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**BULGARIAN JOURNEYS: METAPHOR IN EUROPEAN ACCESSION
DISCOURSES**

- DRAFT! Comments are welcome -

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A good cartoon is as powerful as a thousand-watt spotlight; it evokes a visceral reaction that not even the most stirring editorial can duplicate.

Jerry Adler cited in Bostdorff 1987: 57, n.6

Art does not just make ideology explicit but can be used, at a particular historical juncture, to rework it.

Lisa Tickner cited in McDonald 2000: 9

The master metaphor in the EU accession discourses of accession countries was the 'journey' metaphor. As such, this is an unspectacular result. One does not have to engage in prolonged and detailed research to learn that the 'return to Europe' or 'back to the West' tropes were prevalent in the EU (and also NATO) accession discourses of the post communist countries. Simultaneously, in the EU rhetoric the image of the European integration as a 'journey' is certainly common. The JOURNEY or TRANSPORT¹ metaphor as an illustration of the process of European integration is so well established that parts of its conceptual frame have become *dead* metaphors (Musolff 1996). As the movement schema allows for the introduction of a means of transport, the preferred vehicles in the EU rhetoric are ships, trains and bicycles (Schäffner 1996). The presence of the metaphor in both the EU rhetoric as well as discourses of European integration of the accession countries would suggest a sort of repetition. Such a remark misses the inherent ambiguity that characterize metaphors and which allows the same metaphor to articulate a variety of narratives, sometimes even contradictory narratives. And it is precisely these stories that interested me as an IR-minded student.

Unfolded in the context of Bulgarian political cartoons, the MOTION metaphor and its JOURNEY variant convey rather interesting narratives. In telling about trips by car, train, boat or cart, milestones, traffic signs, hurdles and barriers, these cartoons narrate also the national community, they articulate Bulgarianness. My aims in this paper are twofold. *First*, I am interested in how 'Bulgaria' and 'Bulgariannes', and 'Europe' and 'the West' is constructed by those political cartoons which rely on the JOURNEY metaphor. I also ask whether these narrations challenge by any means, reinforce, are ambiguous about or indifferent to the *Balkanist* discourse which is dominant in and about the Balkans (e.g. Todorova 1996)². Few studies have examined how the relationship 'the Balkans' ('Bulgaria')-'Europe'/'the west' is articulated by the 'Balkan people' themselves (Neuburger 2006: 431). And that is precisely what this paper undertakes to

¹ I follow Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in using small capitals when referring to CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS.

² Like *Orientalism*, *Balkanism* is organized around a set of binaries (rational/irrational, centre/periphery, civilization/barbarism) arranged hierarchically so that the first sign ('Europe') is always primary and definitional of the second ('Balkans'), and so the second is always an internal effect of the first. The most fervent critique of *Balkanist* discourse, Maria Todorova, argues in her highly influential *Imagining the Balkans*, that the term Balkan has become 'one of the most powerful pejorative designations in history, international relations, political science, and, nowadays, general intellectual discourse' (Todorova 1997: 7). The rhetoric in this view amounts to 'a persistent hegemonic discourse from the West, continuously disparaging about the Balkans, which sends out messages about the politicization of essentialised cultural differences' (ibid.: 59). Todorova also treats Balkanism as a discourse that severely constrains the options of the people in the Balkans. Confronted with the hegemonic Western construction imposed on them, she writes, 'it is hardly realistic to expect the Balkans to create a liberal, tolerant, all-embracing identity celebrating ambiguity and a negation of essentialism' (ibid.: 59).

do. Before being accused of an essentialism which I actually strongly oppose (see Curticapean 2007), I have to clarify that in the context of this paper by ‘the Balkan people’ I mean the Bulgarian cartoonists who in their drawings of EU accession address Bulgaria-Europe relationship. These cartoons are however much more than singular points of view. As researchers of the genre have pointed out, political cartoons reflect ‘shared notions of social reality’ (Dines 1995) and cultural beliefs and attitudes (White & Fuentez 1997). They have been called ‘encyclopedias of popular culture’ (Michelmores: 37). Political cartoons rely on essential myths and dominant narratives of the cultures within which they are produced, but often they offer alternatives to those myths and escapes from hegemonic patterns (Schmitt 1992, Hammond 1991).

Second, this paper is concerned with the gendering of the political body. In the context of the cartoons, the JOURNEY conceptual schema cannot do without a corporeal representation. In the linguistic expressions of the JOURNEY metaphor, it is ‘Bulgaria’ or the neutral ‘it’ who moves. In visual representation, however, gender neutrality is hardly possible. There are only two alternatives for the moving body: female or male. Whose body is then taken to stand up for a group of diverse bodies? The conclusion is not that easy to anticipate. On the one hand, the *masculinity* of the body politic has been long exposed by feminist scholars. As Moira Gatens puts it: ‘the modern body politic is based on an image of a *masculine* body which reflects fantasies about the value and the capacities of that body’ (1995: 25, italics in original). Following this line of reasoning we would expect a male Bulgaria setting out for Europe. On the other hand, the influential and pervasive categories of East and West have important gender connotations. The notions of West as male and East as female are appropriated from the European-colonial encounters (Neuburger 2004: 14, Yuval-Davis 1997). In addition, the *Balkanist* discourse relegates the Balkans to a passive, that is feminine, position. Susan Morrison’s (1992) study of the unification of the two Germanies confirms this gendering code and shows that GDR is rendered as female and FRG as male. Should we then expect a female Bulgaria moving towards Europe?

The cartoons gathered for this study have all been drawn between April 2004-October 2005 by editorial cartoonists employed by central Bulgarian newspapers. The list include Chavdar Nikolov (editorial cartoons for *Novinar* but his cartoons are printed also by *Vsekiden*), Hristo Komarnitzki (*Sega*), Racho Rachev (*Trud*) and Ivan Kutuzov (*Dnevnik*)³. Cartoons usually incorporate a verbal element, either within the frame of the cartoon as caption or outside it, as a title. The verbal component of the cartoons was translated by Radost Dimova, to whom I am very thankful. All the cartoons gathered are signed my men. That is by no means particular to Bulgarian political cartooning. According to Alex Robins who in 2006 interviewed artists from twelve countries, political cartoonists is ‘generally a population of older men’⁴. It is also telling that so far only two women, won the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning which has been awarded every year since 1922.

³ In the parentheses are the names of the newspapers for which the cartoonists worked during the period under analysis in this study, that is, April 2004-October 2005.

⁴ See Stephen Anzaldi’s interview Alex Robins, <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2007/03/cartoon.html>, last accessed 8 June 2007.

