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Winter 2002

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Callaloo, Volume 25, Number 1, Winter 2002, pp. 146-164 (Article)

Published by The Johns Hopkins University Press
DOI: 10.1353/cal.2002.0044



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“REMEMBERING WHEN INDIANS WERE RED”
Bob Kaufman, the Popular Front, and the Black Arts Movement

by James Smethurst

Unlike other African-American contemporaries who participated in the New American Poetry groupings of the 1950s, such as Ted Joans and Amiri Baraka, Bob Kaufman seems not to have been much engaged with the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. However, Kaufman’s work in many respects was a crucial forerunner of the model of a popular avant-garde art rooted in African-American popular culture and connected to a radical anti-racist, anti-colonialist and internationalist sensibility that would be characteristic of much African-American nationalist art in the 1960s and 1970s. This model of what Werner Sollors has called a “populist modernism” is heavily associated with Amiri Baraka—with considerable justice since Baraka theorized it extensively in his prose writings (Sollors 8). Nonetheless, Kaufman actually pioneered this approach in his poetry simultaneously with or earlier than did Baraka or Joans—and, as Lorenzo Thomas points out in a clearer and more developed form (Thomas, “Communicating by Horns”293). In no small part, this is due to the fact that the notion of the popular avant-garde derives significantly from the Popular Front subculture from which Kaufman emerged and with which he continued to identify after its decline during the Cold War.

Reliable information about Kaufman’s early life is hard to come by—largely due to Kaufman’s self-mythologizing which, as we will see, has a crucial impact on how we read his work.¹ What seems to be fairly certain is that Kaufman was born in New Orleans in 1925 to a “middle-class” Catholic African-American family. Though it seems possible that Kaufman’s paternal grandfather was partly of Jewish descent, contrary to Kaufman’s claims the family was not Jewish in terms either of Jewish law or social categories as they would have been recognized in New Orleans at the time. Rather Kaufman’s family seems to have identified itself as African-American in a fairly straightforward manner—though it is worth remembering that racial identity was often defined a bit differently in New Orleans than in the rest of the South (or the North, for that matter).

At an early age (probably eighteen), Kaufman, like his older brother George, joined the merchant marine. During this period, Kaufman became an activist in the National Maritime Union (NMU), a union of merchant sailors famous at the time for its radical leadership and its racial egalitarianism—for example, its National Secretary at the time was Ferdinand Smith, a black Communist whose political sympathies were a matter of public record. In the late 1940s or early 1950s, Kaufman was (perhaps) one of approximately 2,000 sailors expelled by the union or “screened” from the merchant

marine by the Federal government for their Communist associations.² Kaufman is said to have engaged in a number of radical labor and political activities in New York and the South before ending up on the West Coast where he became an active and very visible part of the “Beat” and “San Francisco Renaissance” literary circles.³

Kaufman spent most of the 1950s and 1960s in San Francisco with a sojourn in New York City. He was a crucial figure in the emerging Bay Area New American Poetry circles as a writer, an organizer (he was one of the catalysts for the important journal *Beatitude*), and a public figure of uncompromising resistance to aesthetic and political authority. His period in New York is frequently characterized as one of mental decline brought on by drugs, especially speed, arrest and brutal treatment by various authorities, including numerous forced bouts with shock therapy. However, there is evidence that even in New York, Kaufman continued to serve as a cultural catalyst, particularly among African-American artists.⁴ Returning to San Francisco, Kaufman took a vow of silence, allegedly after John F. Kennedy’s death, which he intended to last until the Vietnam War was ended. He died in 1986 after years of poverty, substance abuse, and mental problems.

The point of this bare biographical sketch is not the absolute truth of every detail, but that Kaufman was a revolutionary with a history, even if possibly imagined in part, in actual radical political movements before he came to the literary radicalism of the 1950s. Though many other participants in various New American Poetry circles, such as Allen Ginsberg, Frank O’Hara, and Stuart Perkoff, had some connection to the old Communist Left, Kaufman was more directly and more recently connected to the Old Left—though he became antagonistic towards the Soviet Union, perhaps, like many Communists, disillusioned by Krushchev’s admissions about Stalin’s terrors and the invasion of Hungary in 1956.⁵ He also appears to have been uncompromising in his commitment to personal as well as group liberation and in his rebellion against what he saw as oppressive authority.

In other words, Kaufman experienced life, or recreated his life, as a sort of symbolic field in which his work was not clearly distinguished from “real life.” This is in obvious rebellion against the dominant “New Critic” literary strictures of the time that spoke of the intentional fallacy in which the author and the work were falsely confused. This sort of self-creation, or biography as artistic statement, can be seen in Kaufman’s invention of biographical “facts.” Kaufman claimed that his father was an orthodox German Jew and his mother a devotee of Catholicism and voodoo from Martinique. As noted earlier, it appears that Kaufman’s father was not Jewish as it would have been understood in New Orleans or among observant Jews; Kaufman’s mother came from a long-established New Orleans African-American family (Damon, *Dark End* 33). But on a level of symbolic recreation, these claims make a lot of sense.

On a very specific and obvious level, Kaufman’s invented Caribbean ancestry proclaimed an artistic and ideological kinship with the great Martinican surrealist poet, former Communist, and radical anti-colonial activist Aimé Césaire. Césaire’s tortured and impassioned surrealism in *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land* (1939) was a huge influence on Kaufman (and on Baraka) formally and thematically—though, as will be argued below, the voice of Kaufman’s poetry issued at least as much

from the Popular Front in the United States. Like Kaufman, Césaire joined the Communist Left in the middle 1940s and left in the 1950s. In Césaire's case, his exit from the Communist movement appears to have been motivated by a sense that the Communist Party of France, and the more Soviet-influenced Communist Parties, were not attuned to the situations of peoples of the colonized (or neo-colonized) world, as well as by the shocks occasioned by Krushchev's "secret speech" about Stalin and the invasion of Hungary. Nonetheless, Césaire remained a political radical. Also, the Martinican Catholic-oodoo claim embodies a cultural model that is American (in the hemispheric sense), internationalist, and yet rooted in Africa. A similar link can be seen in Kaufman's claim that his maternal grandmother (or possibly great-grandmother) had been born in Africa and transported on a slave ship, thereby allowing her to pass on a direct oral African cultural inheritance to him.⁶

Kaufman's assertion of an immediate German Jewish ancestry also invokes a tradition of marginality, intellectual radicalism, and cosmopolitanism (indeed, in Europe, particularly in the Soviet Union under Stalin, the term "cosmopolitan" was a pejorative code word for Jewish). Other associations could be cited, but the short form of the Martinican *papaloi*-German Jew claim is that Kaufman's self-fashioning can be seen as valuing a consciousness that is diasporic in the African sense, American in the hemispheric sense, internationalist in the revolutionary sense, and oppositional in the sense of identifying with the marginalized in both the U.S. and abroad. Thus, Kaufman's "fictional" autobiography is at least as useful in approaching his work as the "facts" of his life insofar as we know them. On the other hand, actual facts of Kaufman's life are worth noting because they let us know that in many respects, despite some obvious formal differences, Kaufman comes from, or at least identifies with, the same Leftwing subculture that marked many of his African-American literary contemporaries and immediate predecessors, such as Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, Margaret Walker, Frank Marshall Davis, Ralph Ellison, Owen Dodson, Melvin Tolson, and Robert Hayden.

