Multicultural Men?: The Early, Exclusionary Multicultural Vision of Edward F. Haskell’s Lance

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Multicultural Men?: The Early, Exclusionary Multicultural Vision of Edward F. Haskell’s Lance

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The first two quotations for the Oxford English Dictionary entry on the adjective \textit{multicultural} include a passage from University of Chicago sociologist Everett V. Stonequist’s article “The Problem of the Marginal Man” (1935), which appeared in \textit{The American Journal of Sociology},\footnote{“Let us begin with the social situation, since it is this which produces the marginal type of personality,” Stonequist writes, adding, “We have already indicated its general configuration: a bi-cultural (or multi-cultural) situation in which members of one cultural group are seeking to adjust themselves to the group which possesses greater prestige and power” (3). He later devoted a monograph to the topic—\textit{The Marginal Man: a Study in Personality and Culture Conflict}—which appeared in 1937.} and another from a book review by Iris Barry that was published in the July 27, 1941 issue of the \textit{New York Herald-Tribune}.\footnote{The passage cited by the OED opens up the review's third paragraph: Lance is “a fervent sermon against nationalism, national prejudice and behavior in favor of a ‘multicultural’ way of life” (Barry 3).} It is worth noting that the scholars for the \textit{OED} neglected to look at the text Barry reviewed—\textit{Lance} (1941), by Edward F. Haskell (1906-1986)—because its subtitle\footnote{Barry’s review does not mention the novel’s subtitle.} is \textit{A Novel about Multicultural Men}\footnote{Haskell uses the term “multicultural men” in various places throughout the novel. He is using the word “men” to refer to humanity, rather than men specifically. One of the novel’s major characters is a female Eleonora Halley. As a result, I will use his terminology at times throughout this essay.}. Today, Haskell’s neglected novel remains a revealing curiosity for a few reasons, most notably for its incredibly early usage of the term “multicultural,” especially as a socially progressive adjective, long before the founding of \textit{MELUS} (Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States) and the Before Columbus Foundation in the mid-1970s. Haskell’s novel follows the travails of Lancelot Tenorton (Lance), a brilliant young social scientist—raised in England and Germany—who becomes a prisoner of war in Bulgaria during World War I, suspected of being a German spy. Lance’s mentor, Major Bruce
Campbell, who formulates the multicultural ideology that Lance abides by, explains, late in the novel, “We, being children of the great age of transportation and communication, have contacts with many languages, many faiths, and many nations. We are multicultural” (321). These children form the basis of the sociological phenomenon Haskell examines in Lance.

Haskell, who was himself a sociologist, anthropologist, and ecologist by trade, was only a part-time novelist at best, as Lance proved to be his only novel. Iris Barry notes the peculiarity of Haskell’s novel in the opening paragraph of her review, proclaiming, “This long and exciting adventure story, which is also a modern tract, must surely be one of the oddest novels to appear since M.P. Shiel published his last one” (3). As a result, Lance often reads like a “tract,” as Barry states (3). Stylistically, it is a piece of modernist realism, as Haskell’s narrative includes frequently essayistic (or “tract”-like) asides, intertextual references to the poetry of Bulgarian revolutionary Hristo Botev, and the occasional use of free indirect discourse. And though it is set in Bulgaria during World War I, Haskell’s commentary is frequently topical, presenting a cautionary tale against nationalism, especially the most brutal example of it then being promulgated by Hitler’s German forces. Interestingly, as the novel concludes, Haskell, a native of Bulgaria who permanently immigrated to the United States in his twenties, presents the United States as the nation-state best suited for these “multicultural men.” For Haskell, these are individuals whose lives (and their bases of knowledge) have been expanded yet fragmented by technological advances in telecommunications and transportation during the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. Lance explains his part in this existence to Captain Gerhard

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5 Shiel’s most recent novel at the time this review appeared was The Young Men are Coming! (1937).
6 Haskell inserts an anachronistic bit of prophecy in one of Major Bruce Campbell’s monologues near the novel’s conclusion. Campbell claims, “I foresee the rise of some leader toward German dominance like Botev’s rise to lead toward Bulgarian freedom. A struggle in the future, gentlemen: a war more terrible and gigantic than any we can dream today” (Lance 348). This German leader is to be, presumably, Hitler.
later in the novel: “My life is the quintessence of the century’s conflicts, modern fate’s ironic masterpiece” (261). Haskell’s semi-autobiographical socio-political adventure romance draws off prevailing discourses of cosmopolitanism, modernism, and social science to advocate its intriguing but incomplete ideology of multiculturalism. In this essay, I discuss Haskell’s configuration of multicultural people, the ways in which his construction is problematic, and how Haskell’s narrative concludes that the United States provides the utopian means for avoiding these insufficiencies.

