

BALKANISTICA

Volume 25:1
2012

Edited by
Donald L. Dyer

Published for
The South East European Studies Association

- Friedman, V. 2010. Introduction. *Bai Ganyo: Incredible Tales of a Modern Bulgarian*, Friedman, V. (ed.), V. Friedman, C. Kramer, G. Fielder, and C. Rudin (trans.) Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, pp. 3-11.
- Giles, H., J. Coupland and N. Coupland. 1991. "Accommodation Theory: Communication, Context, and Consequence," *Contexts of Accommodation: Developments in Applied Sociolinguistics*, Giles, H., J. Coupland and N. Coupland (eds). Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-68.
- Goldman, M. 2008. Language, Satire, and Heteroglossia in the *Cena Trimalchionis*. *Helios* 35:1, pp. 49-65.
- Gyllin, R. 1991. *The Genesis of the Modern Bulgarian Literary Language*. Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University.
- Hauge, K. 2002. Bulgarian Pragmatic Particles Borrowed from Turkish. *Balkanistica* 15, pp. 217-37.
- Lotman, Yu. 1990. *Universe of the Mind*. Translated by A. Shukman. London: Tauris Press.
- Mollova, M. 1988. "Sur quelques turcismes en bulgare," *Južnoslovenski filolog* 44, pp. 29-44
- Noël, D. 2003. "Translations as Evidence for Semantics: An Illustration," *Linguistics* 41(4), pp. 757-85.
- Silverstein, M. 2003. "Indexical Order and the Dialectics of Sociolinguistic Life," *Language and Communication* 23(3-4), pp. 193-229.
- Tardy, C. and P. Matsuda. 2009. The Construction of Author Voice by Editorial Board Members. *Written Communication* 26:1, pp. 32-52.
- Voloshinov, V. 1986. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- White, P. 2000. "Dialogue and Inter-Subjectivity; Reinterpreting the Semantics of Modality and Hedging," *Working with Dialogue*, Coulthard, M., et al. (eds). Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, pp. 67-80.

The Languages of *Bai Ganyo*: Codeswitching as Social Commentary

Victor A. Friedman
University of Chicago

Just as can happen in the polyglot Balkans itself, so too in Aleko Konstantinov's *Bai Ganyo* different languages signal social, political and historical commentary. Moreover, the languages of *Bai Ganyo* serve to index one of the novel's major thematic dichotomies: the Ottoman East and non-Ottoman "Europe," with Slavic playing a complex intermediate role. Aleko's deployment of various languages is one of the stylistic devices that he uses to convey the value systems associated with these two worlds that are at times explicit and at times implicit in the novel itself. While Aleko's use of Turkisms in Bulgarian is an obvious example of the expected contrast (see Rudin this volume, and also Kramer 1992), in fact his use of Turkish (as opposed to Turkisms) actually has a significantly different function. At the same time, Aleko uses other languages both to signal his own point of view and the that of his characters. The various languages of *Bai Ganyo* are thus a part of both its artistic effect and its social commentary. In this article, I shall examine how these languages function to construct Aleko's world and that of *Bai Ganyo*. For the most part, the languages of *Bai Ganyo* are deployed either to signal humor or mockery or else to express sympathy, at times with a sense of coloring for emotional involvement or authenticity.

The abovementioned opposition of Ottoman/non-Ottoman is itself based on the historical background of *Bai Ganyo*. As I wrote in my introduction to our new translation:

When *Bai Ganyo* was written, the modern Bulgarian state was less than twenty years old, having only recently emerged piecemeal from the Ottoman Empire with the help of czarist Russia, whose designs on the fledgling country left Bulgaria's citizens with a deeply ambivalent attitude. Bulgarians experienced a clash between the old values of a largely agrarian former Turkish territory and those of a new, modernizing European country, indexed by, among other things, *Bai Ganyo*'s attire: a Bulgarian brimless, peaked fur cap (*kalpak*), boots,

and a peasant's sash and collarless shirt underneath an urban West European vest and frock coat (Friedman 2010: 4).