The political and artistic subculture from which Kaufman emerged, or at least with which he claimed a connection, might be called the late Popular Front, that is the political and cultural milieu of the Communist Left from the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 (and the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December of that year) until the onset of the "high" Cold War in the late 1940s. The Popular Front was a more complicated political formation than can be untangled here. However, some general comments on it and on Popular Front aesthetics and literary practices are in order. One of the most notable, and most noted features of Popular Front aesthetics is a self-conscious cultural mixing—of "high" and "low," of "popular" and "literary," of Whitman and Eliot, of folk culture and mass culture, of genres, of media, of literary and non-literary documents. Examples of this hybridity include Langston Hughes's popular 1938 "poetry-play" *Don't You Want to Be Free* in which Hughes's poems were interspersed among blues and gospel tunes; Woody Guthrie's seven minute music adaptation of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath* set to the tune of "Black Jack Davey" and recorded by RCA Victor; Muriel Rukeyser's poetic sequence "Book of the Dead" which was filled with "non-literary" fragments, such as government documents, court testimony, diary entries, and stock exchange listings; and Richard

Wright's blues "King Joe," a minor jukebox hit in 1941 set to music by Count Basie, and sung by Paul Robeson with the Basie Orchestra backing.

It is worth noting here that the stance of individual artists toward mass culture varied considerably. In general, the dominant Popular Front view saw mass culture, whether popular literature, music, film or professional sports, as a field of contestation in which "the people" battled what Franklin Delano Roosevelt termed the "economic Royalists" rather than as simply a form of thought control designed to pacify the working class (a view that dominated many earlier Communist visions of mass culture).

Nonetheless, the take on popular culture during the Popular Front, even by Left artists, was far from a monolithic optimism as the works of Nathaniel West, Frank Marshall Davis and Gwendolyn Brooks attest. At the same time, while there was an increased engagement with the forms and institutions of popular culture as compared with the 1920s and early 1930s, the notion of an alternative "people's" culture which might draw on popular culture, but which was at least partially outside of mass culture remained an importance influence—of which the most famous example might be the Left "folk" music movement of the 1940s.

Another important feature of much Popular Front art was an interest in race and ethnicity and the relation of racial and ethnic identity to an American identity. This aspect of the Popular Front has been often misunderstood in that Popular Front constructs of "the people" have been set in opposition to ethnic or racial identity. However, when one considers the poetry of Sterling Brown, Frank Marshall Davis, Langston Hughes, Waring Cuney, and Margaret Walker, narratives such as Donato Di Pietro's *Christ in Concrete*, Jerre Mangione's *Mount Allegro*, Daniel Fuchs's Williamsburg trilogy, and Richard Wright's *Native Son*, the famous "Spirituals to Swing" concerts of 1939, and paintings by Jacob Lawrence, Ben Shahn, Aaron Douglas, and Jack Levine, to name but a few of many, many examples, it is clear that race and ethnicity remain an over-riding concern during the Popular Front, albeit as much about transformation and inter-cultural exchange as about tradition and the maintenance of cultural boundaries.⁷

There is the truism that Popular Front poetics were "middlebrow" pap (or pop) inherently opposed to those of modernism or avant-gardism. However, many iconic literary and artistic radicals, particularly those that Kaufman admired, such as Picasso, Césaire, Guillén, Alberti, Neruda, Aragon, Eluard, and Tzara, joined the Communist Left during the extended Popular Front era from about 1935 to 1945.⁸ And, of course, Kaufman's idol, Lorca, was a key Popular Front martyr after his execution by the Falangists in Spain—as seen in Langston Hughes's translations of Lorca prominently published in *New Masses*.⁹ While the work of these artists changed significantly after their engagement with the organized Left, they generally tried to find some way to anchor their increased political engagement in what might be thought of as modernist aesthetics—albeit modernist aesthetics that were generally quite different from those promoted by the New Critics and New York Intellectuals during the Cold War.

The cultural Popular Front was largely swept away during the Cold War by a liberal-conservative anti-Communist consensus in much the same way that it was in

other areas of American life—though important, if neglected works sympathetic to the Popular Front, such as Harriet Arnow's *The Dollmaker* (1954) and Lloyd Brown's *Iron City* (1951), continued after the Popular Front as an active social formation had been largely eliminated or isolated.¹⁰ The intellectual spearhead of the attack on the Popular Front in the area of literature and the institutions that support literary production was a peculiar alliance of a group consisting of, for the most part, conservative white male Christian Southerners who dominated what came to be called the New Criticism, and a group made up largely of Trotskyist and formerly Trotskyist Jewish New Yorkers who formed the core of what became known as the New York Intellectuals. This, of course, is over-simplified, as will be my account of the New Critical-New York Intellectual alliance and its aesthetics. There were, of course, significant differences within the groups associated with the New York Intellectuals and the New Critics. However, since the histories of the New Criticism and the New York Intellectuals are generally far better known than that of the Popular Front, I am going to make only a few general comments on the culture wars of the 1940s and 1950s and the role of the New Critics and New York intellectuals.¹¹

First, it is worth noting the tremendous force and effectiveness of the attack on the Popular Front. The destruction of the Popular Front was not, of course, due entirely to external assaults: various sorts of infighting, sectarian policies, and disillusionment with the Communist Party and Communism played major roles in the isolation and decline of the Communist Left in the United States. However, the mass disillusionment following Krushchev's 1956 speech about Stalin's crimes and the invasion of Hungary, which devastated the Communist Party and diminished its membership from somewhere around 30,000 to a few thousand, took place several years after the effective isolation of the Communist Left, particularly in the arts.