Very little has been written about Edward F. Haskell. According to a profile in *The New York Times Book Review*’s “Books and Authors” feature from their June 29, 1941 issue, Haskell was born in Philippopolis (now Plovdiv), Bulgaria in 1906. His grandfather, Dr. Henry C. Haskell, was among the missionaries who founded the American College of Sofia in 1860 ("Award" 14; “History”). His father, Rev. Dr. Edward B. Haskell, born in Bulgaria, was also a missionary there for nearly half a century ("Award" 14). These conditions no doubt contributed to his son’s cosmopolitan upbringing. In his formative years, he spoke “a conglomerate of English, Swiss-German and Bulgaria,”7 and he was educated in “an American kindergarten, German schools in Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria, public school in Oberlin, Ohio, [and a] mid-Victorian girls’ pensionnat in French Switzerland (where he was the only boy)” (11).8 Haskell lived in Bulgaria for the duration of the first World War, and, according to Iris Barry, during those years, he “investigated political trials, [was] shadowed by the police, and served on the International Committee for Political Prisoners” (3). For all these reasons, the one paragraph profile in “Books

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7 Haskell’s mother was Swiss (Quine 56).
8 Major Bruce Campbell’s family, in *Lance*, is very much modeled after Haskell’s. The Campbell’s had left the United States for life abroad “to do good” (Haskell, *Lance* 21). Campbell is, as a result, like his author, raised in Africa, taught in an English school, speaking “such a jargon of English and African dialects that his own mother literally could not understand him” (22).
and Authors” concludes, “If he is not a cosmopolitan, then there just ‘ain’t no such animal’” (11).

His first published work was an entry in a “Why I Subscribed” contest for a 1922 issue of *Boy’s Life* in which he indicated his desire “for complete Americanization” (“Books” 11). Presumably his Americanization indeed became complete as he returned to America for good to complete his higher education, obtaining his A.B. at Oberlin College in 1929. While there, he met noted American philosopher W.V. Quine, who later boasted, in his autobiography, *The Time of My Life* (1985), “Ed has long been my closest friend” (56). He studied briefly at Columbia University, but left school for a five year hiatus, traveling and writing the manuscript for his novel. According to Quine, Haskell began composing *Lance* as early as 1931. After completing two years of graduate work at Harvard (1935-7), he became associated with the University of Chicago from 1937 to 1943, where he became a fellow, despite failing to complete his doctoral thesis (Wilken). During these years, he produced two scholarly essays: “Mathematical Systematization of ‘Environment,’ ‘Organism’ and ‘Habitat’” (1940, in *Ecology*) and “The Religious Force of Unified Science” (1942, in *The Scientific Monthly*). The latter essay, though only seven pages long, shaped the future trajectory of his research and gave him his life’s mission: to establish “a modern sacred society: Its method is scientific; its extension, universal; its direction, progressive; and its force, religious” (Haskell, “Religious Force” 551).

According to Timothy Wilken, Haskell was highly instrumental in the formation of the Council for Unified Research and Education (CURE) in 1948—which he chaired from its inception to its dissolution in the mid-1980s—a “private non-profit research organization of scientists committed to the unification of science and education” (Wilken). Their interdisciplinary goal
was “the synthesis of all knowledge into a single discipline” (Wilken). The culmination of the group’s efforts was the publication of *Full Circle: The Moral Force of Unified Science* in 1972, which Haskell edited, contributing to three of the book’s five chapters. The scant scholarly attention that has been paid to Haskell’s work has focused on his Unified Science theory, while *Lance* has been all but ignored by literary critics.