Like Bai Ganyo's clothes, his languages and those of the novel are also indexical. In addition to his native Bulgarian, Aleko used eleven other languages in his novel, and while modern Bulgarian editions frequently provide translations in footnotes, Aleko's original did not. It can be argued that unannotated codeswitching in Bai Ganyo represents Balkan practice, West European hegemony and, as indicated above, an additional means by which Aleko provided implicit commentary both by and on his characters.

The eleven non-Bulgarian languages of Bai Ganyo can be divided into four groups based on a combination of who uses them and Aleko's stylistic intent. The languages and groups are the following:

- I. Ottoman = non-Slavic Balkan = Turkish, Romanian, and Albanian
- II. non-Ottoman = three sub-groups
 - (a) European = French, German, Italian, and Latin
 - (b) Slavic = Serbian, Russian, and Czech
 - (c) incomprehensible = Hungarian

I should note immediately that some of these languages have more than one valence in the novel, and that these multiple valences represent the complexities of Aleko's world and worldview.

The first foreign language to be used in Bai Ganyo occurs in *Bai Ganyo Sets Off* and is not really a language at all but rather the imitation of one, namely Hungarian. Its first occurrence is when Aleko's narrator describes the sound of the stationmaster announcing the directions of trains in one of Budapest's three stations:

Hö-gōsh-fō-kō-tō-he-gi, Kish-kō-rōsh, Se-ge-din, Uy-ve-dek (*Bai Ganyo Sets Off*, p. 16)

In Aleko's rendering, there are four towns, but in fact the actual places are five: Horgos, Feketehegy (Visegrad), Kiskörös, Szeged (Segedin in Serbian), Újvidék (Novi Sad, now in Serbia). Later in the chapter, Bai Ganyo himself imitates Hungarian:

I startled some guy and he shouted something at me in Hungarian — *heke meke ... (Bai Ganyo Sets Off, p. 17).*

Aleko's use of Hungarian fits the popular stereotype of this language as difficult and unlearnable. As with Finnish and Estonian, Europe's other nation-state Uralic languages, speakers themselves are aware of the difficulty of their languages for speakers of Indo-European languages and take great pride in this fact, as can be seen, for example, in their folk tales of the man who made a bet with the Devil that he (the Devil) would not be able to learn the relevant language and won. (The same tale also occurs in Basque.) Thus the place of the "incomprehensible" Hungarian is humorous, although at the same time it enhances the local color of the Pest train station. Bai Ganyo's *heke meke* could just as easily have been spoken by Aleko himself.

While Hungarian is, strictly speaking, a language of the Europe that Aleko admires, Aleko does not take it seriously, hence my label of *incomprehensible*. Turning now to the languages that I have labeled *European*, we can observe that while Aleko admires the speakers of these languages, his actual deployment of codeswitching that uses them is almost always to mock either Bai Ganyo's lack of Europeanization or to highlight his hypocrisy or that of the unscrupulous among his fellow-countrymen. The following quotation is illustrative of the first point. Bai Ganyo has awakened in a strange house and does not know how to find the bathroom.

It's very bad when a person abroad doesn't know the language; they can't understand you even regarding the most basic things. You have explain to them using your hands, point with your fingers. And it's not like everything can be acted out. Bai Ganyo knew several languages. He could speak Turkish like a real Turk; he understood Romanian; he had a smattering of Serbian and Russian, but the Germans and the Czechs didn't understand a single one of these languages. You couldn't say that Bai Ganyo didn't know any German at all; he did know a word or two. [...] he mentally composed a phrase in German that would correspond to our "Where is the you-know-what for number two?" and finally cobbled together as a translation the phrase, "*Wo ist diese für gross Arbeit?*" (*Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting*, p. 61).