Before proceeding with the interpretation of the empirical material, a note on the theoretical approach of the concept of metaphor is due. This paper employs a discourse analytical approach to metaphor (see e.g. Hülse 2000, Maasen and Weingart 2000, Milliken 1999, Mottier 2005). Metaphors, as key elements of discourses, construct political subjectivities and they do so in a particular way. First, metaphors produce identities by telling a story in a very concentrated format; in that sense they function as *condensed narratives* (Ankersmit 1993, Mottier 2005, Schön 1979). Second, these narratives are not completely spelled out. The spelling out of the full story is done by the audiences which draw on their tacit knowledge of the historical, social and political context to do so. Metaphor is from this perspective analogous to an unfinished film: it prompts viewers to search for and “fill in” information that is suggested, but not provided. My interest here is neither in the message(s) that the cartoonists intended to convey nor in the images themselves. Instead, I am concerned with the *preferred readings or narratives* that the Bulgarian audience would construct for the cartoons in the context of their publication.

I classified the cartoons which activate the MOTION metaphor in four groups according to the representation of the national community. In the first group, ‘Bulgaria’ is represented by Bai Ganio and in the second it is the ‘Everyman’ who stands for the national community. A third group pictures ‘Everyman’'s interactions with the Bulgarian politicians and the fourth focuses on politicians and their actions. Because of time/space constraints, this paper addresses only the first two categories.

Bai Ganio sets out for Europe



Figure 1 Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 7 October 2004
'National politics and Eurointegration'⁵

Kutuzov's cartoon reproduced in Figure 1 portrays a man who has stripped off the peasant costume and runs towards an EU symbolized by stars. The destination is not very

⁵ In *Dnevnik* the cartoon is published together with an article and both cover a common topic. 'National politics and Eurointegration' is the title of the article accompanying the cartoon in Figure 1.

far and there are no apparent obstacles on the way. The man is chubby. We cannot see his face and it is difficult to figure out his emotional state. Is he thrilled, worried, tired? That we do not know because the view is from behind. He threw off his clothes as he was running; the last piece of clothing to discard was his shirt which still flies in the air. There is one interesting detail concerning his trousers: there are patches on both knees and a third one is located on the upper part of the garment. Moreover his trousers seem slightly destroyed in the lower end. A pair of worn out trousers of a poor peasant!

The title of the article which the cartoon in Figure 1 accompanies, ‘National politics and Eurointegration’, suggests that we can interpret the cartoon as an enactment of the EU ACCESSION IS A JOURNEY metaphor, though this is certainly not the only possible interpretation. In autumn 2006, visiting from UK our research group⁶, Christine Sylvester immediately and strongly offered an alternative interpretation of the cartoon as a metonymical expression of the current at the time (and possible intensifying after EU accession) emigration of Bulgarians to various EU countries. This example bears witness that our **preferred** interpretation of image-texts (but also verbal-texts) depends on the discourses which surround us. At a time when the UK government was making decisions on how to deal with potential immigration from Bulgaria (and Romania) after their soon-to-happen accession in January 2007 and UK media was forecasting ‘huge waves’ (note the metaphor!) of immigrants arriving from these countries as soon as their first day of membership, somebody located in the UK would have probably *strongly preferred* Professor Sylvester’s interpretation. Yet, Kutuzov drew his cartoon in autumn 2004 to tell a story to the Bulgarian audiences! Of course, the point here is not to detect the ‘true’ meaning of the cartoon or the ‘correct’ interpretation (as it transpires, I do not believe there is such a thing), but rather to suggest what could be *a preferred* interpretation within a given context. Both the intent behind and the multiple readings of a cartoon are virtually impossible to know for certain.

The cartoon was published the day after the European Commission made public its 2004 regular report on Bulgaria’s progress towards accession. The negotiation chapters being closed in June, the report mentioned for the first time 1 January 2007 as the date of accession, conditional on ‘further progress in complying with the membership criteria’⁷. The report also included a so-called ‘safeguard clause’ for postponing the accession until 2008 if reforms were not continuing as envisaged. Considering the context of the publication of the cartoon in Figure 1, I propose reading it as an enactment of the EU ACCESSION IS A JOURNEY metaphor and ask what kind of political subjectivities for Bulgaria and the EU it produces? The EU is present here merely as the destination of the journey as this cartoon narrates Bulgaria. It represents it as a corpulent male peasant who abandoned his traditional costume in his quest for reaching the EU. It is a story of discontinuity, of change. It can be read as a story of *modernization* that will happen through EU accession when (hopefully) new and better clothes will be put on. The *Balkanist* discourse is interestingly played out and complicated. The civilized-backward dichotomy, one of the main elements on which the *Balkanist* discourse rests, is suggested

⁶ This research is part of the Finnish Academy funded project ‘Communities in Transition’ lead by Prof. Tarja Väyrynen.

⁷ 2004 Regular Report on Bulgaria’s progress towards accession: 5.

by the weary peasant garments. In his pursuit for the EU, Bulgaria disposes himself of them. The centre-periphery division is also activated. Bulgaria is running in the direction of the EU. The alternative would be that the EU is approaching Bulgaria. EU is the centre towards which motion is willingly oriented. Yet, unlike the Balkanist discourse would have it, agency is ascribed here to Bulgaria.

So far we have not paid too much attention to the element of nakedness in the cartoon. The representation of nude/naked bodies has been long documented by art historians and researchers of visual material. Some have differentiated between the naked and the nude and relegated one of the terms to the superior position and the other to the inferior. There is no consensus however as to which one is the positive term. In Clark's formulation, for instance, the nude is 'the body 'clothed' in art, the body in representation' and the naked represents 'the body in advance of its aesthetic transformation'⁸, hence the inferior term of the dichotomy. John Berger inverts the relationship and posits the naked in a superior position when he claims that the artist's love metamorphoses the nude into a naked woman and prevents the voyeurism of the spectator (Berger cited in Nead 1992: 15). The distinction between the naked and the nude depends, of course, upon the theoretical possibility of 'a physical body that is outside of representation and is then given representation, for better or for worse, through art' (Nead 1992: 16). As such it ignores a whole body of (especially feminist) writing which has exposed the existence of 'the body outside representation' as fantasmic (see e.g. Butler 1990, 1992, 1997). As the body is always a construction, a representation, I will not operate with the nude/naked distinction but rather use the two terms interchangeably.

Kenneth Clark's depiction of the ideal male body enshrines the Enlightenment values: 'harmony, clarity and tranquil authority ... calm, pitiless, and supremely confident' (cited in Nead 1992: 17)⁹. According to Clark, the muscle architecture of the male torso stands for power and control. In addition, the idealized male body (and in this particular respect it is no different than the idealized female body) requires for 'the threat of the flesh to be remorselessly disciplined' (ibid.: 18). Obviously, the excess of flesh and curve disqualify the naked body in Figure 1 from the western ideal of male beauty. Yet, deprived of clothes, the body in Figure 1 is shown as solidly built and healthy and as such stands for *vigorous masculine* agency.