*Lance: a Novel about Multicultural Men* was published by The John Day Company of New York City in 1941. John Day was founded in 1926 and published books intermittently until 1978. They generally published left-of-center material, including most of Pearl S. Buck’s books, Joseph Stalin’s five-year plan for 1931, anti-Nazi literature (including Leon Trotsky’s tract *What Hitler Wants* [1933]), pro-Communist and socialist literature, Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s *Looking Forward* (1933) and *On Our Way* (1934), Mohandas Gandhi’s *My Appeal to the British* (1942), as well as several books by Jawaharlal Nehru. Haskell’s *Lance* surely appealed to the multicultural and internationalist interests of The John Day Company, which additionally published a variety of travel guides, numerous narrative accounts of bi-cultural experiences, and even eleven of early Chinese American writer Lin Yutang’s books. According to Quine, Haskell “was a Marxist” during the period in which he began work on the novel, and as late as 1935, he was in his “communist phase” (78; 121). It appears that between then and the time the novel was completed, Haskell’s “communist fervor had been reversed by his intimate acquaintance with the party and the system” (Quine 192). As a result, Haskell is generally critical of Communism in *Lance*. However, his anti-fascist and pro-multicultural rhetoric remain unfettered throughout the novel and are consistent with certain aspects of the Popular Front of
Communism, which peaked during the years *Lance* was composed and being shopped to publishing houses (roughly 1934 to 1939). Michael Denning observes, “‘Pan-ethnic Americanism’ is perhaps the most powerful working-class ideology of the age of the CIO [Congress of Industrial Organizations], and it significantly reshaped the contours of official US nationalism” (130). Denning also argues, “The tale of the ‘great dictator’ haunted the Popular Front imagination” (376). This is worth noting because Haskell got the attention of *The New York Times* in April 1935 when he returned the Cross of the Order of Civic Merit which Bulgaria’s King Boris III had presented to his father in 1927 for his half-century of missionary work there. According to the *Times*, Haskell “left that decoration at the office of the Bulgarian Consulate General” in New York City to protest “past atrocities and particularly against the March raids on workers’ homes” and “the military Fascist dictatorship of Bulgaria” (“Award” 14). And while no fascist leaders populate the pages of *Lance*, Haskell is clearly quite critical of the nationalist characters in the novel, for nationalism was very often a key political tool of fascist regimes.

Haskell’s association with the University of Chicago sociology department, beginning in 1937, is also important to note here. Many scholars, such as Martin Bulmer, refer to the years 1915 to 1935 as the halcyon days for the department, which was “the leading center of sociology in world at this period” (1-2). Their department included Robert E. Park, W.I. Thomas, Nels Anderson, Paul G. Cressey, and Clifford Shaw, while Everett Stonequist (who was mentored by Park) and E. Franklin Frazier received their Ph.D.s there during these years. Park and Stonequist’s work on “the marginal man” surely informed Haskell’s construction of the
multicultural class that populates *Lance.*\(^{11}\) Park is credited for creating the concept of the marginal man in his essay “Human Migration and the Marginal Man” (1928). He explains:

> In the case of the marginal man the period of crisis is relatively permanent. The result is that he tends to become a personality type. Ordinarily the marginal man is a mixed blood ... but that is apparent because the man of mixed blood is one who lives in two worlds, in both of which he is more or less of a stranger. The Christian convert in Asia or in Africa exhibits many if not most of the characteristics of the marginal man—the same spiritual instability, intensified self-consciousness, restlessness, and *malaise.* (893)

In the novel, Eleonora Halley, Lancelot Tenorton (the man Eleonora loves), Bob Ivanoff (the man who loves Eleonora), and Bruce Halley (Eleonora’s younger brother) each share experiences similar to the “Christian convert” Park describes, as they have lived in multiple countries during their formative years. In “The Problem of the Marginal Man,” the essay in which, according to the *OED*, the term multicultural is used for the first time, Stonequist attributes the growth of “bi-cultural (or multi-cultural) situation[s]” to the fact that “the economic system has expanded so much more rapidly than have the other aspects of culture,” and, as a result, “many individuals [are] growing up in a more complex and less harmonious cultural situation” (2-3). Tellingly, throughout *Lance*, Haskell is much more interested in the

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\(^{11}\) Robert E.L. Faris observes, “Park’s contributions on [the marginal man] were transmitted in detail to his student, Everett Stonequist, for the latter’s doctoral dissertation and the book [*The Marginal Man: a Study in Personality and Culture Conflict*] which appeared a few years later” (108).

It is also important to point out that there is no conclusive evidence that Haskell was in contact with Park or Stonequist. Stonequist was affiliated with Skidmore College from 1930 to 1970, and Park retired in 1935, the year before Haskell arrived at the University of Chicago. But due to the importance of their work and their contributions to the University of Chicago’s status as the leading Sociology program in the country from 1915 to 1935, there is a high probability that Haskell was familiar with their work.
cosmopolitan multicultural individual than the “mixed blood”; the growing economic system Stonequist refers to, the earliest manifestations of the multinational global economy, has generated vagabond existences for many of the children of those initial traveling businessmen following the boom in automobile and air-travel.