Elsewhere Bai Ganyo orders coffee in bad French (*Bai Ganyo in Switzerland*, p. 76), the point being that even though Bai Ganyo travels around Europe, he fails to learn from it, a topic to which I shall return later. One occurrence of Italian is a reference by the narrator to Verdi — Aleko's favorite composer:

Grandissimo maestro Verdi! You don't have, you can't have, enemies! But if, God forbid, such a monster were to appear, it would be Satan himself. God is great, *Esimio Maestro*, and all the arrows of the Evil Spirit are powerless against you! One means alone, just one, can the Tempter use and ... and the entire musical world will be covered in mourning. We will pray, you pray, too, *Divin Maestro*, to the Almighty Creator, lest Satan be allowed to lead you into the salon where Bai Ganyo is singing "Terrible Is the Night" (*Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting*, p. 70).

Here Aleko is speaking with his own voice, and the Italian is simply to add to the contrast between Bai Ganyo and his pretensions. Italian occurs again in *Bai Ganyo the Journalist* (p. 120), when the narrator uses *far niente* as well as the German *fräuleins* in describing a scene in which he and his company are relaxing in the back room of a restaurant. These are non-ironic Europeanisms, meant to index precisely those qualities that are opposed to Bai Ganyo's *kef* and "that kind of girl." As Kramer (this volume) points out, however, the attitude toward women is underlyingly the same, and, we can add, the difference between *far niente* and *kef* echoes that between *supa* and *chorba* in *Bai Ganyo at Jirechek's* (p. 27). While in the latter case Aleko is mocking Bai Ganyo's pretensions, in the former he is arguably engaging in the same valuation of "Europe" using his own voice.

Aleko deploys Latin only in Part Two. The first three occurrences are in *Bai Ganyo Returns from Europe* (pp. 91, 98, 99), and the fourth is in *Bai Ganyo the Journalist*. In both these chapters, Aleko was criticizing the post-1878 mud-slinging press that later found its echoes in the post-1989 press of the same type. The first occurrence — *Et tu, Ozhilka, et tu, Brute?* is in humorous banter among the narrators, but the others are all expressions used by Bai Ganyo and his circle as empty, pretentious phrases intended to lend an air of gravity to their scheming:

"This is a very serious matter," said Ganyo the Lawyer. "And do you know why it's so serious? It's because those other papers, damn them, have already taken all the good names. They haven't left anything for us. But we'll come up with something. I think it would be best to call our paper *Justice*, and then we'll add in parentheses 'fin du siècle.'" "

"Huh?"

"That's a French expression. You don't know it."

"We don't want any French. Put in something in Latin, if you can. It's customary."

"How about 'tempora mutantur' ...?" (*Bai Ganyo the Journalist*, p. 130).

For the most part, then, French, German and Latin are used by Ganyo and his crowd, whereas Italian is the preserve of Aleko's narrators. In every case, however, the (west) European language highlights the non-"Europeanness" of Bai Ganyo.

Unlike the deployment of what I have labeled *European* languages, where Aleko's usage represents his unalloyed approval of Europe and criticism of its misappropriation by Bai Ganyo and the likes of Bai Ganyo, Aleko's deployment of *Slavic* languages (other than Bulgarian, of course) is representative of the complexity of Bulgaria's political relations with other Slavic-speaking countries and regions. Serbia is a hostile competitor, Russia is scheming, and the Czechs are friendly but distant. It can be argued that given the ideology of pan-Slavism that was particularly salient in Aleko's day, his deployment of other Slavic languages points distinctly away from such ideology. This is consistent with Bulgaria's historical position *vis-à-vis* Serbian and Russian interpretations of pan-Slavism as a justifying domination.

Serbian occurs only once, when the lights fail on the Bulgarian train taking the Bulgarian delegation to the Prague exhibition just as they are approaching the Bulgarian-Serbian border, and Bai Ganyo says:

"See that one over there, that Serbian clerk? The guy's laughing. Of course he's laughing." And Bai Ganyo's patriotism, once aroused, wouldn't permit him to put up with a Serb laughing at him. He scowled at the fellow.