The cartoon in Figure 1 also powerfully reminds of Bai Ganio's journeys to Europe and activating this frame brings an ironic twist in the interpretation of the metaphor. In what follows I will first introduce Bai Ganio, the literary character and then briefly present the various interpretations and uses of BAI GANIO metaphor.

⁸ See Nead's discussion of Clark's *The Nude* in Nead 1992: 12-16.

⁹ Clark's work has been strongly criticized by feminist art historians, Lynda Nead and Helen McDonald amongst others.

Bai Ganio¹⁰ is the main character of a series of short stories published at the end of the nineteenth century and authored by the Bulgarian writer Aleko Konstantinov (1863-1897) or simply Aleko¹¹. The stories were initially published in *Zname* and *Misul* and in 1895 Konstantinov collected them in a book which bears the name of its main character and is subtitled ‘Incredible tales of a contemporary Bulgarian’. According to Todorova, Bai Ganio ‘is the one literary name and the book that every single Bulgarian knows and has read’ (1997: 39). But Bai Ganio is certainly much more than a character of fiction! Little known outside Bulgaria, Bai Ganio ‘stepped out of his literary world by acquiring a broad currency within society, and he evolved into a national symbol’, says Daskalov (2001: 530). In the same vein, I suggest that Bai Ganio has become a metaphor within Bulgarian society and culture. As it is with metaphors in general, BAI GANIO metaphor is complex and ambiguous and lends itself to various uses and interpretations across time or even, as we’ll see in the cartoons, within the same period. The encounter with Bai Ganio in Figure 1 is not a singular one. We meet him time and again in Bulgarian cartoons.

First, few words about Ganio Balkanski or Bai Ganio (*bai* is a form of address to an older person), the literary character¹². Apparently, Aleko Konstantinov invented his character while visiting the Bulgarian pavilion at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. Here, in the back of the ‘Bulgarian Curiosities’ shop, he encountered an odd and memorable figure. His name was Ganio Somov, formally addressed as Bai Ganio. Konstantinov watched him as he sat in his oriental attire (*shalvari*-type trousers, sash and fez) on a box covered with a kilim rug. Lined up in front of him were small bottles filled with *tereshe* – a cheap imitation of the valued Bulgarian rose oil. He puffed away at his cigarette, unable to understand or answer visitors’ questions (Neuburger 2006: 439-40)¹³. Ganio Somov captured Aleko’s imagination and served as inspiration for his famous character Ganio Balkanski or Bai Ganio¹⁴. The change of name can not go unnoticed. ‘Somov’ is replaced

¹⁰ Note the various spellings of the character’s name in English-language sources: Bai Ganio (e.g. Daskalov 2001), Bai Gano (e.g. Neuburger 2004, 2006), Bay Ganyo (e.g. Todorova 1997), Bai Ganiu (e.g. Salter 1969). The variations are, of course, due to transliterating Bulgarian from the Cyrillic to the Roman alphabet. For reasons of consistency I use Bai Ganio transliteration throughout this text.

¹¹ Aleko Konstantinov is the only Bulgarian writer to be commonly referred to by the first name by a loving public (Daskalov 2001: 532, n. 3).

¹² Unlike Konstantinov’s other famous book, *To Chicago and Back*, which has been recently (2004) translated into English, *Bai Ganio. Incredible Stories about a Contemporary Bulgarian* has not been made available for reading in English. The book has been partly or completely translated into several other languages including Serbian (*Baja Gan’e*, Rijanac Baceta, trans., published in 1900 by Glas neslobozdenog srpstva and republished in 1907 by Srpska knjižna zadruga), German (*Baj Ganju*, G. Weigand, trans., Leipzig, 1908; only the first part was translated), French (*Baj Gagno. Le tatarin Bulgare*, Matei Gueorguiev et Jean Jagersmidt, trans., Paris, 1911 and *Bai Ganju na frenski i bulgarski*, Sofija, 1942, partial translation used for foreign language teaching), Russian (*Bai Ganiu. Bolgarskii tatarin*, Moscow, 1912 and also *Bai Ganiu*, O. Govorukhina, trans., Moscow, 1931), Armenian (*Bai Ganiu*, Sofija, 1926) and Esperanto (*Baj Ganju*, Loveč, 1941). I rely my discussion of the literary character on three stories (‘Bai Ganiu Travels’, ‘Bai Ganiu at the Opera’ and ‘Bai Ganiu at the Baths’) which were translated into English by Francis Salter (1969) and on secondary English-language sources: Daskalov (2001), Neuburger (1997, 2004, 2006) and Todorova (1997).

¹³ See also Konstantinov’s description of his encounter with Ganio Somov in *To Chicago and Back*.

¹⁴ The similarity was so obvious that it prompted Gano Somov to write several times to Aleko Konstantinov claiming his share of the royalties from his book.

with 'Balkanski', which is the Bulgarian adjectival form of Balkan, as he would be a representative of the Balkans and not just an ordinary Bulgarian.

Bai Ganio, the literary character, is a Bulgarian trader of rose oil (a traditional Bulgarian merchandise) who travels through 'Europe' to sell his products. His physical appearance is carefully detailed. His very first action, in the beginning of the book or of the first feuilleton, is to 'remove the Turkish coat from his shoulders' and don a 'Belgian mantle' (Konstantinov 1985a, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 117). Following his change of attire, 'everybody said that Bai Ganio was already completely European' (ibid.). Bai Ganio leaves behind his peasant costume and puts on a 'European' coat and suit. Yet, he keeps his Bulgarian *kalpak* (brimless sheepskin hat, fez-like in appearance) and woollen Bulgarian undergarments. In addition, he carries saddlebag-like woollen bags for his luggage. An odd combination of European and Bulgarian garments and accessories! It is worth quoting at length the author's description of his hero:

A wide shouldered, dark-eyed, dark-haired and moreover dark-skinned gentlemen with a twirled moustache, high cheekbones, shaven, bristling beard, dressed in (what would you think?) a frock coat, unbuttoned; under his vest a two or three inch wide red belt and with a white (in a Bulgarian sense white) shirt without collar, with a small cocked red fur cap, high boots and a walking stick under his arm. A young man: He is, perhaps, at the most thirty years old. (Konstantinov 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 712)

Note the insistence on darkness (of the eyes, hair and moreover skin)! It is suggested that the shirt is not perfectly clean, yet that is not a problem for Bai Ganio as Bulgarian standards for cleanliness are not anyway too high (the shirt is white only in a 'Bulgarian sense'). Throughout the book we are offered other piquant details concerning Bai Ganio's physical presence. His strong bodily odour, sweat and irregular personal hygiene are frequently mentioned: his hands are sweaty, his legs are dirty and 'From afar he emit[s] a sour odor' (Konstantinov 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 713). Bai Ganio carries vials of delightfully scented rose oil, yet, ironically, he reeks of 'sweat and garlic' (Petko Totev cited in Neuburger 2006). In the olfactory encounter with Europe, Bai Ganio stands as the stinky Bulgarian who, however, sells the clean and perfumed Europeans part of the means to become that way. As Mary Neuburger (2006: 443) observes, in the nineteenth century, when the literary character was born, bathing began to become a standard among the middle classes in the US and many parts of Europe. Being modern required conforming to an olfactory norm and hygiene and odour became part of Europe's encounter with the world. Obviously, Bai Ganio had not adopted European practices of hygiene. In the European world of hygiene, his stench marked him as different. Among Bulgarians, though, he was at home since 'with uncleanliness one cannot surprise the Bulgarians' (Konstantinov 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 715). Smell and dirt had long been a European trope on Balkan backwardness (Neuburger 2006: 443) and in Aleko Konstantinov's stories it informs Bulgarian students' descriptions of Bai Ganio.

