "reconcilement like chrism" (*Purificare – Purification*);

- linişte „încovoiată ca un cer" – silence "curved like a sky" (*Purificare – Purification*);

- „Rămasă pe fotolii ca o brumă,/ Lumina stinsă-a fiecărui gest." – "Remaining on armchairs like rime/ The subdued light of each gesture" (*Reconstituire – Reconstitution*);

- freamăt „ca o rugăciune" – bustle "like a prayer" (*Pont-Euxin*);

- „Eu zac tolănit la picioarele mele,/ ca iarba la poalele muntelui-nalt" – "I am sprawled at my feet/ like grass at the foot of the high mountain" (*Umbra de fier – The Iron Shadow*);

- „Şi umbra mea are aripi ca heruvii/ şi braţele-i par două jerbe de foc" – "And my shadow has cherub's wings/ and its arms seem two showers of fire" (*Umbra de fier – The Iron Shadow*);

- „Cugetul meu însă, răzvrătit, aşteaptă/ din adânc să iasă ca din iaz o ştimă" – "But my rebelling thought is waiting/ for a naiad to come out of the river" (*Răzvrătire – Rebellion*);

- „Fără somn ar scoate, chiar şi-n ziua-a şaptea,/ Tainele ca melcii leneşi din cochilii" – "Sleeplessly it would take out, even on the seventh day, / Mysteries like idle snails in their shells" (*Răzvrătire – Rebellion*);

- „Ca pe-un snop de grâne coapte,/ cuprind la piept lumina lui." – "Like a bundle of ripe grains/ I embrace its light". (*Pragul de piatră – The Stone Threshold*);

- „Cum secolii de umeri se-anină/ Ca nişte alge prinse de-o galeră". – "As centuries hang from shoulders/ Like algae clinging to a galley". (*Pont-Euxin*);

- „Îţi port mister-n sânge de milenii/ Ca umbra scrisă pe genune". – "I carry your mystery in my blood for centuries/ Like the shadow inscribed upon the abyss". (*Pont-Euxin*); etc.

Surprisingly enough, the poet makes little use of **metaphors**:

- „tăcerea-i cuminecătură" – "silence is communion" (*Purificare – Purification*);

- „cearcăn de lumină" – "circle of light" (*Purificare – Purification*);

- „Brazdele noastre miros a sânge/şi pâinea noastră-a măcel" – "Our furrows smell of blood/and our bread smells of slaughter" (*Secol – Century*);

- „Fiece vorbă e o grenadă/ orice privire, fulmicoton" – "Each word is a grenade/ each gaze, blasting gelatin" (*Secol – Century*); etc.

- „Sunt vulturul care a căzut din lună" – "I am the eagle fallen from the moon" (*Silex – Flint*);

- „râpile cu dinţi" – "the toothed ravines" (*Silex – Flint*);

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- „mă spintecă amintirile" – "memories slash me" (*Silex – Flint*);
- „scrumul clipei" – "the ashes of the moment" (*Silex – Flint*);
- „salcâmul clănţăne din oase" – "the acacia clatters its bones" (*Salcâmul de lângă fereastră – The Acacia by the Window*);
- „vămi de fontă şi stele" – "customs of cast iron and stars" (*Umbra de fier – The Iron Shadow*);
- „lespezi de timp" – "slabs of time" (*Umbra de fier – The Iron Shadow*);
- „boccea de întrebări" – "a pack of questions" (*Moartea filosofului – The Philosopher's Death*); etc.