The near destruction of the intellectual and artistic aspects of the Popular Front took place on many levels. While one can overestimate the impact of direct government repression, this repression—especially in collaboration with such cooperative institutions as universities, publishing houses, and film studios—was a crucial part of the breaking of the Popular Front.¹² The details of this repression are too numerous to recount here, but suffice it to say that the end result was that the artists and intellectuals associated with the Popular Front, with a few exceptions that will be noted later, either recanted, as did Langston Hughes, Canada Lee, Budd Schulberg, and Josh White, fell silent, as did Sterling Brown and Frank Marshall Davis, or found themselves virtually unemployable and/or unpublishable pariahs, as did Paul Robeson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Meridel Le Sueur, H.T. Tsiang, and Edwin Rolfe. (Some, such as Canada Lee, recanted and still remained blacklisted.) Similarly, many of the institutions that promoted the Popular Front, such as the International Workers Order (the Left-wing "fraternal" organization which supported many cultural activities, including the publication of Langston Hughes's collection of poetry, *A New Song* and the staging of Hughes's poetry play, *Don't You Want to Be Free*) were destroyed. Others, such as the journal *New Masses* (which merged with the monthly *Mainstream* in 1949 to form *Masses and Mainstream*), continued to exist only in a much circumscribed form.

Both the New Critics and the New York Intellectuals played an important role in the shutting down of the Popular Front, ranging from fairly general attacks on Left

aesthetics and cultural practices (blaming the Popular Front for the rise of “middle-brow” culture, for example) to vitriolic attacks on individual Popular Front writers and intellectuals who remained more or less unrepentant, as in the case of the vicious assaults on Muriel Rukeyser by such critics as Delmore Schwartz, William Phillips, and Weldon Kees.¹³ This alliance played no small part in the disappearance of many authors, such as Edwin Rolfe, Meridel Le Sueur, and Ann Petry, from the literary record and in the recontextualization of the work of other writers (often with those writers’ help) so as to erase an earlier engagement with the Popular Front.

In addition to the elimination of the Popular Front as an organized force in American culture, the alliance between the New York Intellectuals and the New Critics resulted in a related conservative modernist or neo-modernist aesthetic. What this aesthetic consisted of for the most part was a stripped down “high” modernism which elided, evaded or rejected mass culture and the more “extreme” and politically radical strains of modernism, such as dadaism, surrealism, German expressionism, and Russian futurism—not to mention such home-grown strains as objectivism, the proto-modernist populism of Whitman, the work of William Carlos Williams, and even much of the early Eliot. Thus, the dominant aesthetic of poetry in the late 1940s and the early 1950s, as seen in the work of Alan Tate (who emerged from the right-wing Fugitives) and in that of Robert Lowell, John Berryman, and Delmore Schwartz (aligned with the New York Intellectuals and influenced by the old anti-Stalinist Left) was, despite the poets’ very different social outlooks, a neo-modernism that was formally conservative and aspiring toward a sort of “universality” that tended to avoid or decry the concerns with contemporary popular culture, ethnicity, and race that animated the Popular Front. Even when these concerns did appear, as in Berryman’s “Boston Common” (1942), they lack the immediacy of Popular Front art, generally maintaining an air of historical and formal distance. (Lowell, Berryman, and Schwartz would later alter their literary approaches under the impact of the New American Poetry and their own dissatisfaction with the limits of neo-modernism.)

An interesting, and important variation of this neo-modernism is that of African-American writers, such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Melvin Tolson, and Robert Hayden, who in many respects subscribed to the New Critical-New York Intellectual formal aesthetics while remaining deeply engaged with race and popular culture. At the same time, the black writers most publicly associated with the Popular Front—Langston Hughes, Frank Marshall Davis, Sterling Brown, and Margaret Walker—remained generally quiet poetically during the height of the McCarthy era. Of course, it should also be noted that Brooks, Tolson, and Hayden, too, had been part of the Popular Front subculture.

Kaufman’s poetry is filled with Popular Front landmarks. The most prominent are the invocations of the defining international event of the early Popular Front, the Spanish Civil War. As noted above, when Kaufman paid tribute to Lorca, he was not merely memorializing a quasi-surrealist ancestor, but also *the* internationally known Republican martyr to fascism whose name and work appeared in pages of the political and cultural journals of the Communist Left throughout the world during the late 1930s and 1940s. The connection of Lorca’s death to the political situation of Spain after the Fascist victory can be seen in Kaufman’s “Lorca” where a critique of the Cold

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War "Free World" is registered through a reference to Arthur Koestler's Cold War favorite *Darkness at Noon*: "Singing Garcia, / In lost Spain's / Darkened Noon." Similarly, Picasso is not simply the iconic figure of modernist painting that he is in American culture generally, but the anti-Fascist (and anti-Cold War) Communist of "Guernica." "African giants hired by the foot, with secret orders to kill Picasso" in "Countess Erica Blaise: Chorus" invokes Franco's use of Moorish mercenaries with Picasso standing in for both the Spanish Republic and artistic freedom.

Other bohemian icons are invoked who double as Popular Front figures. For example, Maxwell Bodenheim was cited by many in the 1950s as a living link between early Greenwich Village bohemianism and the new bohemian. But Bodenheim had also been an activist in the Popular Front during the 1930s and a familiar figure in the *New Masses* offices as well as an original signer of the call to form the League of American Writers in 1935.¹⁴ The Popular Front Bodenheim as well as the more familiar (to later audiences) bohemian Bodenheim were linked in "A Remembered Beat" where Bodenheim is memorialized memorializing *the* Popular Front literary martyr: "We remembered when Max Bodenheim remembered Lorca."

This sort of linking of figures or events which have some bohemian or oppositional political resonance in the present moment of the poem to earlier Popular Front (or even "Third Period" Communist) icons can also be seen in Kaufman's Carl Chessman poems recalling a long line of Communist-led legal (and extra-legal) campaigns against racially and/or politically motivated capital punishment prosecutions, from the Scottsboro case in the 1930s to the cases of the Martinsville Seven and Willie McGee in the late 1940s and early 1950s.¹⁵ Similarly, "dreams of Alabama, / gingerbread visions, / of angry policemen" in "Alien Winds" invoke Scottsboro in the 1930s as well as Bull Connor (who himself spanned the two eras) and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. For that matter, Crispus Attucks was also a familiar figure of Popular Front-influenced literature in the 1930s and 1940s. Kaufman's linking of Attucks to Nathan Hale (and opposing him to the Cold War of the Rosenbergs, Alger Hiss, and Whittaker Chambers) in "The Ancient Rain" particularly recalls similar rhetorical moves during the Popular Front era and the declaration attributed to former CPUSA General Secretary Earl Browder that Communism (in the United States, anyway) was twentieth-century Americanism.¹⁶