His actions, just like his physical appearance and odour, tell about Bai Ganio's oddness in the European world. His behaviour seems to always bring him in ridiculous and absurd situations which trigger the astonishment or derision of the locals and his fellow

compatriot travellers. These young men, who are mostly Bulgarian students aboard, tend to be amused but also deeply humiliated by Bai Ganio's actions which they witness. The stories are actually narrated by these young educated Bulgarians, each of them telling an episode of his encounters with Bai Ganio. We observe him in a public bath, insisting on keeping his merchandise under supervision (of fear that otherwise it would be stolen) and breaking the conventions by jumping and swimming ('the Sailor' and 'the Steamer') in the small pool, splashing water on the heads of everybody else around. In another episode we see him in a candy shop insulting the cashier lady by pinching and twisting her arm. As this were not enough, in the same episode he continues to embarrass his compatriot who invited him at the Vienna Opera and provokes the laughter of the entire theatre by completely ignoring the etiquette and making himself comfortable for the show (he strips to his shirt sleeves and unbuttons his vest). From one episode to another we learn more and more about Bai Ganio's character. He is opportunistic – often pretends to be naïve or stupid to take advantages of others – greedy and superficial, yet of an exceptional vitality.

Bai Ganio's fellow countrymen, who measure his behaviour against the European norms, are amused but also truly embarrassed by his behaviour. Yet Bai Ganio himself does not seem to care. To the contrary! He is totally and overtly proud of himself. He trusts his masculinity and thinks of himself as a potential Don Juan. He has no doubts concerning his intelligence either: in Vienna, at the baths, unable to find a nail to hang his precious vials of oil to keep them under supervision (all properties should have been left in the dressing room) he declares infuriated: 'What a stupid business, these Germans, it never enters their head to stick a nail in the wall – and they say that we are stupid!' (Konstantinov 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 714). Proud of himself, he does not hesitate to affirm his Bulgarian nationality, as in the baths scene when:

[Bai Ganio] began to heroically strike his hairy breast and shout triumphantly:
"Bulgar! Bulgaaaaaar!" and he struck his breast even harder.

The proud tone with which he expressed this recommendation expressed much: That tone said, "Here he is, do you see him, a Bulgarian! This is he, such is he! And you've only heard him, Slivnishki hero, Balkan genius! Here he is in front of you, *in toto*, from head to toe, in the raw! See what wonders he is empowered to do. And not only that. Aha, and what other deeds is he yet capable of doing! Bulgarians are stupid, ah? You gyps and farmers!" (Konstantinov 1895c, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 715)

Bai Ganio's very positive image of himself as Bulgarian is accompanied by a negative opinion about the Europeans whom he completely distrusts. He takes his Bulgarian student fellow advice of depositing the expensive vials of rose oil in a hotel safekeeping deposit as a proof of deep naiveté. In his opinion, the only completely safe place is his vest, away from the hands and noses of foreigners. As about the European etiquette and high culture, Bai Ganio could not care less! When, following his misbehaviour, the usher of the theatre invites to him leave, Bai Ganio 'gaze[s] at him in amazement and answer[s] with only a sign. ... "I wonder who you're trying to scare?"' (Konstantinov 1895b, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 554). And when his compatriot questions his lack of interest concerning the town of Vienna, Bai Ganio answers:

Why should I be looking at Vienna? A town is a town! Houses, people, pomp. And no matter where you go, it's always "gut morgen" and everyone wants money. Why should we give our money to these Germans? We also have someone to use it. (Konstantinov 1895a, F. Salter, trans., 1969: 120)

Through Bai Ganio, Bulgarians could see themselves reflected in the European mirror – odd though partly European attire, unpolished manners – and smell themselves with a European nose: ‘European but not quite!’, as Aleko would have it (Todorova 1997: 41). Yet the standard against which Bai Ganio is measured, though called European is not set from the outside, but rather from inside the Bulgarian society. It is the standard held by a group of his own countrymen, though certainly informed by western distinctions between ‘Europe’ and ‘the East’ or ‘the Balkans’.

While in the first part of the book, *Bai Ganio sets out for Europe*, he is depicted as a comic, colourful character, yet always on the look for some personal advantage, in another part written at a later period, *Bai Ganio returns from Europe*, he is set in his native Bulgaria and turns into a completely brutal and repulsive personage, without any moral scruple. From one episode to another, he takes a variety of detestable roles. For instance, he changes party affiliation always favouring the party in power in search of personal benefits. In other episodes, he appears as a journalist ready to sell anything to anybody or as a head of a group who does not refrain from intimidation and assault of voters in order to secure the election of a parliamentary candidate (Daskalov 2001: 531). In this second part of the book, humour and irony are replaced by bitter satire and moral indignation.

Bai Ganio certainly amused Bulgarians but also invited them at self-reflection. Since the publication of the book, debates about the meaning of BAI GANIO arose. Was he a metaphor for the whole nation or perhaps for the entire region of the Balkans (as his surname, ‘Balkanski’, would suggest)? Or did he rather stand for a particular social type with the Bulgarian society (for instance, the nouveau riche)? Roumen Daskalov (2001) warns us that the mission of searching for a ‘true’ interpretation of Bai Ganio is impossible and even misleading. He synthesizes the various interpretations of Bai Ganio from the publication of the book to the present day and argues convincingly that these interpretations function as a mirror of the modern Bulgarian society reflecting its major problems and concerns. According to Daskalov, the interpretation of Bai Ganio in ‘national’ terms prevailed before the communist period (pre-1944) whereas its interpretation in ‘social’ terms dominated during the communist period¹⁵.