As far as the **epithets** are concerned, they outnumber, by far, all the other figures of speech. Most of them are simple, only a few are double („fum subţire şi molatic" – *Salcia* – "thin soft smoke" – *The Willow*; „verde curcubeu înalt – *Purificare* – "green high rainbow" – *Purification*; „vulturi uriaşi de aramă" – *Noapte de dragoste* – "huge bronze eagles" – *Night of Love*; „aspre nechezuri lungi – *Noapte de dragoste* – "long rough neighing" – *Night of Love*; „dragi nimicuri uriaşe" – *Păreri de rău* – "dear huge trifles" – *Regrets*) or triple („tragic, unic şi cumplit Dumnezeu" – *Singurătate* – "tragic, unique and terrible God" – *Solitude*). As regards the simple epithets, most of them are chromatic epithets: „alba-ncăpere" – *Uşile* – "the white room" – *The Doors*; „camera-albastră" – *Uşile* – "the blue room" – *The Doors*; „galbena uşă" – *Uşile* – "the yellow door" – *The Doors*; „somnul verde" – *Salcia* – "the green sleep" – *The Willow*; „stâncile albaste" – *Silex* – "the blue rocks" – *Silex*; „crengii albe" – *Salcâmul de lângă fereastră* – "the white branch" – *The Acacia by the Window*; „tăcerii negre" – *Răzvrătire* – "black silence" – *Rebellion* etc. Mention should also be made of synaesthetic epithets, which surprise us because they put together words coming from various sense domains: „liniști reci şi grave" – *Salcia* – "cold grave silences" – *The Willow*; „putreda lumină" – *Salcia* – "the rotten light" – *The Willow*; „linişte de silex" – *Silex* – "silex silence" – *Silex*; „ncleştărilor ei reci" – *Silex* – "its cold clashes" – *Silex*; „zbuciume fierbinţi" – *Silex* – "hot throbs" – *Silex*; „asprele artere minerale" – *Silex* – "the rough mineral arteries" – *Silex*; „carne pârguită" – *Noapte de dragoste* – "ripe flesh" – *Night of Love*; „şoapte învăpăiate" – *Noapte de dragoste* – "fiery whispers" – *Night of Love*; „coapse dulci" – *Noapte de dragoste* – "sweet hips" – *Night of Love*; „pântec de aur" – *Noapte de dragoste* – "golden womb" – *Night of Love*; „vuiet greu" – *Răzvrătire* – "heavy roar" – *Rebellion*; „noapte densă" – *Răzvrătire* – "dense night" – *Rebellion*; „lâncedelor linii" – *Răzvrătire* – "lazy lines" – *Rebellion*; „genuni rigide" – *Răzvrătire* – "rigid abysses" – *Rebellion*; „lacătele mute" – *Răzvrătire* – "dumb locks" – *Rebellion*; „putredu-apus" – *Umbra de fier* –

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"rotten sunset" – *The Iron Shadow*; „copci de oţel" – *Umbra de fier* – "steel hooks" – *The Iron Shadow*; „vlagă grea" – *Pragul de piatră* – "heavy sap" – *The Stone Threshold*; „fierbinţi căinţe" – *Păreri de rău* – "bitter regrets" – *Regrets*; etc. It is interesting to notice the fact that the idea of limitation is often expressed by means of epithets: „uşa grea" *Uşile* – "the heavy door" – *The Doors*;, „cerul închis" – *Uşile* – "the closed sky" – *The Doors*; „ferecatele uşi" – *Uşile* – "the locked doors" – *The Doors*; „grozave zăvoare" – *Uşile* – "wondrous locks" – *The Doors*; „închisori adânci" – *Secol* – "deep prisons" – *Century*; „tăcerile de veci" – *Silex* – "age-old silences" – *Silex*; „slutului ei iad" – *Salcâmul de lângă fereastră* – "its ugly hell" – *The Acacia by the Window*; „jgheabul scund" – *Salcâmul de lângă fereastră* – "the small eaves" – *The Acacia by the Window*; „tainele amare" – *Salcâmul de lângă fereastră* – "bitter secrets" – *The Acacia by the Window*; „lumina stinsă" – *Reconstituire* – "the subdued light" – *Reconstitution*; „dogmă neclintită" – *Răzvrătire* – "unflinching dogma" – *Rebellion*; „genuni rigide" – *Răzvrătire* – "rigid abysses" – *Rebellion*; „lacătele mute" *Răzvrătire* – "silent locks" – *Rebellion*; „tăcerii negre" – *Răzvrătire* – "black silence" – *Rebellion*; „străşnica foame" – *Moartea filosofului* – "terrible hunger" – *The Philosopher's Death*; „braţe moi" – *Moartea filosofului* – "soft arms" – *The Philosopher's Death*; „părelnice icoane" – *Pont-Euxin* – "apparent icons" – *Pontus-Euxinus*; „neguri subterane" – *Pont-Euxin* – "underground fogs" – *Pontus-Euxinus*; „bezne seculare" – *Pont-Euxin* – "century-old darkness" – *Pontus-Euxinus*; „ţărm trist" – *Pont-Euxin* – "sad shore" – *Pontus-Euxinus* etc.