"You there! What's so funny, huh?" And he wanted to jump out of the car and have it out with the Serb. What a hero!

"Shh! Bai Ganyo, take it easy," begged the passengers. "Don't cause a scandal. Keep in mind that you're entering Serbia."

"Yeah? So what if I am entering Serbia? What're they going to do, scare me? What about Slivnitsa? Have they forgotten how they cried, 'Retreat, brothers!' at the battle of Slivnitsa?" Then an obscenity burst forth from Bai Ganyo's mouth like a bomb (*Bai Ganyo at the Prague Exhibition*, pp. 35-36).

In the original, "Retreat brothers!" is in Bulgarian-accented Serbian (*natrak brača*), which for Aleko's audience serves to emphasize the scene. In our translation, however, this nuance simply had to be lost since it would have interrupted the flow too much. The point of both Bai Ganyo's braggadocio and Bulgaria's problematic relationship with its only Slavic-speaking nation-state neighbor are both clear from the context and my footnotes, and we were aiming for a popular as well as an academic audience. The paragraph immediately following this also emphasizes the problem of Bulgaria's difficult relationship with Serbia:

Somehow or other we managed to cross Serbia. But don't think we managed it in peace and quiet. Oh no! Bulgarians are no fools! Bai Ganyo never missed a chance to take a jab at the Serbs, to remind them of Slivnitsa. In Nish and even in Belgrade he asked all the clerks and porters, "You're really a Bulgarian, aren't you? C'mon, admit it. You're all Bulgarians, but you're trying to turn yourselves into Serbs!" (*Bai Ganyo at the Prague Exhibition*, p. 36).

Here Aleko is mocking an exaggeration of Bulgarian territorial pretensions. Serbia and Bulgaria justified their competing claims to disputed territories by maintaining that the population in the affected regions was Serbian or Bulgarian, respectively. At the time Aleko was writing, Bulgaria and Serbia had already gone to war once (1885) over their competing territorial claims. They would do so again officially three times in the five decades that followed *Bai Ganyo's* publication (1913, 1914-18, 1941-44), and even today, Bulgarian dialectologists continue to claim southern Serbia well past Nish, albeit not all the way to Belgrade (Kočev 2001).

Russian, too, is problematic for Aleko — just as Russia was for Bulgaria in his day — but in ways different from the problematic relationship with Serbia. Bulgaria had an ambivalent relationship with Russia, since the Russian army was crucial in establishing an independent Bulgarian nation-state, but the Russian government made use of this fact to interfere in Bulgarian internal affairs, to the point that annexation as the Trans-Danubian Province (in Russian *Zadunajskaja gubernaja*) was a real fear — a fear whose tenacity can be seen in the fact that such annexation was rumored to have also been proposed by Todor Zhivkov during the communist period. Aleko's use of Russian indexes this problematic relationship. Bai Ganyo and his companions use Russian words when discussing how to take advantage of Bulgaria's renewed relationship with Russia after a nine-year hiatus, during which relations between the two countries had been ruptured owing to Russia's foiled attempt to sponsor an army-led coup (*Bai Ganyo the Journalist*, pp. 125-26). In *Bai Ganyo in the Delegation* (pp. 136-39), which is set in Russia but is really about Bulgaria's relationship to its gigantic big brother, Aleko quoted verbatim in Russian from contemporary newspaper accounts of the Bulgarian delegation whose trip signaled the rapprochement. Aleko is clearly mocking that press in these passages. In general, the story serves as a vehicle for Aleko's political opinions at that time.

The use of Czech, by contrast, is generally sympathetic and usually for the sake of local color, as in the oft-repeated greeting *nazdar*. The other uses of Czech in *Bai Ganyo* illustrate the mutual unintelligibility of Czech and Bulgarian, such as when the barber, not understanding Bai Ganyo, asks the narrator: *Co pan mluvi?* "What is the gentleman saying?" (*Bai Ganyo at the Prague Exhibition*, p. 47). This in turn reflects, it can be said, a skeptical attitude toward pan-Slavism, evinced elsewhere in the chapter by Aleko's ironic account of pompous speeches (pp. 40-41).