In the post communist period, BAI GANIO metaphor has flourished. Bai Ganio was born in a modernizing Bulgaria which was gaining independence from the Ottoman Empire and was overtly hesitant of its positioning in relation to ‘Europe’. It is therefore not a surprise that the metaphor came in prominent use in the post-communist period marked by somehow similar uncertainties and a re-emergent discourse on Europe. We find it in films, cartoons and novels. Ivan Nichev directed two films based on Aleko Konstantinov’s stories – *Bai Ganio* (1990) and *Bai Ganio on His Way to Europe* (1991) –

¹⁵ Daskalov (2001) discusses two other interpretive threads: historical and cultural. Maria Todorova (1997) privileges a socio-historical interpretation which associates Bai Ganio with the nouveaux riches group and not with the nation as a whole.

both starring famous Bulgarian comedian Georgi Kaloyanchev as the main character¹⁶. In addition, we encounter Bai Ganio in the cartoons drawn by the famous Bulgarian cartoonist Todor Tsonev in the beginning of the 1990s¹⁷ and also as the main character of the stories authored by Iordan Popov, Krüstiü Krüstev and Mikhail Veshim (Daskalov 2001: 549, n. 49). Concerning the material under analysis in this study, we come upon him in the cartoons drawn by Ivan Kutuzov and published in *Dnevnik* during 2004, 2005.

Both the social and the national interpretations can be encountered in the postcommunist period. The *social* interpretation is in place whenever the name *Bai Ganio* is applied to the ‘nouveaux riches who have attained their wealth through fraud and crude force and who often have a scanty education’ (Daskalov 2001: 548) to ‘former sportsmen and secret police agents who have become “businessmen”’, to ‘populist politicians’, to ‘millionaires who made money by crooked means’, to ‘fraudulent Bulgarians abroad, and so on’ (ibid.: 549, n.49). In this case, the metaphor functions as a way of condemning social groups and has a strong negative meaning. In any case, calling somebody Bai Ganio is considered an insult. The *national* use and interpretation, in turn, implies that Bai Ganio is associated with the entire Bulgarian population. When the metaphor is employed to refer to a national ‘us’, its ambiguity is highlighted. In this case, the metaphor has negative – but this time it is a nuanced negativity – and also more positive implications.

One combination that is particularly pernicious rests on a set of overlapping dichotomies ‘European’-‘Bulgarian’, ‘civilized’-‘barbaric’, ‘developed’-‘backward’, ‘high culture’-‘low culture’ in such a way that ‘European’ becomes fused with ‘civilized’, ‘developed’ and ‘high culture’ and ‘Bulgarian’ with ‘barbaric’, ‘backward’ and ‘low culture’. Such use of BAI GANIO metaphor looks like a ‘gesture of despair or resignation’ (ibid.: 545), bitter self-derision and ‘shameful national identification’ (Kiossev cited in Daskalov 2001: 547, n.44). A total succumbing to the *Balkanist* discourse you might think! Yet, sensing the self-irony that often comes with the metaphor, flips this interpretation on its head. Indeed, BAI GANIO metaphor can function as a *therapy through laughter*, a strategy of coping with the stigma imposed from the outside. By collectively laughing at it, Bulgarians could complicate the workings of the *Balkanist* discourse, turn it into a milder form or perhaps escape it altogether. But, as Meshekov – himself a strong believer in the purifying and curative power of laughing at oneself – carefully noted, for the therapy to attain its cathartic effect ‘more self-assurance and less of an inferiority complex’ is required (cited in Daskalov 2001: 547). Without self-assurance the therapy is doomed to fail.

¹⁶ Positioning their stories in relation to Europe is not uncommon for Bulgarian film. Like Bai Ganio films (*Bai Ganio* and *Bai Ganio on His Way to Europe*) a number of other films – such as *The Attached Balloon* (Bulgaria, Binka Zheliazkova, 1967), *The Patent Leather Shoes of the Unknown Soldier* (Bulgaria, Rangel Vulčanov, 1979), *Last Wishes* (Bulgaria, Rangel Vulčanov, 1984) or the more recent *Traka-Trak* (Bulgaria, Iliya Kostov, 1996) – tell their stories by reflection on ‘Europe’, by placing their narrative in a ‘European’ context (Iordanova 2000).

¹⁷ Two cartoons by Todor Tsonev which employ BAI GANIO metaphor are reproduced in Neuburger 1997: 18 and 19.

In addition to rehabilitation through self-irony, there are several other interpretations and uses of BAI GANIO metaphor, which propose a positive assessment of the character. One of these interpretations insists on the historical circumstances of *Bai Ganio behaviour* and argues that it was crucial for the survival of the Bulgarian nation during centuries of Ottoman rule. This interpretation admits that Bai Ganio is an opportunist, yet a vigorous and energetic one, and underscores the vital role such comportment played in the survival of the nation under conditions of foreign rule. Acting differently was simply impossible in those conditions, this interpretation maintains (Gesemann cited in Daskalov 2001: 534). Another positive appraisal of the character derives from the notion of ‘wounded national pride’ and is laid on romantic nationalism. Such a position does not question Bai Ganio’s distrust of Europeans. Why would he trust them, after all, when they committed great injustices against the Bulgarians? And why would Bai Ganio be respecting European civilization? Who are they to teach Bulgarians how to live? While conceding the character’s flaws, this interpretation nevertheless elevates Bai Ganio to the position of a dramatic, perhaps tragic hero (see Ralchev in Daskalov 2001: 534), and simultaneously downgrades the Europeanized Bulgarian students and the Europeans themselves.

Bay Ganio also figures positively in contemporary anecdotes and funny stories. Given the scarcity of data on such sources, I rely here on Daskalov’s appreciation of recent anecdotes scattered in humorous Bulgarian publications (published in Bulgarian and obviously addressing a Bulgarian audience). According to him, in these anecdotes Bai Ganio is

synonymous with “the Bulgarian” and meets representatives of other nationalities in various challenging situations, such as a contest or trial (also love contests) organized by some famous political figure or by God himself. In such encounters, Bai Ganio always triumphs over his adversaries – the “effeminate” French, the technically better equipped Germans, or the earnest Americans – by some rough stratagem or by a simple but effective trick, a more positive reinterpretation of the character’s original combination of machismo and cunning. What seems gratifying to the audience is that a rough “Bulgarian” may still triumph against all odds, and additional fun is derived from engaging popular images of other nations. (Daskalov 2001: 535)

A positive appraisal of the character occurred also in the staging of Bai Ganio in which the manners of the civilized Europeans seemed formal and superficial whereas Bai Ganio, played by the Bulgarian actor Georgi Kaloianchev, offered a more natural, relaxed impression (cf. Daskalov 2001: 536, n. 17).

Interpretations and uses of BAI GANIO metaphor exhibit significant caveats, shifts and even contradictions. As in Aleko Konstantinov’s stories, in Ivan Kutuzov’s cartoons Bai Ganio takes on a multiplicity of roles as a way of conceptualizing or rather visualizing Bulgaria. The encounter with the EU or ‘Europe’ in the accession discourse invites the metaphor.