Given Haskell’s background, it is not surprising that cosmopolitanism is crucial to understanding his construction of multicultural men in *Lance*. The *OED* defines the cosmopolitan as “belonging to all parts of the world; not restricted to any one country or its inhabitants” and “composed of people from many different countries.” Nationalism might seem antithetical to cosmopolitanism, but, as critics like Pheng Cheah and Daniel S. Malachuk have observed, “advocates of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and of the nationalism that followed generally understood one another to be allies rather than opponents” (Malachuk 139). Malachuk notes that these allegiances continued until the late nineteenth century. In *Lance*, the patriarchs Robert Ivanoff and Mr. Halley embody this generational divide, as their multiple inhabitations throughout the world are in the service of war profiteering. The novel’s younger characters are cosmopolitan by definition, but, instead, according to David Hollinger, practice cultural pluralism, which “prescribes [ethnic particularism] and envisions a society full of particular groups, each respecting another” (57). Hollinger’s conception of cosmopolitanism in “Ethnic Diversity, Cosmopolitanism, and the Emergence of the American Liberal Intelligentsia” (1975), though specifically limited to the American intellectual, is useful here as well. The novel’s younger cosmopolitan characters (Major Bruce Campbell, Lancelot Tenorton, Eleonora

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12 Cultural or racial “mixing” is referred to in the novel. In Major Bruce Campbell’s defense of Lance near its conclusion, he claims, “The peoples of the world are rapidly being scrambled! Whether they want to be, like the Americans, or whether they do not want to be, like the Germans, they are mixing themselves anyway. You need only look, and you will already find blue-eyed, fair-haired babies all over the Balkans!” (330).
Halley), like Hollinger’s cosmopolitan, seek to “transcend the limitations of any and all particularisms in order to achieve a more complete human experience and a more complete understanding of that experience,” and Campbell and Lance, in particular, view specific cultures “as repositories for insights and experiences that can be drawn upon in the interests of a more comprehensive outlook on the world” (59).

Since Lance has never been reprinted and no scholarship exists about it, I will provide a brief summary of the novel. Lance (nee Friedrich “Fritz” Rossner) is raised by German man (“Professor” Friedrich Rossner) who performs throughout Europe as a clown. Lance has no memory of his English parents (“if, indeed, they really were his parents,” the narrator claims), and, according to “Professor” Rossner, he was found deserted in a Berlin alleyway (11; 24). While being schooled in Berlin, he is introduced to his mentor, Bruce Campbell, who inculcates Lance with his multicultural philosophy and eventually adopts him. Here, he also meets Eleonora Halley, his love interest throughout the novel. Her father (Mr. Halley), an American industrialist, has sent her abroad for her education as well. When Mr. Halley finds out about Lance’s mysterious origins, he is able to prove in an English court that he is the heir of the vast estate of Lancelot Tenorton. Mr. Halley is appointed trustee of his estate, and sends him to a traditional English school. While still in school, Lance learns that “Professor” Rossner committed suicide. Contributing to his malaise is the fact that Mr. Halley never sent the “Professor” the living wages he promised Lance he would send to him. Lance cuts off all ties with the Halley family, including Eleonora, and leaves England to travel abroad. Years later, at the height of World War I, Lance falls into the hands of the Bulgarians while doing anthropological work,
suspected of being a German spy. During his imprisonment, aboard a railroad prison nicknamed the “Orient Express,” he has the extreme latitude to sing for high-ranking officials, travel, and conduct sociological experiments. He even finds the time to marry his life’s love, Eleonora, who has joined the Communist effort, much to the chagrin of her capitalist father and to the skeptical Lance. Because of Lance’s complicated national heritage, his aversion to nationalism, and his radical new multicultural philosophy, he is court-martialed by the British, suspected of being a traitor to England. Lance’s court martial is ultimately annulled after a successful defense by Major Bruce Campbell.

