

1999

Utopia out of place: Studs' Place, Popular Front culture and the blacklist in early Chicago television

Chad Raphael

Santa Clara University, craphael@scu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarcommons.scu.edu/comm>

 Part of the [Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Raphael, C. (1999). Utopia out of place: Studs' Place, Popular Front culture and the blacklist in early Chicago television. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 16, 1-18.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10509209709361465>

This is an Accepted Manuscript of an article published by Taylor & Francis in *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* in 1999, available online:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/10509209709361465>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts & Sciences at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Communication by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact rscroggin@scu.edu.

Raphael, C. (1999). Utopia out of place: Studs' Place, Popular Front culture and the blacklist in early Chicago television. *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 16, 1-18.

Utopia Out of Place: *Studs' Place*, Popular Front Culture and the Blacklist in Chicago Television¹

Chad Raphael

Studs' Place (NBC and ABC, 1949–52) has been cited as an exemplar of the “Chicago School of Television,” a handful of network programs that originated in the Second City between 1948 and the mid-1950s, noted for their distinctive emphasis on liveness, spontaneity, informality, intimacy, and experimentation.² If these qualities marked off Chicago School programming from other network fare, *Studs' Place* further distinguished itself through its collaborative and improvisational mode of production, its embeddedness in the local culture of Chicago, and cast members Studs Terkel and Win Stracke’s unique experiences with the blacklist.³ Returning to *Studs' Place* raises questions about broadcast historians’ tendency to locate creative control over early television exclusively in the hands of network programmers, wielded from the economic and cultural centers of New York and Los Angeles.⁴

Set in a fictional tavern-restaurant on Chicago’s North Side named for proprietor Terkel, *Studs' Place* was one of many urban, working class situation comedies of the 1950s, yet it provides a fascinating counter-example to the main themes and ideologies of this subgenre. The program focused less on the nuclear family and its trials of competitive consumption than on exploring the cultural politics of “highbrow” and “lowbrow,” as well as the potential for economic cooperation and mutual aid among the tavern’s regulars. In this, the program was contiguous with Terkel’s subsequent work as an eclectic disc jockey and an oral historian of Chicago’s working class life, jazz and blues, and race relations—all of which were represented in the program.⁵

LOCAL IMPROVISATIONS

Studs' Place was created by some of the television pioneers who designed the other major Chicago-originated network programs of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Charlie Andrews, who helped conceive and write *Studs' Place*, also wrote for *Garroway at Large*, the innovative variety show which launched long-term

Today show host Dave Garroway. *Studs' Place* was packaged by agent Biggy Levin, who represented Garroway, Andrews, and Burr Tillstrom (puppet-master and creator of the loosely-scripted *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*), premiering in December, 1949 on NBC-owned station WNBQ as a vehicle for Terkel's storytelling. *Studs' Place* then sustained a brief run as a segment on the short-lived *Saturday Square* (a variety show set in a small town square, which included Studs' tavern). The program assembled its regular cast and was expanded to thirty minutes in April, 1950. NBC aired it across the network on a sustaining basis for six months, then dropped it in the Fall—either because it could not find a sponsor, or because Terkel and Stracke had become blacklist targets (discussed below.) Chicago's ABC-owned station WENR (later WBKB), picked up the program and found a sponsor in Manor House Coffee. *Studs' Place* closed when the sponsor abandoned the show in May, 1952.⁶

Terkel assembled the cast of four regulars who habituated the Chicago tavern-restaurant. Studs (Studs Terkel) was the crusty proprietor, given to venting his opinions on the arts and life in general. Win (Win Stracke) was the resident handyman and folk musician, "self-educated but artistic," according to Terkel.⁷ Stracke recalled the character as "patterned after the Wobblies of some years before; the guy who read as he ran."⁸ Chet (Chet Roble) was a "big-city guy,"⁹ a white jazz and blues pianist, who often teamed with Stracke to provide musical interludes. Grace (Beverly Younger), the only performer who did not portray herself, waited tables, teased Studs about his cultural pretensions and egoism, and made peace among the others. Occasional supporting characters included Joe Zabysco, the hot-headed vegetable dealer who feuded with Studs, and Bronco the truck driver. Most programs featured a guest star, often a local Chicago cultural figure playing him or herself.

The uniquely collaborative and improvisational mode of production of *Studs' Place* pried open a space for the actors to dramatize their own experiences and concerns. Four days before each air date, "writer" Charlie Andrews would give the cast a two page plot outline and ask them to elaborate on it and improvise dialogue:

I'd say to Studs, 'In this episode you had an argument with your wife. What was the argument about?' Studs would say, 'Well, day before yesterday she wanted to go to the store and spend some money and I didn't want her to...' And I'd say 'O.K., let's work on that.' And I'd say to Gracie the waitress, 'Well, do you think Studs was right or Ida was right?' And she'd say, 'Well, I think Ida was right.' 'How did the argument start? What'd you say? What'd she say?'