Familiar with Bai Ganio as we have become by now, we can not escape seeing him in the cartoon in Figure 1. The very first action of Aleko Konstantinov’s hero, in the beginning of the book, is to change the peasant costume with European clothes. Similarly, in Figure 1 the man strips off the peasant dress as he runs towards the EU. Moreover, he is ‘wide-

shouldered' and 'dark-haired' fitting Konstantinov's description of Bai Ganio. Activating BAI GANIO metaphor provides a closing to the story which the cartoon leaves open and thus brings an ironic twist in the interpretation of the JOURNEY metaphor. We know that Bai Ganio changed his peasant dress with European clothes yet this action brought about only a superficial transformation. European costume on, Bai Ganio continued to act as Bai Ganio! The tale of *Europeanization* and profound transformation is twisted and laughed at! Thus, the cartoon in Figure 1 tells, at the same time, both the story of transformation and its reverse.

Another encounter with Bai Ganio is in Figure 2. The context of the cartoon is the approval by the Bulgarian Parliament of a set of amendments to the Bulgarian constitution related to Bulgaria's future membership of the EU and including provisions regarding ownership of land by foreigners. In terms of one of the amendments, EU citizens and EU companies are allowed to acquire ownership of land in Bulgaria. The title of the article, 'European ships in Bulgarian territorial waters', is itself metaphorical and suggestive of a potential threat. This time around, it is the EU ('the European ships') that is moving towards Bulgaria and the move is received with suspicion.



Figure 2 Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 20 February 2005
'European ships in Bulgarian territorial waters'

The cartoon accompanying the article relies also on the MOTION metaphor. It depicts a man with dark hair and dark moustache, who wears a wide belt and a mantle on his shoulders. He certainly resembles Bai Ganio. Interestingly, in this cartoon Bai Ganio is not moving towards the EU. To the contrary! He seems to gather all his forces to pull out the Bulgarian flag from the EU magnet. The expression on his face shows determination. The EU magnet is bigger than Bai Ganio, yet it seems to lean slightly in the direction in which Bai Ganio pulls the flag. Will he succeed? The story remains, once more, unfinished. I suggest the interpretation of the cartoon in Figure 2 in national terms. It narrates Bulgaria as an energetic and vigorous Bai Ganio, determined to resist the attraction of the EU. No trace of the civilizational tale here! Through Bai Ganio, Bulgaria is represented firm on its position, resisting the appeal of the centre.



Figure 3 Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 13 October 2005
Iberian lessons

The cartoon in Figure 3 was published together with an article titled ‘Iberian lessons’ ahead of the release on October 25 of the European Commission report on Bulgaria’s readiness to join the EU. The two men caricatured here seem to be Don Quijote and his companion Sancho Panza. Don Quijote on Rocinante easily jumps through the EU ring giving an example, or lesson if you will, to Sancho Panza on how to execute the move. Sancho Panza on his mule appreciates the task as much more difficult. The mule is hesitant and so seems Sancho. One small detail in the representation of Sancho Panza puts his identity into doubt. Instead of a cap, he wears a traditional Bulgarian hat (made of sheepskin and without a brim). Once his identity is questioned, the similarities between *this* Sancho Panza and Bai Ganio become apparent. Moustache, white shirt, vest, saddle bags: *this* Sancho Panza can easily be Bai Ganio! Interpreting Don Quijote as a textual embodiment of Spain and Sancho Panza-Bai Ganio as Bulgaria would not hence appear too far-fetched.

The wide shouldered Bai Ganio that we know from Aleko Konstantinov’s stories is reduced here to a squat Sancho Panza. ‘Dwarfing’ or diminishment, as Janis Edwards has argued, is a common strategy in cartoons and acts on two levels: on the first level, it operates a reduction in physical stature and on the second level it trivializes the character and capabilities of the one diminished (Edwards 1997: 81-91). In the cartoon in Figure 1, Bai Ganio-Sancho Panza is clearly diminished in relationship to Don Quijote. The contrast between the tall, thin, fancy Quijote on his Rocinante and the fat, short, simple Bai Ganio-Sancho Panza riding the mule works obviously in favour of the former. Jumping through the ring, which translates metaphorically into EU accession, was easy for Don Quijote – Spain who had the means, i.e. Rocinante, but seems rather complicated for Sancho Panza - Bai Ganio – Bulgaria who does not have similar capacities. The cartoon could thus be interpreted negatively as questioning Bulgaria’s capabilities in the EU accession process. Bulgaria is inferior to other former EU candidates, here Spain, and should better learn from them. Provided that it learns the (jumping) lesson, Bulgaria can become an EU member!

Deeper familiarity with Cervantes’s story can twist the meaning conveyed of the cartoon. In Cervantes’s novel, Sancho Panza does not share Don Quijote’s delusional ‘enchantment’ (at least not until late in the novel). He is ever-faithful to his master, following him despite being sometimes puzzled by Don Quijote actions and manages to get him out from several conflictual situations. In the cartoon in Figure 3, Sancho Panza-Bai Ganio is hesitant to follow Don Quijote in jumping through the EU ring but his action, or rather lack of action, can be interpreted as appropriate caution. Who knows what *aventura* lies on the other side of the ring? What kind of troubles would Don Quijote’s fantasies bring them into this time? Translating this line of interpretation in integration terms suggests that the EU project belongs to the world of fantasy, and portrays Bulgaria as appropriately sceptic towards EU accession. Iberian lessons should not be hastily followed!

The two opposite lines of interpretation are united in ascribing agency to Bulgaria. As in the previous cartoons its gender is masculine.



Figure 4 Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 14 April 2005
About Pax Europeana

In the drawing in Figure 4 the vehicle used by the Balkan people to go to ‘Europe’ is a boat. The nationalities of the men in the boat are almost impossible to decode with one exception. Traditional dress (fez and *shalvari*-type trousers) signifies that the last man jumping in the boat is Turkish. Visual elements linked to traditional clothing, especially hats, and idiosyncratic elements concerning cartoonist’s style of drawing Bulgarian and Romanian men would suggest that a Romanian and a Bulgarian have also joined the EU-Balkans boat to Europe. The Romanian man sits on the left-hand side of the boat and wears a pointed, brimless sheepskin hat. His face is distorted, his left hand is raised in the air with the fist clenched. The Bulgarian sits beside him. He wears a black sheepskin hat resembling a fez. This interpretation is, however, highly debatable, as in each country there are large variations of the traditional costumes, including the shape and colour of

the hats, from one region to another¹⁸. Moreover, the other travellers' nationalities are not made recognizable. Taking into consideration the stereotypical facial features of the participants in the journey – i.e. dark hair, moustache, big noses – and the absence of clear national markers I propose reading the cartoon as an enactment of BAI GANIO metaphor. I hence suggest that the EU-Balkans boat is populated by a number of Bai Ganio-s. Unlike the previous cartoons where Bai Ganio symbolized Bulgaria, in the cartoon in Figure 4 Bai Ganio-in-plural stands as a metaphor for the whole region of the Balkans.