From the outset, Haskell’s multiculturalism is intellectual rather than familial, ancestral, or locational, its intellectualism essentially rooted in anti-nationalism. The narrator begins the novel’s second chapter: “An integrated man has warmth, wholeheartedness; he feels ‘deep reality.’ Such a man, who has a real, loving mother and father, a real, happy home, and a real, wholly-loved country, cannot understand how anybody would give his life for anything so pale and ‘unreal’ as an idea. He must regard such a person either as crazy or as a saint” (11). This passage does not promote pacifism so much as it espouses an “institution-building” internationalism, where a coalition of nations work to develop peace and security through law and the respect of cultural tradition (Goldmann 2). Haskell, however, assumes that culturally static people make it difficult for people like Lance, who “was like the increasing millions in our towns today whose homes are disrupted by diverse languages and loyalties and most of whose

13 This form of internationalism is recognizably different from the kind advocated in the novel by the German Communist Captain von Gerhard-Seeburg. Haskell is quite critical of Communism for its absolutism throughout Lance, viewing the tactics of the Communists as consistent with those of the nationalists. It is clear that Haskell is ridiculing Gerhard when he attempts to recruit Eleonora, telling her to “join our international organization and change this hideous system of thievery and lying from the ground up! Eleonora, you know our program; you know that we are the party of science and internationalism. You belong with us. Your very instincts are international” (167). Later, Lance refers to the Bolsheviks as a “power-organization” (260).
countrymen therefore are unsympathetic people” (11). The reason these “unsympathetic people” will kill to preserve ideals is because of their unwavering belief in absolutes. Major Bruce Campbell teaches Lance that “life is multiordinal; death alone is absolute! ... absolutes are forces of death” (20). Campbell, who is often Haskell’s mouthpiece in the novel, has “adapted to the new world of rapid transport and communication” unlike “most multicultural people” because he is not an oppositionist “crippled by the blows of ... unicultural worlds” (21). Campbell even views multicultural people in terms of biological evolution in this lengthy passage:

When the lobe-finned fishes crawled shakily out of the sea, as the first animals to live on land, their fins had only half evolved into feet, their air-bladders only half into lungs. It was a terrible, gasping struggle: a great battle with the unknown earth and air, a war of defense against the strong, sure, unprogressive fishes that would never rise to a higher form of life. So we and all multicultural people who crawl shakily out of the national narrows into the open world have no more than a half-evolved world feeling and world knowledge ... We find ourselves at odds with strong, sure unicultural people. Yet we feel sure that our vision is much truer than the vision of provincial people. We see their mistakes. We try to save us and them from themselves, and lead everyone into a higher, and we hope, a happier way of life. (321)

Campbell’s extended analogy presents “unicultural” or provincial people as unevolved, suggesting that a multicultural mindset is partly biological, not simply intellectual. However, Lance’s multicultural ideology is rooted in an ecumenical view of social science, which he argues
“aims at eliminating war, suicide, insanity, revolution just as wholly as biological science eliminated the Black Death, smallpox, and typhoid fever” (345-6).

Though multiculturalism is, at least for Lance and Campbell, anti-nationalist, anti-absolutist, and averse to oppositionism, for Eleonora it is the practical result of her father’s cosmopolitanism, which has exposed her to life in at least five different countries. She jokingly asks, “What could I call myself?” acknowledging the rootlessness of her childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, answering, “Bulgaria, America, France, England, Germany—B-A-F-E-G—Bafeg!” (79). Though her enthusiasm for her “Bafeg” identity eventually wanes, her conscious cultural identifications remain fragmented throughout much of the novel. She resists a national self-identity unlike Bob Ivanoff, another multicultural character who went to school with her and Lance in England. To alleviate his multicultural social anxiety, he has followed the path of his father, Robert Ivanoff—who is a corrupt Captain in the Bulgarian army—by joining the Bulgarian war effort, despite never having lived in Bulgaria nor experienced Bulgarian culture. When Bob, who has long been in love with Eleonora, hears her admit that she wishes to join the Communists, he asks her, “Are you mad?” She answers, “I’ll tell you what I am; I’m a human type created by modern transportation and communication, a polyglot; an international, many-hearted girl who is going mad because she’s torn ten ways and has no one to understand her” (176). Unlike Bob, who has adopted Bulgarian nationalism, Eleonora does not privilege one of her experiences inside one nation’s borders over another. This is what it means to her to be multicultural.
While Haskell’s advance of a multicultural philosophy in the early 1940s\textsuperscript{14} may seem ahead of its time on the surface, it bares only a minor resemblance to the practical or intellectual multiculturalism practiced today. Contemporary multiculturalism is not rooted in anti-nationalism (as many multicultural student organizations and literary anthologies, for instance, do, to a certain extent, embrace some of the national components of their cultural experiences), and it is not confined to the wealthiest or most well-traveled individuals. Similarly, today’s multicultural people can include individuals with family members from different cultural backgrounds as well as those whose selected forms of expression originate from a variety of cultures. The collective aspect of contemporary multiculturalism is markedly different from the sort of misanthropic, elitist individualism that the first chapters of \textit{Lance} seemingly espouse. As a child, Lance shares his formative opinions with Campbell, telling him, “the world is divided into himself [Campbell] and Fritz [Lance] on the one hand, and the dumbheads on the other” (18). Campbell affirms his contention, saying, “That jolly well puts it in a nutshell, Fritz, doesn’t it!” (18).