Another link between Kaufman's earlier radicalism and his poetry in the 1950s and 1960s can be seen in his concern with the domestic and international Cold War from the viewpoint of a Leftwing insider not unlike that of Edwin Rolfe in "Ballad of the Noble Intentions" or Kenneth Fearing in "Family Album (4): *The Investigators*" (or former insider Richard Wright in "FB Eye Blues") in their poetic responses to McCarthyism. Like the Cold War work of Rolfe and Fearing, Kaufman's poems of the 1950s and 1960s are full of questions that are variations on "Are you now or have you ever been?" ("People ask me what do I know all about China" in "Bonsai Poems"), investigating committees ("Native-son Woodmen of the West, utterly convinced that Donald Duck is Jewish" in "Hollywood"), spies (the ironic "The secret agent, an innocent bystander, / Drops a note in the wail-box" in "Battle Report"), red-hunting and red-baiting newspaper columnists a la Walter Winchell ("Snoopy columnist with two punctuation marks, both periods" in "Hollywood"), and so on. Iconic figures and

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events of the McCarthy Era also appear in his poetry: the Rosenbergs (in “Sullen Bakeries of Total Recall”), the House Un-American Activities Committee Hollywood investigations (“Hollywood”), and the government harassment of Charlie Chaplin (“Sullen Bakeries of Total Recall” and “Patriotic Ode on the Fourteenth Anniversary of the Persecution of Charlie Chaplin”). In fact, the “Riff Raff Rolfe” of “Unhistorical Events” (“WHO WAS RICH IN CALIFORNIA, BUT / HAD TO FLEE BECAUSE HE WAS QUEER”) may well refer to Edwin Rolfe, a Communist poet and Spanish Civil War veteran living in California and blacklisted during the McCarthy Era.¹⁷

In many respects, Kaufman’s Abomunist poems can be seen as the quintessential poems of Cold War continuation and disruption of Popular Front ideology and community. Amiri Baraka argues that “Abomunist” is essentially a Cold War code for “Communist”—or should be.¹⁸ Maria Damon claims that the poems are Beat rejections of both communism and capitalism.¹⁹ Both are correct in that the poems practice a sort of ideological distancing from a specific radical engagement while maintaining a radical stance that invokes the earlier specific engagement. These poems proclaim their militancy through their refusal to answer questions, through their refusal to define themselves positively (“Abomunists reject everything except snowmen”). This militant evasion of the familiar “Are you now or have you ever been?” question has much in common with work of the early Cold War by other poets, particularly African-American poets, who had been a part of the Left literary milieu of the 1930s and 1940s.

This refusal to admit to a specific past or present ideological or institutional context is linked with an identification with the poor and the oppressed of the United States that is also evasive in that the parodic and often campy tone of the poems modulates so rapidly that it is difficult to tell who or what is being parodied (and how seriously the reader should take the parody). It is interesting, for example, to read the 1959 *Abomunist Manifesto* against Langston Hughes’s 1951 *Montage of a Dream Deferred*. The first poem of Hughes’s poetic sequence, “Dream Boogie,” provides a guide to reading the rest of the text. It is in many respects a Cold War rewriting of Paul Laurence Dunbar’s “We Wear the Mask” (and Frederick Douglass’s commentary on the meaning of slave music in his first autobiography) thematizing a dualistic concealment which nonetheless reveals that there is a deeper rebelliousness or dissatisfaction:

Listen to it closely:
Ain’t you heard
something underneath
like a—

What did I say?

Sure,
I’m happy!
Take it away!

Hughes's poem sounds the themes of discontent transvalued into "nonsense" syllables and "wild" music ("Hey, pop! / Re-bop! / Mop!") in the face of a consensus coerced from those unwilling to accept it otherwise. It both thematizes and embodies the enforcement of this consensus while making its shortcomings with respect to African Americans obvious. *Montage*, then, maintains a link with Hughes's earlier "Communist" poetry both in the representation of the Harlem community and its problems which in many respects are quite "realistic," and in the implication of a coming explosion of the "dream deferred" which, while not perhaps quite as ideologically delineated as in his earlier work, is quite consonant with the calls for and predictions of social revolution in such works as "Air Raid Over Harlem," "Scottsboro Limited" and "Don't You Want to Be Free." In addition, one can also say that Hughes is making an argument in the later poem for how such revolutionary themes will be able to be expressed in the context of the Cold War of the United States. After all, the problem is not just that it is dangerous express radical political positions directly, but also practically difficult in that the institutions that had provided both a forum and form for such sentiments had collapsed or were becoming increasingly isolated. In short, what one sees here is a politics and poetics of engaged evasion that is more than a question of personal career and personal expression, but a strategy for maintaining a continuity with past struggle and past practice in moment of state repression.

Similar operations could be performed on the work of Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, and Melvin Tolson published during the Cold War period, particularly Brooks's 1949 *Annie Allen* and Tolson's 1953 *Libretto for Liberia*. Though formally quite different from Hughes's *Montage* and Kaufman's Abomunist poems in many respects, one finds in these works a self-reflexive distancing, both formally and politically, from the radical poetry and politics of the 1930s and 1940 while at the same time the politics and poetry of that period is invoked with reference to the post-war condition of African Americans. Here as in *Montage* and the Abomunist poems is the implicit suggestion that ambiguity is not so much a break with the radical past, and a radical sensibility in the present, but a means of maintaining a certain continuity with this past in a politically dangerous (and morally ambiguous after Krushchev's 1956 speech) time. Thus Kaufman's Abomunist poems can be read as a part of larger, significantly African-American transvaluation of the political and cultural radicalism of the 1930s and 1940s Communist Left into a Cold War African-American modality. Or, to take Amiri Baraka's claim that "Abomunists were Reds" a bit further, one can view Kaufman's "Abomunist" as a revision of Popular Front radicalism much as Langston Hughes's formulation of the "new red Negro" in his 1931 verse play "Scottsboro Limited" had revised the New Negro movement of the 1920s into a distinctly African-American take on the Communist Left of the 1930s in ways that emphasized both disruption and continuity.