Turning now to the what I call the Ottoman languages in *Bai Ganyo*, we see that they function differently. Romanian is humorous, Albanian is colorful and Turkish depends on who uses it — Bai Ganyo or a Turk.

Romanian is used to mock Bai Ganyo's Balkan idea of cosmopolitanism — the mockery itself being a result of the effect of West European hegemony on Aleko. In *Bai Ganyo Sets Off* (p. 18), Bai Ganyo recounts the Romanian cities he has visited as a demonstration of how well-traveled he is. Aleko's subtext here is that Bai Ganyo's worldview is so narrow that he thinks Romania rivals Vienna.

Later in Vienna, Bai Ganyo actually speaks Romanian in an attempt to communicate his desire:

We got our tickets at the cashier's window. Bai Ganyo demanded his change by pushing his hand through the opening under the window and rubbing his fingers together. The young woman behind the glass smiled and gave him the change. Bai Ganyo fixed his lustful eyes on her, scooped up the money, and, with a peculiar cough, revealed his feelings. She burst out laughing. Bai Ganyo, enchanted, twirled the left side of his mustache and bobbed his head. "*Che fromoza esh domneta.*¹ Stoycho, ask her if she knows Romanian." "*Shtii rumuneshti?*" Bai Ganyo posed the question himself (*Bai Ganyo at the Baths*, p. 26)

Here Aleko is mocking the idea that Romanian could function on the level of an international language of communication like French or German. This choice of precisely Romanian could also be interpreted as conveying the idea that Romanian is no better than Bulgarian. In Aleko's day, Romania and Bulgaria were competing for Dobrudja, which remained a source of international tension, and indeed the border between the two countries would be readjusted several times until the end of World War II. As will be seen below, Aleko's attitude toward Romanians was not particularly positive.

Albanian is spoken by an Albanian (*Bai Ganyo in Russia*, p. 83), where its purpose is to emphasize a classic stereotype of Albanians as honor-bound and hot-tempered. One of the narrators on his arrival at his dormitory in St. Petersburg describes the Albanian, Kocho, in the following terms:

My bed had been kept by my faithful friend Kocho, an Albanian This Kocho was a good fellow. He'd give his life for a friend, but God forbid that you make him angry; in an instant all his Albanian tribal passions would boil over, he'd go pale with rage, and his eyes would become completely bloodshot: a real beast! (*Bai Ganyo in Russia*, p. 81).

The portrayal of Albanians as loyal friends having "fiercely tribal passions" is consistent with stereotypes of Albanians encountered both in the west and in the

Balkans. Later in the chapter, Kocho has been cheated out of his paltry 3-rouble-a-month stipend by Aslanov, an unscrupulous Bulgarian whom Aleko later characterizes as so vile that even Bai Ganyo disapproves of him. The moment when Kocho speaks Albanian is when he is recounting to the narrator and Bai Ganyo that when he went to collect his stipend the cashier told him it had been reassigned to Aslanov because they had evidence that Kocho was a spy for the Bulgarian government:

"For God's sake, who gave you this evidence?" I asked through tears of rage that were choking me. "Mr. Aslanov himself," he [the cashier] said calmly. "A-r-r-g-g-h-h, *besa ta besa!*"² I roared like a madman and rushed out into the street to the Anichkin Bridge (*Bai Ganyo in Russia*, p. 83)

Unlike Romanian, which Aleko uses to mock Bai Ganyo's pretensions to cosmopolitanism, Albanian in *Bai Ganyo* reinforces the Albanianess of the speaker. Moreover, the content and context of the Albanian utterance index precisely those elements considered central to the Albanian national character, namely honor and ferocity in defending it. Among many, perhaps most, Albanians, *besë* (def. *besa*) 'honor, faith, truce [in a blood feud]' is popularly perceived as a specifically Albanian cultural trait, and indeed the rules governing *besë* are a part of traditional Albanian oral law (*kanun*). This concern with honor has, in the western imagination, also been associated with aggression and violence (see for example Munro 1904).