The atmosphere in the boat is excited – mouths are open and hands are raised, fists are shaken. No doubt is placed over the destination of the boat which is clearly indicated by the sign 'Europa'. But this only means that the Balkans are not part of 'Europe', they are merely going towards 'Europe', not by ships or trains or any other modern means of transport, but by boat. And yet there is something more to this cartoon, for ironically nobody is rowing and the boat is actually sitting on rocks, so how could it move at all?! And even if the boat were on water, the outcome might not be that different: the overcrowded boat could easily sink. Closer attention to details reveals also the aridity of the land; grass is scarce around the boat. Yet, at the horizon, 'Europa' sign is surrounded by grass. We have here a whole chain of visual elements representing a complex metaphorical argument.

Suggestive is also the date of publication of the cartoon. It appeared in *Dnevnik* on the day following the approval by the European Parliament of the Accession Treaty of Bulgaria and Romania to be signed later in the month in Luxembourg. Titles such as '15-hour-long agonizing negotiations on the brink of a heart attack', 'Europe admitted us after a dramatic turn' splashed the first pages of Bulgarian newspapers on the day following the tensions over the vote in Strasbourg¹⁹. The cartoon in Figure 4 ridicules the Balkans' potential integration in Europe. The Balkan people are represented as a crowd of Bai Ganio-s in a boat which sits on rocks. In these conditions the possibility of getting closer to Europe is, to say the least, bleak! Yet, it is up to these men to find alternatives to get to Europe, if they so wish. The agency is ascribed to the Balkan group and once more is a primitive, male agency. Europe is the object of desire, the destination of the journey. However, unlike the other cartoons so far, the cartoon in Figure 4 tells something more about Europe: it is the place where the grass grows. The flock of Bai Ganio-s intend to leave the arid land of the Balkans in search of Europe's prosperity. The cartoon plays out the Balkanist discourse. However, collective laughing can complicate the workings of the Balkanist discourse.

The 'Everyman' on the road to Europe

¹⁸ See, for instance, <http://www.angelfire.com/folk/balkan/bgfolkcostumes.html> for Bulgarian folk costumes and <http://www.eliznik.org.uk/RomaniaPortul/index.htm> for traditional costumes in Romania; last accessed 3.10.2005.

¹⁹ Interview with Gergana Gruncharova on BTV, 'Tazi Sutrin' (transl. 'This Morning') program, 14 April 2005, Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs web-site, accessed 23 June 2005.

Another large group of cartoons portray the Bulgarian community as a kind of ‘Everyman’. According to Duus, the representation of the nation as the ‘Everyman’ or ‘Everywoman’ facilitates ‘the audience’s sense of identity with the nation in a way that a standard icon like Uncle Sam does not’ (Duus 2001: 986).



Figure 5 Racho Rachev in *Trud*, 14 April 2005

Like the cartoon in Figure 4, the cartoons in Figure 5 was published on the 14th of April, the day after the European Parliament approved the accession treaty of Bulgaria and Romania to the EU. Both cartoons activate the MOTION metaphor, yet they articulate different very metaphorical stories. Racho Rachev’s cartoon in *Trud* pictures a person jumping. Facial features are roughly drawn, but other physical traits (i.e. big hands, solid legs) and elements of clothing (i.e. trousers, hat) signify the masculine gender of the personage. The verbal component of the cartoon relies on a play of words: ‘Europa!’ (‘Europe!’) is divided into ‘Eur’ and ‘opa!’ (‘opa!’ is an exclamation that accompanies jumping). From this composition of verbal, pictorial and contextual elements emerges the idea of the approval of the accession treaty by the European Parliament as a big step (or rather jump) forward for Bulgaria. Unlike the previous cartoons which rely on BAI GANIO metaphor, the drawing in Figure 5 tells its story by leaving out many of the familiar dichotomies of the *Balkanist* discourse, i.e. ‘civilized’ – ‘primitive’, ‘affluent’ – ‘poor’. The cartoons in Figure 6 and 7 work in similar ways. They represent the national community by a hybrid the ‘Everyman’-plus-car.



Figure 6 Racho Rachev in *Trud*, 4 August 2005
 On the traffic sign: Europe (straight), Vote (right)
 Caption translation: Here is to the right



Figure 7 Hristo Komarnitzki in *Sega*, 26 July 2005

In the cartoon in Figure 6, the ‘Everyman’ is in a car looking at a traffic sign. The sign shows that the main road straight ahead leads to Europe and a secondary road to the right leads to elections. He has to choose between ‘Europe’ and ‘vote’, cannot have both at once. The ‘Everyman’ appreciates that the next move will be a turn to the right, which according to the traffic sign means going to vote. The cartoon was published on the 4th of August 2005 about a month after the parliamentary elections on the 25th of June. The elections were followed by a period of intense political bargaining and coalition talks among the coalitions and parties that received most of the votes, namely the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP) dominated Coalition for Bulgaria, the National Movement Simeon II (NMSII) and Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF). On the 28th of July, when the Parliament elected BSP leader Sergei Stanishev as Prime Minister the negotiations seemed to have come to an end. Yet, somewhat unexpectedly, several hours later the Parliament did not approve Stanishev’s proposed cabinet. In the beginning of August, when the cartoon in Figure 6 was published, the new cabinet of Bulgaria was still uncertain and early elections seemed very likely. At the same time, deadlines on adopting laws and completing reforms related to membership of the EU were pressing. The drawing in figure 6 suggests that early elections will be organized and this action will divert the ‘Everyman’-Bulgaria from his way to Europe. Agency is ascribed to the hybrid ‘Everyman’-plus-car; it is up to the ‘Everyman’ to decide whether to take the right turn or not, to increase to speed or not, or even to abandon the journey.

Hristo Komarnitzki’s cartoon (Figure 7) in *Sega* picturing the ‘Everyman’ at the petrol station dates also from the same period of heated political negotiations for forming the new cabinet. The cartoon depicts a man who holds the nozzle and fills the tank of his car. He is moustached, dark-haired and wears a light blue shirt, dark brown trousers and brown shoes. His clothing is ordinary, but it is in good condition and so is the car: its colour is bright red and tyres are properly inflated. The matriculation number on the car

reads 'Bulgaria'. On the petrol pump, on a blue background features the inscription 'Europe', in English spelling. The yellow price (or amount) indicator on the pump shows that the filling has already exceeded 2007 but has not yet reached 2008. The man looks at the indicator. His emotional state is difficult to appreciate, but obviously he is not cheerful. Let us now attempt the metaphorical translation by placing the cartoon in the context of difficult and prolonged political negotiations. In the absence of a governing coalition, the adoption of laws required for EU accession was brought to a halt. The red colour of the car can be easily linked to BSP's symbol, the red rose²⁰ just as the colours on the petrol pump remind of the EU flag (yellow stars on a blue background). Bulgaria (man plus car) is in good shape yet the cartoon implies that it is unlikely that it will join the EU/Europe in 2007.