Even Kaufman's identification with Judaism has much more to do with a secular American radicalism than any simple religious or ethnic identification. Kaufman shows little or no interest in Jewish religious practices, including the Jewish mystical traditions drawn upon by some of his literary contemporaries, or in the sort of Zionism associated with the new state of Israel. He is far more concerned with the working-class Jews of the Lower East Side and their generally Left-influenced subcul-

ture, like the suicidal rabbi who wants to be an actor in the Yiddish theatre in "Sullen Bakeries of Total Recall." Kaufman seems generally indifferent to Zionism, and sympathetic to North African anti-colonial struggles, including that of the Egyptians in the 1956 Suez War. The holocaust is a persistent theme in Kaufman's work, but it is worth noting that the Nazi death camps also figured prominently in the poetry of a number of Popular Front-influenced African-American poets who made no claims to a Jewish identity, including Robert Hayden and Melvin Tolson. There are also some complex invocations of Exodus, as in "Benediction:" "Pale brown Moses went down to Egypt land / To let somebody's people go. / Keep him out of Florida, no UN there." The complication here is that Kaufman's anti-colonial, anti-racist stance compares the willingness of the United Nations (under pressure from the United States) to bring an end to the Suez Crisis in 1956 to its failure to act on American barbarisms at home and abroad. Of course, the straightforward and ironic use of Exodus has a long tradition in African-American literature and folk culture generally so that this apparent "Jewish" reference is also "African American" as is obviously seen here in Kaufman's satiric reworking of the spiritual "Go Down, Moses." For that matter, that "Go Down Moses" was so prominently identified with Paul Robeson in the 1940s may signal a conjunction of Jewish, African-American, and Popular Front radical identities.

As Ellen Schrecker notes, this linking of imperialism and racism, commonly made by even such representatives of resolutely "moderate" (and often anti-Communist) civil rights leaders as Walter White of the NAACP before the Cold War, had become increasingly a radical (and politically marginal) public position in the United States during the McCarthy Era (Schrecker 375). Of course, outside the United States this linking would remain a feature of the work of "Third World" writers, such as Guillén, Senghor, Neruda, and Césaire, during the Cold War. Kaufman's particular internationalism can be seen as related to the longtime Communist emphasis on the interconnection between local and global struggles, say the linking of Leadbelly in Sugarland Prison, Egyptians battling neo-colonialism, Cuban poverty, South African repression of native peoples, and the independence movement in the Congo that a reader finds in "I, Too, Know What I Am Not" (which seems to be an ironic and less optimistic Cold War revision of Langston Hughes's "I, Too" that evades the above mentioned McCarthyite question of what one is or has ever been).

However, as previously noted, it is clear that at least by the middle 1950s Kaufman has become estranged from the institutional manifestations of the Communist Left. He adopts a critical stance that resembles that of Allen Ginsberg, another poet with roots in the Popular Front who increasingly subscribes to what would become known as the "Two Superpowers theory" of essentially mirroring Cold War opponents. Unlike Ginsberg (who generally posits the U.S.S.R. as an undesirable, but significantly different alternative to the United States), but like many in the more Marxist variants of the New Left in the 1960s and 1970s, Kaufman sees the Soviet Union as a neo-capitalist state which has capitulated to consumerism so that the two Powers are strangely mirrored, as seen, for example, in "Abomnewcast . . . On the Hour . . .:" "Russians said to be copying TV format with frontier epic filmed in Berlin, nuclear Wagon Train features Moiseyev Dancers." Interestingly, as with many proto-Black Arts writers and intellectuals, some of whom (like Harold Cruse and Richard Moore)

also came out of the Communist Left, there is a sympathy expressed for the Cuban Revolution even as the Soviet Union is mocked: "Cubans seize Cuba, outraged U.S. acts quickly".

In general "mainstream" mass culture fares poorly in Kaufman's work. Film and television are particularly seen as a sort of mind-control (e.g., "Every day your people get more and more / Cars, televisions, death dreams" in "Benediction"). Charlie Chaplin is a heroic figure, but as an icon of the rampages of and resistance to McCarthyism rather than as an artist. Instead, resistance is located in various subcultures—bohemian, African-American, immigrant, gay, and so on—that are seen as being excluded or voluntarily withdrawing from mass culture. In this Kaufman's stance resembles Amiri Baraka's early 1960s notion of African Americans as involuntary "non-conformists" who can hold out "against the hypocrisy and sterility of big-time America" (Baraka, *Home* 93). However, like Baraka, Kaufman posits an alternative culture that is also rooted in popular culture, particularly the African-American-identified musical genres of the blues, rhythm and blues, and jazz.

As Maria Damon, Lorenzo Thomas, and others have pointed out, bebop was a particular formal and thematic resource for Kaufman (Damon, *Dark End* 68–71; Thomas, "Communicating" 293–94). As Damon notes, formally, the complicated, shifting, and often double-time rhythms, the break with older jazz harmonies and tonalities, the often humorous playfulness, and the fragmented anger of bebop informed the structure of Kaufman's work (as it did Langston Hughes's *Montage of a Dream Deferred* [1951]) (69). Like Hughes's poetic sequence and Alan Ginsberg's *Howl*, the lineation and phrasing of Kaufman's work as well as the relation between images or clusters of images, particularly in his longer poems, is significantly influenced by the bebop (proto-bebop Kansas City jazz) practice of organizing improvisation around a series of musical phrases or riffs.²⁰

Of course, this sort of formal combination of different "high" and "popular" artistic genres and media has a long history in the literary culture of the United States—one thinks of the engagement of the work of Vachel Lindsay, Carl Sandburg, Fenton Johnson, Ezra Pound, Langston Hughes, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and James Weldon Johnson (to cite a few examples) with various sorts of popular or "folk" music in the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, as noted above, a self-conscious hybridity of "high" and "low" genres and media in a deep and systematic manner was a particular mark of Popular Front expressive culture—and would continue to distinguish the poetic practice of the "New American Poetry," especially the Beats and the New York Poets.

Bebop also provided a model of popular African-American avant-gardism that was unquestionably "modern" and "revolutionary" and yet was seen as rooted in a continuum of African-American experience. For example, Kaufman draws a lineage of jazz in "Walking Parker Home" that extends from ancient Egypt ("Smothered rage covering pyramids of notes spontaneously exploding") through the blues and dance music of the Southwestern Territory bands from which leading bebop or proto-bebop musicians, such as Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, and Charlie Christian, emerged (with Parker, Young, and Hawkins as well as Kansas City all named in the poem) to the ghetto and black avant-gardism of post-war New York

("New York altar city / black tears / secret disciples"). Here is a notion of African-American culture which does not oppose popular culture either to a "residual" culture on the margins of mass culture (a la Raymond Williams) or to an avant-garde "high" culture (a la the Frankfurt School), but sees a continuum of folk, popular, and "high" African-American culture in which the new avant-gardism is distinguished from more sterile versions of formal radicalism by its grounding in African-American popular culture. In short, Kaufman proposes bebop (and the post-bop jazz) as a model of black artistic production that anticipates the model that Black Arts theorists and critics, such as A.B. Spellman and Amiri Baraka, will promote using bebop and the "New Thing" jazz of such musicians as Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor, John Coltrane, and Sun Ra. (Indeed, Kaufman's take on bebop as encompassing a black cultural continuum from the pyramids to modern Harlem and 52nd Street jazz in "Walking Parker Home" looks remarkably like the model and image of black music promoted by Sun Ra and his Arkestra.)