5. The versification of the poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*)

We will proceed by a short presentation of the **versification** used by Gyr in the poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*). As regards **the stanza**, we can say that the quatrain is most frequently used. Thus, out of the total of 40 poems, 33 poems use the four-line stanza, one poem contains a five-line stanza – *Dor* (*Longing*) and one poem contains a seven-line stanza – *Cavalcadă* (*Cavalcade*). Five poems do not contain the same number of lines contained by a stanza. Thus, the poem *Singurătate* (*Loneliness*) has the following number of lines per stanza: 3-6-5-6-4-4-4-5-6-2, the poem *Prometeu* (*Prometheus*) (1 line +) 6-4-12-4-4-3-5-5-4-4-5-9-3-3-3 (+1 line), the poem *Laudă suferinţei* (*Praise to Suffering*) 4-8-8-4-8-8-8-4-4, the poem *Puternice sunteţi* (*You Are Powerful*) 6+7+6+7+6+10+5+4 and the poem *Soldaţii lui Bonaparte* (*Bonaparte's Soldiers*) 6-4-6-4-6-4. From the point of

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view of **the rhyme**, mention can be made of the fact that, out of the total of 40 poems: 21 poems have an *a b a b* rhyming scheme – *Ştiu că sunt lut* (*I Know I Am Made of Ashes*), *Salcia* (*The Willow*), *Silex* (*Flint*), *Reconstituire* (*Reconstitution*), *Purificare* (*Purification*), *Răzvrătire* (*Rebellion*), *Umbra de fier* (*The Iron Shadow*), *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*), *Manuale de geografie* (*Geography Textbooks*), *Pont-Euxin*, *Phoenix*, *Rugina* (*Rust*), *Vânătoare* (*Hunting*), *Ziua-n oraş vin pădurile* (*Forests Come In Town During the day*), *Circuit* (*Circuit*), *Nuferi* (*Water Lilies*), *Ziceam* (*I Used to Say*), *Ţapul sălbatic* (*The Wild Goat*), *Cimitirul oraşului* (*The City Graveyard*), *Adu-mârţoaga din grajd* (*Bring Me the Old Rip from the Stables*), *Tartuffe*; 3 poems have an *aa bb* rhyming scheme – *Uşile* (*The Doors*); *Dorul meu cu tunet mare* (*My Powerful Longing*); *Atâta ştiu* (*This Is All that I Know*); 7 poems have an *a bb a* rhyming scheme – *Salcâmul de lângă fereastră* (*The Acacia by the Window*), *Moartea filosofului* (*The Philosopher's Death*), *Păreri de rău* (*Regrets*), *Din când în când* (*From Time to Time*), *Creanga de aur* (*The Golden Bough*), *Triptic molieresc*. *Monsieur Jourdain* (*Moliere Triptych – Mr. Jourdain*), *Harpagon*. Apart from these, there are 9 poems which can not be included in any of the above mentioned categories: *Secol* (*Century*), *Singurătate* (*Loneliness*), *Noapte de dragoste* (*Night of Love*), *Prometeu* (*Prometheus*), *Laudă suferinţei* (*Praise of Suffering*), *Cavalcadă* (*Cavalcade*), *Dor* (*Longing*), *Puternice sunteţi* (*You Are Powerful*), *Soldaţii lui Bonaparte* (*Bonaparte's Soldiers*).

6. Conclusions

According to Radu Gyr, national identity is the communion with the soul of the nation and the communion with God. Throughout the entire poetic cycle *Pragul de piatră* (*The Stone Threshold*), one can easily notice his strong belief in the the unfading, everlasting values arising out of one's love for one's country and for God. Salvation from evil and the power to overcome any obstacles come from the unbounded belief in God. One must not give up hope and must continue to fight doubt and despair. Fear must be subdued and this can only be accomplished if one is aware that every person is the creation of God and has an immortal soul. Several stages of spiritual life must be experienced in order to break the chains of everything subjected to deterioration and this difficult, painful passage, marked by unavoidable falls and come-backs, is guided by the endless longing for God. Paradoxically, physical isolation can accelerate the process of spiritual deliverance. A cell can be a way to freedom because it helps you concentrate on the inside and suffering is the quickest and safest way of knowing yourself, of fighting

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indifference, of becoming aware of God's presence inside you. In this light, the stone threshold can be seen as a metaphor of suffering, essential to discover your true self. Not running away from suffering but the conscious acceptance of suffering can also be seen as a means of redemption of individual and national sins.

Radu Gyr's poems are the result of some unbearable sufferings and, above all, are the proof that these sufferings can make a human being exceed any limit and purify his/her soul in search of the divine core within.

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