Elements of the *Balkanist* discourse return in the cartoon in Figure 8 which pictures the 'Everyman' setting out for Europe. For his luggage he carries saddlebags. Behind him, four oversized bullets lie on the ground. The 'Everyman' looks at them and thinks 'Few of us will get there'. The cartoon was published shortly after Bulgarian businessman Emil Kyulev was shot dead in the centre of Sofia while travelling in his luxurious car. Kyulev was one of the richest Bulgarians, banker and owner of an insurance company. It was suspected that the murder was generated by his attempt to differentiate himself from Bulgaria's shady circles²¹. According to Sofia Echo, his murder was the eighth since the formation of Bulgaria's new government²².



Figure 8 Racho Rachev in *Trud*, 27 October 2005
Caption translation: Few of us will get there.

²⁰ The BSP dominated Coalition for Bulgaria won the largest percent of the votes at the parliamentary elections held on the 25th of June 2005 and was likely to nominate the Prime Minister.

²¹ See, for instance, Sofia Echo, 26 October 2005.

²² http://www.sofiaecho.com/article/another-murder-in-sofia/id_12681/catid_38, accessed 30 August 2007.

The date of the murder coincided with the official presentation of the European Commission report on Bulgaria's (and Romania's) progress. The 2005 report was expected to settle the accession date but, eventually, it did not make a final assessment. Instead the Commission decided to continue its 'intensive monitoring' of 'Bulgaria's and Romania's preparation', 'to review the situation' in spring 2006 and 'if needed, to postpone accession by one year' and make use of 'other available safeguards'. I also expressed the 'hope' that 'steps undertaken by both countries will lead' to 'conclude that such a recommendation' was not 'necessary'. Concerning Bulgaria, it was also mentioned that it has 'lost the momentum somewhat after the conclusion of the negotiations in summer 2004' and 'has worked energetically to make up for lost time after the parliamentary elections of June 2005'²³. In this context, the murder of the Bulgarian businessman was interpreted as an illustration of the failure to deal with organized crime. The cartoon in Figure 8 reiterates this interpretation in an overtone of irony. To reach 'Europe' one has first to survive locally. Bulgaria is marked in this narrative as a dangerous place.

The cartoons in Figure 9 and 10, both published in the beginning of March 2005, continue on the same tone.



Figure 9 Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 6 March 2005
Montenegro does not want anything,
but Serbia does not give



Figure 10 Ivan Kutuzov in *Dnevnik*, 10 March 2005
Should we expect shock raise of prices
in Bulgaria?

The title of the article which the cartoon in Figure 9 accompanies tells about a dispute between Montenegro and Serbia, yet the cartoon neglects the topic and articulates on its own a story about Bulgaria and the EU. Bulgaria is again represented by the 'Everyman' who now stands in front of a rainbow. For his luggage he carries saddlebags with the inscription 'Bg'. Ironically, he wears slippers while stark naked. His position, with the hand covering the genital area, invites a sexual narrative. As feminist art historians have noticed, the difference between the male and female nude is that whereas the female covers her breast or genital area, the male covers nothing. The idealized female nude was represented since antiquity in the form of *Venus Pudica*, the female figure covering her genital area with her hand (Salomon 1996:73, Valenius 2004: 153-4). *Pudica* is a position of exposure and vulnerability. Depicting the male nude as *pudica* challenges his

²³ Olli Rehn, '2005 Comprehensive Monitoring Report on Bulgaria's and Romania's progress towards accession', presentation in the European Parliament, 25 October 2005, Strasbourg.

masculinity, feminizes him. This cartoon invites its viewers to laugh at Bulgaria's presupposed masculinity. Like previous cartoons this one too relies on the gender codification: the male as strong, active, independent and the female as the weak, passive, dependant counterpart. Bulgaria's masculinity, i.e. strong, active and independent position, is however put in question and made fun at.

In Figure 10 the focus is on discrepancy in financial well-being between Bulgaria and the EU. Whereas the EU is represented as a shining sun with the 'Euro' symbol inscribed on it, Bulgaria is personified again by the 'Everyman' who has a big patch of 1 Lev²⁴ on the back of his trousers. Similarly to the cartoon in Figure 9, the EU is represented here by a metaphor from nature. The metaphors can be verbalised 'the EU is rainbow' and 'the EU is sun'. In both cases, the source (rainbow and sun) have positive connotations.

Some final remarks

All the cartoons analyzed in this paper activate the MOTION metaphor, yet they do so in very different ways. The cartoons articulate a diversity of narratives about Bulgaria, there are no two completely similar stories. The narration of 'Bulgaria' simply resists totalization. The record of dealing with an ascribed Balkan identity is decidedly mixed. Some cartoons, such as those in Figures 5, 6 and 7 seem by and large indifferent towards the *Balkanist* distinctions. Most of them, however, are highly ambiguous vis-à-vis *Balkanism* and open to different interpretations. The genre of political cartooning invites ironic interpretations and laughter. Laughter and irony, then, work as very powerful subversive strategies in that they represent ways of stating and simultaneously undermining the *Balkanist* distinctions.

Multiplicity of stories acknowledged, we can now turn to the repetitive patterns. **First**, with exception of the cartoon in Figure 2, in all the other cartoons 'Bulgaria' is moving towards the EU/Europe. The EU/Europe is the centre towards which motion is oriented. The alternative would, of course, be that EU/Europe is approaching Bulgaria. The exception (Figure 2) relies on a similar set of double dichotomies – centre ('magnet')-periphery and EU-Bulgaria –with the EU linked with centre and Bulgaria with periphery. However, in this cartoon the movement is oriented not towards the EU but against it. **Second**, as *Bai Ganio* or the 'Everyman', Bulgaria invariably assumes a male identity. But why is Bulgaria consistently male? The MOTION metaphor obviously requires an active moving subject and that is understood to be male. The cartoons thus rely on a gendering code of male as the strong, active, financial breadwinner and female as weak, passive and dependant partner. By neglecting to present women as active political subjects these cartoons reproduce a patriarchal political culture. Those cartoons which are indifferent to the *Balkanist* distinctions portray Bulgaria's body as healthy and ready for or in motion. At the intersections of the gendering code which cartoons assume with the *Balkanist* discourse (which relegates the Balkans to a passive, feminine position) we encounter positions. Thus, the masculine body is marked as primitive or poor, rendered incapable of moving, or is feminized. **Finally**, the cartoons are preoccupied with narrating 'Bulgaria'. The EU or Europe is usually made recognizable by stars and the

²⁴ The Lev is the currency of Bulgaria.

inscription (EU/Europe). Those cartoons which offer more details, e.g. Figures 4, 9 and 10, portray the EU in highly positive terms (e.g. place where the desert ends, rainbow or sun).

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