There is also the notion in "Walking Parker Home" as well as other Kaufman poems such as "Blues Note" ("Ray Charles is a dangerous man") that if you really had the ears to hear, what the music is expressing is rage and displaced violent rebellion. Again, this notion goes back in African-American letters at least to Frederick Douglass's first autobiographical narrative where he speaks of the "deep meaning of those rude and apparently incoherent songs" (14). And, again, much the same sense can be found in Hughes's *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, particularly where there are persistent, if fragmentary, references to a hidden meaning, hints of the significance and ramifications of a dream too long deferred, beneath African-American music. However, the rage and symbolic violence which Kaufman depicts resembles the particular take on this old trope put forward by such Black Arts writers as, say Baraka in the proto-Black Arts play *Dutchman* and Sonia Sanchez in "a/coltrane/poem." In this, Kaufman can be seen as a bridge between the writing of Hughes in the early Cold War and a significant section of the Black Arts Movement.

In some respects, Kaufman's work here is an extension of an old debate on the Left. Generally speaking, there is still the sense that the aesthetics and institutions of the Popular Front were antagonistic to bebop.²¹ However, the situation was considerably more complex. There were artists and intellectuals associated with the Popular Front, such as Frank Marshall Davis, Charles Edward Smith, and Frederic Ramsey, who, at least initially, valued earlier forms of "primitive" jazz and the blues at the expense of bebop. However, bebop also had its proponents within the late Popular Front, a sort of Leftwing "hipster" sub-subculture.²² Like Hughes, Kaufman can be seen as emerging from this hipster section of the Popular Front that argued for bebop as an expression of modern urban African-American anger and militancy in the politically difficult moment of the Cold War that was nonetheless an organic part of the entire continuum of African-American culture.

Kaufman also promotes bebop (and post-bop jazz) as a crucial analogue to (as well as resource for) his poetic project because of bebop's self-conscious stylistic internationalism. One aspect of this internationalism is relation of bebop (in its later development) to the European art music tradition. Charlie Parker and other leading bebop musicians drew freely on this tradition, particularly on modern composers

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such as Stravinsky and Varese with a new sense of the equality of jazz (or at least the subset of bebop and post-bop jazz) with European art music.²³ Thus, bebop is projected as essentially (and perhaps quintessentially) African-American while able to integrate various non-African-American elements without compromising its identity. Of course, jazz and other forms of African-American vernacular music had always had such borrowings. However, in bebop the public appropriation and assimilation of modernist European art music (and “American” popular culture) with a new sense of the status of the black artist publicly reversed the old idea of taking African-American vernacular music and re-presenting it within the frame of “classical” or conservative European art music—a concept going back at least to the rearrangement of the spirituals in a “light classic” style by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the 19th century. Instead, bebop publicly reframed contemporary European musical ideas within an African-American vernacular context. Thus, Kaufman’s influences from (and references to) European and European American modernism can be seen not so much as evasion and lessening of African-American identity as part of a modern African-American discourse.

Bebop (and some variants of post-bop jazz) in the late 1940s and early 1950s also served Kaufman as models of incorporating diasporic African influences. This can be seen in the influence of Latin music in the late bebop period, most notably in the hiring of Afro-Cuban conga player Chana Pozo by Dizzy Gillespie in 1947, but also in the Latin-influenced recording by a number of leading bebop players, including Bud Powell and Max Roach. Another example would be the Trinidadian-influenced recording by a young Sonny Rollins in the early 1950s. Thus, jazz serves as a model for Kaufman’s spiritual and artistic connection to a larger diasporic sensibility, particularly a radical diasporic anti-colonial sensibility, anticipating a similar connection drawn by Black Arts poets. “Like Father, Like Sun,” for instance, invokes the names of Federico García Lorca, Joan Miro, Nigerian drummer Babatunde Olatunji (who played on seminal bebop percussionist Max Roach’s 1960 *We Insist! Freedom Now Suite*), Hart Crane, and Louis Armstrong and the historical events of the Spanish Civil War, the European seizure of the Americas, and European enslavement of Africans and can still be seen as African-American. At the same time, there is a sort of Popular Front-derived vision in the poem commemorating and praising an America of “the losers in earth’s conflicts,” merging the long-standing African-American trope of “the black Christ” with the related Left vision of the crucified worker as seen, for example in the paintings of Ralph Fassanella (which include a number of canvases representing the painter’s iceman father crucified on a pair of ice tongs) and Harriet Arnow’s novel *The Dollmaker* (1954). In fact, this merger itself was a common move by Left African-American authors, as seen in Langston Hughes’s “Scottsboro” and in the final dream resurrection and transfiguration of the character Lonnie James in Lloyd Brown’s *Iron City*.

Perhaps the most important formal inheritance from the literary Left of the Popular Front era can found in the voice and diction of Kaufman’s poetry. This voice is by turns (or sometimes simultaneously) lyric, vatic, parodic, outraged, matter of fact, hard-boiled, hip, inflected by mass culture, apocalyptic, earnest, and campy:

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The bony oboe doorway beyond the burning nose translates
me into Hebrew. I know that Faust was actually anti-
symbolic and would never have married Kate Smith.
(Kaufman, *Solitudes*, 42)

The tone and diction of this passage in which Kaufman suggests that it is the holocaust and not blood that made him Jewish might seem strangely goofy and campy for such a weighty subject: the holocaust, Faust, and Kate Smith in a single strophe? Yet such mixtures of “high” and “low” diction, of the lyric and the mass, of the parodic and the earnest in which the focus of the parody seems to shift rapidly, is characteristic of much literary production by poets associated with the Communist Left in the 1930s and 1940s. One of the earliest exemplars of such a Left style can be found in the work of Kenneth Fearing whose association with the Left and its cultural institutions, particularly *New Masses*, extended back to the middle 1920s. For example, the 1934 “\$2.50” anticipates Popular Front hybridity of genre, diction, and voice:

But the faith is all gone,
And all the courage is gone, used up, devoured on the first
morning of a home relief menu,
You’ll have to borrow it from the picket killed last Tuesday
on the fancy knitgoods lines;
And the glamor, the ice for the cocktails, the shy appeal, the
Favors for the subdeb ball? O.K,
O.K.,
But they smell of exports to the cannibals
Reek of something blown away from the muzzle of a twenty-
inch gun; (113)

The irony here is perhaps laid on more heavily and more uniformly than would be the case in most Kaufman poems (or many Fearing poems for that matter). Yet the sudden modulation between the “poetic” and the colloquial, between art and commerce where words such as “knitgoods,” “o.k.,” “subdeb,” “picket,” and “reek” exist side by side, between earnest outrage and possibly self-critical and campy parody, between inside (the movement, the working-class, the oppressed, and so on) and outside (the class enemy, consumer capitalism, the social elite, and so on) blurs various sorts of literary and social positions much as Kaufman does.