Campbell extends this division to distinguish between himself and Lance and provincial nationalists by evoking the image of “the native.” After Lance studies a “marvelous mask of the East Borneo \textit{Kenyahs}, agreeing with Campbell that it demonstrated wonderful insight into human character,” Campbell offers the following mediation: “Do you see the savages who made that mask? They know only their own people, their own land, and a little of the sea, and their world-controlling ‘demons’! They never understand anything else because their provincial

\begin{footnote}
\textsuperscript{14} This essay is not suggesting that Haskell’s \textit{Lance} is the first multicultural novel. A cursory look at just about any issue of \textit{MELUS} would debunk this notion instantly. The earliest piece of literature usually cited with a socially progressive analogue for “multicultural” is Israel Zangwill’s play, \textit{The Melting Pot}, first staged in 1908. Haskell even uses the term at least once in \textit{Lance} (194).
\end{footnote}
minds automatically view newcomers as demon-ruled people like themselves. We call such people ‘natives’” (17-8). This passage is problematic for any number of reasons, most notably the belittling of the East Borneo Kenyahs’ cosmology to service the colonialist project of Western civilization.

Interestingly, Haskell applies this “native” terminology throughout the novel to criticize nationalists and provincialists (i.e. there are German, French, and Italian natives as well). Later, when Bob Ivanoff suggests Eleonora should seek the approval of Bulgaria’s politicians and journalists so she can be considered one of the best piano players in Sofia (Bulgaria’s capitol), she retorts, “I’ll play as well as I know how—even if no one in the world likes it and I have to go and live by myself in the mountains! You won’t catch me going native even if you and everybody else become generals and admirals!” (71). Here, she inverts Kurtz’s notion of “going native” in Joseph Conrad’s novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899) by aligning the concept with an unwavering defense of a Western nation’s system of beliefs. According to Patrick Brantlinger, when Kurtz “goes native” in *Heart of Darkness*, “he betrays the ideals of the civilization that he is supposedly importing from Europe” (193). Eleonora’s meaning is, instead, contrary to this standard understanding of the term: by resorting to nationalism, she argues, Bob Ivanoff (for example) is betraying the tenets of Western civilization. While the purpose of Haskell’s reconstruction of “going native” here is to chastise nationalism wherever it occurs on Earth, especially in Western countries, his sharp criticism only gathers strength if we are to think of Africa as the proverbial Dark Continent, an analogue and archetype for this “native” ideology.

These examples from *Lance* expose two glaring weaknesses with Haskell’s early conception of multicultural people: 1) they are necessarily cosmopolitan Westerners (either
European or Euro-American), which presupposes a highly educated, upper-class identity, and; 2) because of their diasporic dispersal, they become highly individualistic and stubborn, resulting in their social isolation. The narrator says of Lance, “He lived his life everywhere, but had his place nowhere. His gears did not mesh with any of the conventionalized social mechanisms about him. While he lived he was a foreigner everywhere. And when he died all would simply be a blank” (105). Eleonora is similarly described as having “no religion, no country, no ethnic customs in common with anybody but Lance” (133). Lance later perfectly describes their status as culturally elite and isolated cosmopolitans: “It must be something in our sort of people that isolates us, even in our own families. We’ve seen things as few others, even our parents, have seen them. It’s as though we were high on a mountain peak, looking down into many sharply separated valleys where the different nations live” (219). Haskell’s choice of the words “as few others” also implies that the “multicultural men” he writes about are quite limited in number globally, thereby limiting the broader appeal of his categorization.