Finally, while Turkisms constitute part of a specific register in Bulgarian whose valences are well known (see Rudin this volume, Kramer 1992), the significance of codeswitching into Turkish in *Bai Ganyo* depends on who is doing it. When Bai Ganyo and his companions speak Turkish, it arguably indexes the same negative or ambivalent attitude toward the language of Bulgaria's Ottoman past seen in Aleko's deployment of Turkisms. For example, Bai Ganyo uses Turkish to apprise his companions that Stambolov, whom Aleko vehemently opposed, has fallen from power:

"It's over," added Bai Ganyo, and as he drew near the table, he whispered softly to his comrades in Turkish, "Stambolov *efendi* is

down the toilet, now it's Stoilov" [*Stambolov efendi boklatmăš, Stoilov sega*] (*Bai Ganyo Returns from Europe*, p. 96).

Later in the same chapter, Bai Ganyo uses Turkish to express his annoyance and pressure one of his friends into doing what he wants. In the original, Ganyo says *Ama, Gunjo, kazdärma beni!*, which we translated 'Hey, Gunjo, don't get me riled.' Although Ganyo's utterance is a codeswitch into Turkish, we treated it as a Turkism for the sake of the flow of the narrative. Unlike the preceding example, where the use of Turkish could arguably have been intended to keep the meaning from being understood by bystanders, here the usage is affective without having such potentially secretive intent. Both usages index Bai Ganyo's "Balkanness", but from the point of view of the novel's narrative, the effect of Bai Ganyo speaking Turkish in the first instance is such that it can be overtly referenced in the translation, whereas in the second occurrence, the codeswitch signifies the kind of usage for which the best translational equivalent is an informal, almost dialectal register.

In the one place where Turks speak Turkish, however, the speakers are portrayed sympathetically, as victims of Bulgarian corruption:

The Turkish voters began to evaporate one by one, saying "Why should I get myself beat up?" [*Ne me ljazăm bana dajak emë*] (*Bai Ganyo Does Elections*, p. 119).

Here, too, the codeswitch into Turkish cannot be indicated in the flow of the narrative for reasons related to, albeit not identical with, those for not identifying the utterance as Turkish in *kazdärma beni*. In both cases, the Turkish signals an intimate register, but the significance is quite different when a Bulgarian speaks Turkish to another Bulgarian as opposed to a Turk speaking Turkish, and as much to himself as to any potential addressee. This usage is actually related to the use of Albanian cited above. Just as the Albanian expression emphasized the Albanianess of the Albanian, so, too, the Turkish expression draws attention to the fact that the speaker is himself a Turk. However, when Kocho uses Albanian he is expressing heightened emotion; the codeswitch contributes to the stereotype. The Turkish voters, on the other hand, are simply muttering in their native language. In the course of a nineteenth century Bulgarian narrative, this use of

Turkish amounts to a kind of local color, although in its context, it can also be read as an implied criticism of the failings of the Bulgarian political system at that time.

Arguably as significant as the languages that are present in Bai Ganyo are the languages that are absent. Despite the fact that the English are mentioned and Americans are the scene-setting protagonists in the tragedy that forms the background for *Bai Ganyo in Dresden* — where Bai Ganyo's sister Marika and her American boyfriend die in a hiking accident — not a word of English occurs in Bai Ganyo. Since we know that Aleko went to Chicago for the Columbian Exposition — in fact, it was that journey that gave birth to Bai Ganyo — it is fair to assume that he must have picked up some English. I would argue here that English was still so absent from the Balkans that Aleko could not assume it would be comprehensible to his audience. French was the language of international relations at that time, and German, then as now, the language of hard necessity.