One sees a similarly shifting range of tone and diction in work of Langston Hughes, probably the most important and widely read poet of the Popular Front:

Lest Harlem see red
And suddenly sit on the edge of its bed
And shake the whole world with a new dream
As the squad cars come and the sirens scream
And a big black giant snatches bombs from the sky
And picks up a cop and lets him fly

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Into the Jimcrow past
And laughs and Hollers
Kiss my
!x!&! (188)

As with Kaufman there is a sort of serious playfulness in the diction here in the 1936 "Air Raid Over Harlem (Scenario for a Little Black Movie)" which again ranges from colloquial to prophetic, from the cartoon to *King Kong*, from the rhetoric of the manifesto to that of the film script. The sense of playfulness here, as is often the case in Kaufman work, is heightened by the use of irregular rhyme that gives the reader (and auditor) the sense of a game in which rules are implicitly present, but not quite apprehensible. And while Hughes and Fearing are cited here as leading exemplars of Popular Front writers who frequently employed this sort of serious playfulness, many other writers could be mentioned in this regard, including Frank Marshall Davis, Waring Cuney, and the early Thomas McGrath.

Beyond the persistent adoption of an emphatically radical stance (even if the specific sort of radicalism is not always clear), this formal playfulness of tone, diction, and syntax may be Kaufman's most lasting influence from the Popular Front as it manifested itself in the United States. It is also this serious (and often anxious), but nonetheless witty and sly playfulness that distinguishes Kaufman from his surrealist or surrealist-influenced models, particularly Lorca and Césaire, in which such a play of diction and tone, of "high" and "low," "literary" and "popular" is absent or is present in a heavy-handed way.²⁴ Of course, in this regard, Kaufman's poetry shares much with the work of other "New American" writers, but this peculiar mixture of high and low, literary and popular, localism and internationalism, race and ethnicity and Americanism that marked many of the poets whose work became grouped within the New American poetry can be seen as an inheritance from the Popular Front which in turn would, as Lorenzo Thomas suggests go on to mark Black Arts poetry.²⁵

In the end, it probably does not matter that much whether Kaufman had been the leading Left-wing activist and organizer he claimed to have been any more than it does whether his father was "really" Jewish or his mother a Martinican *vodun* initiate. Or if it does matter, the fact that we know that Kaufman's self-proclaimed identity was significantly exaggerated or fabricated in many respects reminds us that this created identity is actually an extremely conscious position statement which can serve as at least a partial guide to reading and evaluating Kaufman's work. Ironically, the invention of biographical events may signal ideological affiliation more clearly and consistently than the reporting and interpretation of "actual" events.

Thus, Kaufman resembles other important African-American artists and intellectuals with ideological roots in the Communist movement (however anti-Communist they eventually became), whether as major players, like Richard Moore, or relatively minor participants, like Harold Cruse, who would become Black Power and Black Arts activists. Kaufman's model of a continuum of African-American culture, from Africa to 52nd Street jazz clubs, conceptually encompassing folk, popular, and avant-garde culture was significantly marked by the late Popular Front, which anticipated and influenced the development of similar models of African-American literary

expression during the Black Arts Movement. Kaufman is a crucial figure, then, because, as Lorenzo Thomas suggests, his work prefigures the New Black Poetry (and indeed one of the main Black Arts trends in general) but also because he provides a crucial link to a past African-American radical cultural production that has been often overlooked or effaced (Thomas, “Communicating” 294).

NOTES

1. The bibliographical information here depends heavily on Maria Damon’s account in *Dark End of the Street* (32–76) and David Henderson’s introduction to the recent selection of Kaufman’s poetry, *Cranial Guitar* (1996). Damon’s account particularly attempts to use a variety of primary and secondary resources to untangle Kaufman’s early biography. However, even here, the record generally relies on sometimes conflicting interviews of uncertain reliability that tend to lead back to Kaufman or his brother George as the original source. So far little, if any, documentary evidence about Kaufman’s career as a maritime union activist and labor radical has been presented. What evidence exists shows Kaufman’s role in the NMU to be more oratorical—leading delegations to Washington, speaking from union sound trucks, serving on a strike mobilization committee—than organizational. For brief articles mentioning (and sometimes picturing) Kaufman, see the NMU newspaper, *The Pilot* (July 6, 1945 [11]; July 20, 1945 [3]; May 17, 1946 [3, 11]; and May 31, 1946 [5]). Little or no documentary evidence has surfaced to date about Kaufman’s radical activities inside or outside the NMU or about his alleged role in the Presidential campaign of Progressive Party candidate Henry Wallace in 1948. In addition to Damon and Henderson, Stephen Schwartz states unequivocally that Kaufman was a Communist and labor activist into the 1950s, but does not reveal his sources (48–49). In short, Kaufman’s claimed political activities before the Beat era may be substantially exaggerated or self-invented like many of Kaufman’s other autobiographical claims.
2. NMU President Joe Curran, himself a former Communist, moved steadily to the right in the post-war era. Left union activists, such as Ferdinand Smith and Blackie Myers, opposed him. Curran and his anti-Communist supporters swept union elections in 1947 amid accusations of strong-arm tactics by pro-Curran thugs and local and Federal authorities. From 1948–1950, anti-Communist union officials expelled numerous Leftists from the NMU. In 1950, the Coast Guard in cooperation with the NMU set up a program that screened nearly 2,000 sailors as “subversives,” effectively removing the active influence of the Communist Left among merchant seaman. For an account of the virtual elimination of the Communist Left in the Merchant Marine, see Cauter (392–400).
3. Damon and others mention the claim that Kaufman “became a communist labor organizer in the South” after being banned from the Merchant Marine (Damon, *Dark End of the Street*, 33). It is not exactly clear what this means though perhaps Kaufman played some role in the southern activities of a CPUSA-influenced organization, such as the Civil Rights Congress or the National Negro Labor Council. Similarly, in his introduction to Kaufman’s *Cranial Guitar*, David Henderson quotes George Kaufman as saying that his brother was an “area director” for the Wallace campaign in 1948, but the area in question is not specified (9).
4. For recollections of Kaufman in New York by crucial “New Thing” jazz composer and musician Cecil Taylor, see Funkhouser (28–31).
5. It is also possible that if Kaufman was an active Communist he found himself on the losing side of internal Communist factional fights. Though internal CPUSA debate in the 1950s is generally portrayed as “Left” versus “Right,” Harry Haywood at least suggested a more complicated model of “Left,” “Center,” and “Right” in which “Leftists” (e.g., Harry Haywood and Al Lannon) left or were expelled from the CPUSA as well as “Rightists” (e.g., John Gates). Haywood implies that the Waterfront Section of the CPUSA (which would include merchant sailors), led by Lannon, was a “Left” stronghold (605–27). In short, if Kaufman was the Communist militant he claimed to be, then his break with the CPUSA may have been motivated by domestic concerns as well as by international events.
6. This claim is theoretically possible. The African slave trade was banned in the United States in 1808. Though this greatly reduced the importation of Africans as slaves, an illegal slave trade continued to exist in the United States involving tens of thousands of Africans and people of