While the first weakness is not resolved in the novel, Haskell’s narrative does alleviate Lance and Eleonora of their social loneliness by suggesting that the adoption of a cultural identity can indeed be empowering. The two characters elope in a historically Turkish Bulgarian village. Still worried about making commitments to any organized social group (excepting Eleonora’s Communism), they are initially reticent about marrying in a Bulgarian Orthodox Church. Ultimately, Lance succumbs to the pragmatism of compromise, admitting, “We exert this pressure consciously, and that is sophisticated, democratic change: some temporary compromise on the one hand, certain ultimate progress on the other hand. That’s not dishonest!” (231). They are baptized, married, and then treated to an Orthodox ceremony to
celebrate their nuptials. He admits to Eleonora, “You showed me the power of religion, the power of kinship, of clan, and of country is an eternal power, as eternal as mankind” (299). As a result, Lance is “no longer a split-minded scientist but an integrated one with a direction and a chance to live!” (286). This is a lesson that Major Bruce Campbell seems to have withheld from both characters, suggesting that the novel is not only about multicultural men, but also a dual bildungsroman. He explains to Eleonora:

Multicultural people ... are just like unicultural people. They develop faith and loyalty and patriotism too: faith in science, loyalty to world organization, and patriotism for mankind. We develop it whether we realize it or not. And we develop it in many different forms: some of use develop it as religion; others, like Captain Gerhard, as a political creed; others—say Lance—as science; others, like you, as art; and others—Bob Ivanoff—even as nationalism. Your little brother calls it ‘America’ and fights as hard for it as any of us! (321)

Campbell’s monologue serves a dual function here. First, it ties up the philosophical loose ends of each of the novel’s characters, providing a simple explanation for their convictions. Secondly, Campbell acknowledges what it takes Lance and Eleonora so long to realize: that people can have faith, loyalty, and patriotism, so long as they avoid thinking absolutely about these principles.

Interestingly, Campbell’s monologue concludes by assessing his nephew Bruce Halley’s view of America in conceptual terms (note that America, in the passage, is analogous with religion, a political creed, science, art, and nationalism). Though Lance is not set in the United States, the country’s presence hovers over the novel’s multicultural characters, especially
Eleonora and Bruce Halley, who were born in the United States, and Major Bruce Campbell, whose father was born there. American regionalism or classism is of no concern for Haskell, but like his youthful character Bruce Halley, America remains a powerful concept and a universal symbol for multiculturalism in the novel. From the very beginning, Haskell makes this clear. One of the lessons Campbell teaches the teenaged Lance is this: “America is the country. Its wilds and minorities have made flexible minds. Experiment and invention can develop best in America. Scientific study and direction of society will emerge there first of all” (20). Haskell even offers up another semi-autobiographical statement: “Mark my words, [Lance]. Your fatherland is America! That’s where you’ll fetch up some day” (20). Intriguingly, Haskell is indifferent at best to Anglo American privilege in the United States during World War I, or simply ignorant at worst of America’s racist Jim Crow laws, its destruction of the Native American nations, the various Asian Exclusion acts in place, or even the anti-German sentiment that swept the nation. None of these realities of the World War I-era United States, which strongly resists his characterization of the nation as multiculturalist, are contained within Lance, Bruce Halley, or Bruce Campbell’s utopian vision of America.

As I have already stated, Lance and Eleonora’s multicultural identities, throughout most of the novel, turns them into individualistic, lonely people. Haskell’s counterexample to their relative isolation is Bruce Halley, Eleonora’s younger brother. In his boarding school classes, taught by the inflexible German nationalist Herr Horst Forst, he is frequently picked on by other
cosmopolitan boys with nationalist mindsets. Curiously, Bruce’s love for America is never considered nationalist by Haskell. The narrator explains:

Bruce attributed his unusual attitude to his nationality. And there was a great deal of justification for it in actual fact: the Great Melting Pot, of which he was so terribly proud was more tolerant of the world’s modern wanderers than any other country he knew ... He in his childlike simplicity, however, claimed the backing of a mighty nation of a hundred millions. (194)

By evoking Israel Zangwill’s popular cultural metaphor here (the Melting Pot), Haskell, and therefore Bruce Halley, presumes that America is exempt from nationalism and even racial intolerance because of its ethnic diversity, “wilds,” and “minorities.” Though the young Bruce is naïve regarding the history of racially and culturally motivated violence in the United States, his awareness of America’s multicultural population is quite savvy. After Herr Forst calls America “the land of criminals and mongrels,” a place where “Indians, Jews, Negroes, Chinese, Italians, Poles, Irish, and God knows what all are mixed up,” a place where “Half the countries of Europe have sent all their convicts ... and their bastards and slum degenerates” (209). Bruce defends American diversity, responding: “I’ve been in America, and I know they speak English there! And it’s good that there are many other languages too! And it’s good that there are