Gypsies, Jews, Vlachs (*i.e.*, Daco-Romanian-speakers living in Bulgaria), Kutsovlahs (*i.e.*, Aromanian-speakers), Greeks, Armenians, Anatolians, and even Chinese are also mentioned in Bai Ganyo, but they never speak. Representations of them fall more appropriately under the rubric of ethnic stereotypes.

Gypsies are either musicians or thugs to be ordered around by the likes of Bai Ganyo. Like many Bulgarian intellectuals of his day — and ours — Aleko despises their music and considers it as something that sullies the national character.

"Ilcho, tell me now, why do you detest Bulgarian songs so much?" asked Dravichka as they left. "Who, me? You think I detest them? I'm sorry, my dear friend, that you misunderstood me. I'm capable of taking delight, of losing myself, of being transported into ecstasy by our beautiful, melancholy folk songs, by true Bulgarian songs, and not by those disgusting parodies of foreign popular songs that the Bai Ganyos of this world pass off on us distorted beyond recognition by those Gypsy grace notes and vocal contortions of drunken trills and embellishments ... We have songs, but we don't have singers. I'm ready to embrace my enemy if he sings to me, as it should be sung, the song 'O Bogdan, May God Strike You Dead' or 'Hey, Vela, My Girl, Roll Up Your White Sleeves' and to look askance at my friend when I see that he's taking delight in 'Green Leaves,' 'Little

Carnation,' and other such Gypsy treats" (*Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting*, p. 71).

The same sort of thing could have been written today, especially about the Balkan polyglot East/West fusion style known in Bulgaria by the Turkism *chalga*.

As for Jews, although the Jewish quarter of Prague is mentioned as a place where Bai Ganyo gets lost (*Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting*, p. 63), none of the inhabitants of the quarter speak. Jews are mentioned twice when Bai Ganyo is in Switzerland:

After another day or so, the group was joined by several bitter, nihilistic young Jews who snarled at the capitalist tyrant from the dark corners of the taverns. I don't understand the sympathy for these dark heroes, who were capable of being simultaneously nihilists and agents for the secret police, at the same time anarchists and the lowest sort of abusers of social funds, libraries, and other institutions. ... these boys of ours found their ideal either among the Jews, or the Greeks, or some Armenians ... (*Bai Ganyo in Switzerland*, p. 73).

The first mention of Jews arguably refers to Ashkenazim, whom Aleko himself described in anti-Semitic terms in his travelogue *Do Chikago i nazad* 'To Chicago and Back.' He contrasted them to Sephardim, whom he described as "our Jews," and who were exempted from his disapproval. In this sense, Aleko's voice is not much different from Bai Ganyo's in the use of *Čifuti* to refer to the Viennese (*Bai Ganyo at the Opera*, p. 23, *Bai Ganyo at the Baths*, p. 28, *Bai Ganyo Returns from Europe*, p. 100). The second reference in the passage quoted above is unclear, since here the Jews are grouped with Greeks and Armenians, whom Aleko regards as backwardly Balkan, like Bai Ganyo himself.

In Part Two (*From the Correspondence of Bai Ganyo Balkanski*) a Jew — presumably Bulgarian — is mentioned as being more clever and corrupt than Bodkov, a character portrayed elsewhere in the novel as being a junior version of Bai Ganyo. Here, however, it could also be argued that Aleko is mocking anti-Semitism as hypocritical, at least in Bulgaria.

Another reference to Greeks and Armenians (and other relevant Balkan peoples) occurs in *Bai Ganyo goes Visiting*:

If he [Bai Ganyo] goes to Vienna, he'll stay at the Hotel London. It's just as stuffy there, it has the same smells of cooking and hydrogen sulfide, as at home; he meets with the same Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Serbs, and Albanians that he's used to meeting every day; he won't go to the Café Hapsburg, since he's afraid that they'll fleece him. Instead, he'll go to the Greek coffeehouse, where it's just as dirty and stuffy from eternal smoke as in our own coffeehouses. If he's traveling on business, he'll go to Bulgarian merchants, and because they are his intermediaries, he doesn't even realize that he's coming into contact with Europeans. And the fact that it is precisely outside of this circumscribed sphere that European life begins is something he neither knows nor even cares to know. The upbringing, the moral world of the European, his domestic situation, the fruits of centuries of tradition and the gradual refinement of intellectual movements, social struggles, and manners and customs, the museums, the libraries, the philanthropic institutions, the fine arts, the thousands of displays of progress, do not burden Bai Ganyo's attention (pp. 64-65)

What we can call Aleko's Eurology (*i.e.*, his idolization as well as his idealization of [western] Europe) even extends to Chinese civilization when he writes:

"It's not as if my father was always listening to opera," says Bai Ganyo, and bewitched by this principle of fossilization and ultraconservatism, he isn't terribly impressed by the "new fashion," that is, by civilization. But for all that, Bai Ganyo doesn't have the fortitude of the Chinese, who surrounded themselves with a wall against the forces of civilization ... (*Bai Ganyo Goes Visiting*, p. 65).

A Chinese reader, of course, would be surprised to see the wall that was intended to keep out barbarians described in these terms, but the passage serves to remind us of the power and arrogance of west European hegemonic discourses.

In *Bai Ganyo in Switzerland*, Anatolians are listed separately from Turks in Bai Ganyo's account of the problems he has encountered in Switzerland trying to sell his genuine rose oil. The reference was to an actual glut of rose oil adulterated with geranium oil that resulted from a poor rose harvest in 1893:

The Anatolian mafia has chewed us up and spit us out! And you see, pal, it's not just one or two of them. They came swarming through Europe in hordes: Anatolians, Armenians, Turks, Greeks, and they lie, they cheat people, and they've burned someone here, put the touch on someone there, and people are sick of them. If you smell of roses, they run for cover (*Bai Ganyo in Switzerland*, pp. 74-75).

Of the other ethnolinguistic groups, Vlachs (here, Romanians in Bulgaria) are violent (*Bai Ganyo Does Elections*, pp. 107, 117), and Kutsovlahs (Aromanians) are simply a source of humor (*From the Correspondence of Bai Ganyo Balkanski*, p. 156).

To some extent, codeswitching in *Bai Ganyo* is like stereotyping — it signals characteristics that Aleko and his presumed audience associate with particular groups. But codeswitching does more than stereotyping and adding local color. It also serves to communicate Aleko's point of view on various social and political issues of his day. Aleko's deployment of codeswitching, like Aleko himself, has elements of both the desire to be "European" and an awareness of Bulgaria's specific situation. It reveals the extent to which Aleko himself, like Bai Ganyo, is a product of his times.

Notes

1. "How beautiful you are!" (in substandard Romanian).
2. Aleko's rendering of an Albanian oath, "Besa-besë," roughly "I swear on my honor." *Besë* (definite *besa*, oath, honor, truce) is a central concept in traditional Albanian law and culture.

References

- Friedman, Victor A. (ed.). 2010. *Bai Ganyo: Incredible Tales of a Modern Bulgarian*. Written by Aleko Konstantinov and translated by Victor A. Friedman, Christina E. Kramer, Grace E. Fielder and Catherine Rudin. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Kočev, Ivan. 2001. *Bălgarski dialekten atlas obobštavašt tom: I-III Fonetika, Akcentologija, Leksika*. Sofia: Trud.

- Kramer, Christina. 1992. "The Use of Turkisms in Balkan Languages as Reflected in Konstantinov's Novel *Baj Ganjo*," *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 28, pp. 44-60.
- _____. 2012. "*Vir Balcanicus and Mulier Balcanica: Living Stereotypes in Bai Ganyo*," forthcoming in *Balkanistica*.
- Munro, H.H. (Saki). 1904. "Reginald on Tarriffs," *Reginald*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Rudin, Catherine. 2012. *Bai Ganyo's Revenge: The Persistence of Turkisms in Modern Bulgarian*.