African descent born elsewhere in the Americas. Nonetheless, the vast majority of African Americans in the United States during the 19th century were born there. Even if Kaufman's grandmother was one of the relative few born in Africa, she would have to have been quite old in order to have many clear memories of Africa and the Middle Passage to pass on to a child born in 1925 and old enough himself to have some understanding of what she was telling him. However, again, even if fictional, this claim says something significant about the ideological frame of Kaufman's work.

7. For an overview of "Third Period" Communist and Popular Front ideological positions and institutions and African-American cultural production during the 1930s and 1940s, see Smethurst (16–59).
8. Another crucial Popular Front figure for Kaufman would be Langston Hughes whose engagement with the Communist Left antedated the Popular Front.
9. For a comparatively accessible look at the group of Lorca poems translated by Hughes for *New Masses*, see North (70–77).
10. Though as Michael Denning argues, many of these later works are relatively isolated eulogies for the Popular Front or chronicles of the forces that would lead to the end of that subculture (464–68).
11. For further discussion of the New York Intellectuals and the ideologies and aesthetics they promoted, see Wald and Guibault. For a study that examines the ideological and institutional creation of a New Critic-New York Intellectual consensus (including the crucial role of the Rockefeller Foundation), see Lawrence Schwartz.
12. For a recent study of what might be thought of as the infrastructure of McCarthyism, see Schrecker.
13. For an account of the attacks on Rukeyser by critics associated with the New York Intellectuals, see Kertesz (179–81).
14. For a brief recollection of Bodenheim's participation in *New Masses* literary circles, see North (29).
15. Chessman, a career criminal and would-be novelist who identified with Francois Villon, was convicted of robbery, attempted rape, kidnapping, and "unnatural" sexual assaults in a much publicized trial which many observers felt was deeply flawed. Chessman was executed in a California gas chamber in 1960. The case attracted considerable attention on the Left in California. For an account of the case, see Parker.
16. For example, Melvin Tolson's Popular Front-inflected "Dark Symphony" (which won the National Poetry Contest of the 1940 American Negro Exposition in Chicago) opens, "Black Crispus Attucks taught/Us how to die," before linking Attucks to Patrick Henry.
17. Obviously "queer" has other connotations as well. As Ellen Schrecker points out, though one has to be careful about reading back from our time and conflating Cold War attitudes about Communists and homosexuals, there was a certain intersection of anti-Communism and homophobia in McCarthy era rhetoric and practices (148–49). Kaufman himself is almost certainly making this conflation. This raises the issue of Kaufman and homosexuality. Though most accounts of Kaufman take as a given his heterosexuality, or elide the issue of sexuality, Kaufman's use of the word "queer" here and elsewhere as well as his invocations of Hart Crane and Lorca render this aspect of Kaufman's life, like most other aspects, quite murky. Of course, a fascinating and almost entirely unexplored area is the relation between homosexuality and the Popular Front artistic subculture in which gays and lesbians played crucial roles. For an interesting consideration of the intersection (and the occlusion of that intersection) between gay subculture and Beat subculture in the Bay Area focusing on Kaufman, see Damon, "Triangulated Desire and Tactical Silences."
18. For example, Baraka's "A Meditation on Bob Kaufman" argues:

I say BombKauf, the
 Abomunists
 Were
 Reds (*Eulogies* 86)

19. Damon argues that "the status of his famous 'Abomunist Manifesto' as both an anti-capitalist AND an anti-communist Beat manifesto makes pretty clear the shift from his investment in labor struggles to an investment in disaffection . . ." ("Something about Bob Kaufman" 3).
20. Hughes proclaimed the formal relationship of his sequence to bebop in the introductory note to *Montage*. Ginsberg also claimed that the lineation and phrasing of the first section of *Howl* was based on bebop riffs (Allen 318).

21. For a prominent scholarly example of opposition of the aesthetics of bebop and those of the Popular Front, see Lott (603).
22. For a discussion of the debate among Left and liberal intellectuals in the late Popular Front, see Gennari. The most prominent pro-bebop artist associated with the Popular Front was, of course, Langston Hughes. For a brief and more grassroots view, see Mark Solomon's description of the surviving subculture of the Communist Left in the early 1950s where he mentions being one of a group of young Leftists going to ask Charlie Parker to support W.E.B. Du Bois for the Senate on the Progressive Party ticket as well as seeing Miles Davis at the seemingly unlikely venue of a Labor Youth League (a Communist youth group) dance (xxvii). For that matter, in his autobiography Dizzy Gillespie speaks of his own membership in the CPUSA and participation in the Communist cultural circuit as musician during the 1940s (80). While Gillespie claimed that his membership in the CPUSA was strictly one of access to employment opportunities, his homage to Paul Robeson later in the autobiography suggests that his relationship to the Communist Left was more than one of professional expediency. This homage, as well as the mention of favorable discussions with Charlie Parker about the East Harlem congressman identified with the Communist Left, Vito Marcantonio, provide an interesting counterpoint to notions of the conscious opposition of bebop musicians to Popular Front aesthetics as embodied by Robeson.
23. For a discussion of Parker's relation to the modern European art music tradition, and his sense of the aesthetic equality between European art music and contemporary jazz (though Parker did idealize the European tradition in some respects), see Woideck (169–73; 203–8).
24. For example, when Césaire proclaims "Je sais le tracking, le Lindy-hop et les claquettes" in *Cahier D'un Retour au Pays Natal*, speaking of a performance of blackness for jaded white Europeans, there is little of the ambiguity and sense of play that one might find in a similar line in a poem of Hughes (or Kaufman).
25. Thomas writes, "While the movement rejected mainstream America's ideology, deeming it inimical to black people, Black Arts poets maintained and developed the prosody they had acquired from Black Mountain and the Beats" ("Neon Griot" 309).

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