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15 Though there is one curious passage where, after being punished by Herr Forst, Bruce daydreams about running away from school and murdering Germans, including, specifically, Herr Forst:

Maybe he could stay with the soldiers at the front, or even sneak past the front to the English soldiers on the other side, to the men who were so generous with their good things to eat. Then he could get a gun and kill Germans. And perhaps some day he could kill Herr Forst himself! That would be the happiest day of his life, when Herr Forst would kneel in front of him and beg, and Bruce would tell him to show German diligence, order, respect, and thoroughness in his begging. Then Bruce would tell him that this was not good enough, and tell him that he would now see what is meant by American thoroughness, diligence, and order. And then he would shoot him dead, dead, dead! (211)

16 After being told a particularly disturbing tale of cultural violence by Turkish classmate Bedros Kalpakian, Bruce replies, “But in America they don’t make Armenians spit on the Cross or rub pork on the mouths of Jews or anything like that” (199).
many kinds of people! That shows how much better America is than Germany! Many kids are better than just one kind” (209-10).

And while Bruce remains the novel’s most visible propagandist—giving Lance an American flag at the onset of his court-martial trial—ultimately it is Campbell who recommends to Lance and Eleonora that, if he is victorious, he should “Go to America. It’s the most flexible, progressive country in the world today” (276; 323). Prior to receiving the verdict, Haskell implicitly gives for him what should be the most ringing endorsement of the United States. Lance tells Eleonora, “If I catch it [death resulting from a guilty verdict], tell Bruce that I’m going out on that field because I was clearing the road for him to go ahead.” Eleonora adds, “And I’ll tell him that you left [the American flag Bruce gave him] for him … a flag under which science can become religion” (357). This final statement foreshadows Haskell’s conclusion to his essay “The Religious Force of Unified Science” as well as his life’s work. Since Haskell theorizes America is immune to nationalism because of its multicultural diversity, Bruce Halley’s strong identification as an American—especially in his cosmopolitan travels abroad—epitomizes well-contented multicultural identity in Lance. Therefore, in order for Lance and Eleonora to escape their social isolation, their migration to the United States would give them the stable identity they desire while simultaneously embracing their multicultural upbringings.

Haskell’s display of American patriotism at the novel’s conclusion is complicated to interpret, especially because of his tenuous status as an American immigrant to the United States. Its flag-waving gesture seemingly undermines his constant critiques of nationalism.

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17 I use the word “tenuous” here because Haskell’s grandfather was born in the United States, though he and his father were not. However, his father maintained ties and allegiances with America during Haskell’s upbringing. Therefore, his ties to the United States, as a citizen who migrated from Bulgaria, hardly represent the archetypal immigrant narrative.
throughout *Lance*. However, his ahistorical construction of the United States throughout the novel as a concept—or better, a theory in practice—free of regionalisms, nationalisms, racism, classism, or forms of genocide, is really a sustained criticism of early Twentieth Century European nationalist movements and the bloodshed that resulted from them. The United States, therefore, is presented as a sanctuary for his Eurocentric conception of multicultural men, a place where well-educated, cosmopolitan Europeans can flee from the culturally suicidal “natives” of Europe.

*Lance* is a fascinating piece of neglected literature most notably for its early emphasis on cultural exchange and its embrace of modernity as a swiftly-changing reality that humanity must adapt to. Ironically, reviewer Iris Barry predicted, “the mingled originality and adventurousness of the book will have an even wider appeal. It will be surprising if *Lance* does not cause something of a flutter” (3). What Barry observes as the novel’s “adventurousness” could have contributed to its negligible critical and public reception. But what makes *Lance* such a singular piece of literature is his syntactic development and acknowledgement of a “multicultural” people, especially as nationalist fascism was ravaging Europe. There are limitations to his nascent formulation of “multicultural men”—as this article has clearly illustrated—but his contention that the comprehension and recognition of multiple cultural traditions within the borders of specific nation-states can serve to improve society is one shared by contemporary multiculturalists. His “multicultural men” are a psychically isolated, nation-less people, but they embrace the variety of their cultural experiences and existences while rejecting monoculturalism in all its forms. And though these multicultural men are limited
to a sociological phenomenon in the novel, Haskell ultimately attempts to convince us that in an increasingly connected world, we are all “multicultural men.”
Works Cited