Andrews acknowledges that the cast often generated ideas for plot points during these rehearsals. On the next day, the cast would get up on their feet and improvise dialogue and movement, as the show began to take a more fixed form. By the third day they were ready for a full dress rehearsal with crew; they performed on the air live the following night. Andrews does not recall any other situation comedy or drama at the time, or since, which developed out of this process of scripted improvisation based on the cast's ideas and experiences.¹¹ Some years later, Andrews, who also got a writing credit for *Garroway at Large*, joked that he won the *Look* magazine award for best writer on two shows "where there was no script at all."¹²

Andrews' joke points to how the Chicago School programs embodied a mode of production in which the division of labor and hierarchy of creative roles was less pronounced than in New York or Los Angeles. The New York-based prestige dramas of the time—*Studio One*, *Philco Playhouse*, *Kraft Theater*—are largely remembered as writers' programs. Boddy notes that:

The title 'artist-playwright' attached to the work of the writer in live television drama suggests the importance and prestige frequently associated with the new craft ... Most TV critics and many of the other creative personnel in television saw the writer at the center of television drama."¹³

Early sitcoms, by contrast, usually relied on contract writers, who, according to Boddy, "were accorded less prestige than live drama writers, and less control over their work."¹⁴ Instead, the stars of early sitcoms, some of whom controlled ownership of the programs as well, were the dominant creative voices (Gertrude Berg, of *The Goldbergs*, and Lucille Ball, of *I Love Lucy*, for example). At *Studs' Place*, if Terkel controlled much of the casting, the cast and writer had a great deal of input into dialogue and plot development.

Terkel notes the importance of scripted improvisation for diminishing sponsor and network control over the program. Nowadays, he says:

You can't have big boys investing dough in the thing without their seeing it word for word. Imagine something improvised. 'Where's the script?' 'There is no script.' 'You crazy?' 'There's a plot line.' 'Plot line! What're you talking about?' That could never get over.¹⁵

The more fluid power relations behind the scenes of Chicago-based network programs probably stemmed from their relative scarcity of resources—"too little money, small studios, and even smaller names."¹⁶ Hence, the informal and improvisational quality of *Studs' Place*, and other Chicago School programs such as *Garroway at Large* and *Kukla, Fran, and Ollie*, can be explained by the absence of "name" New York playwrights, by smaller budgets which ruled out extensive rehearsals and elaborate production values, and by the ensemble spirit encouraged by the lack of major stars.

A SENSE OF PLACE

In those days ... You didn't think nationally. We didn't give a shit about anything but Chicago ... That was all you knew. I mean I didn't know anything about New York, Philadelphia. Just without thinking, it came out of your experience—all your reference points. If you walked down the street, you didn't walk down Fifth Avenue, you walked down State Street, or Michigan Avenue.

—Charlie Andrews¹⁷

Smaller budgets for guest stars and the cast's ability to improvise on their own pasts meant that *Studs' Place* was more embedded in a local cultural milieu than most network situation comedies intended for a national audience. The program situated itself within the working class culture of Chicago through references which often depended upon some local knowledge on the part of audiences. Hence, when Studs returns from a night at the opera in one episode, Grace combs the society pages for the names of local personages who were in attendance, and Studs rattles off the suburbs they live in: Winnetka, Glencoe,

Wilmette.¹⁸ Grace feigns surprise that the proprietor is not on the list: "Why no Mr. and Mrs. Studs? I can't understand it?" "Forty-Second Ward," Win explains, referring to Terkel's far humbler Chicago neighborhood. And in another episode, when Win hopes to ask Grace to join him at the Policeman's Ball, but is stymied by a rival for her affections who has come in from out-of-town, he serenades them with a song which asserts his pride of place:

Back of the Yards/ Back of the Yards/ In old Chicago town/ Where each fellow and gal is a regular pal/ where they never turn you down/ Where an ace is ace, any time, any place/ They'll give you their kind regard/ And I feel mighty proud/ And I'll shout right out loud/ That I'm from Back of the Yards.

Win's homage to his working class neighborhood in the face of an outside intruder may have been puzzling for out-of-town viewers unfamiliar with the Back of the Yards, but not for Chicagoans, who knew the area that bordered on the biggest slaughterhouses in Chicago as one of the toughest working class neighborhoods in the city.¹⁹

Studs' Place also situated itself within a broader Chicago culture through the inclusion of local writers, musicians, and actors as guest stars, and through the cast's outside activities. Terkel brought in numerous friends and colleagues to appear on the program, including Chicago writers such as Nelson Algren, the gospel singer Mahalia Jackson, and Shakespearean actor Philip Lord. The regular cast members, particularly Terkel and Roble, were also highly visible in the city's culture. Terkel was by now a local, public media intellectual—a rare persona he has cultivated since. His career had already spanned Chicago labor and repertory theater, gangster radio roles, a stint as music critic for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and disc jockeying an extraordinarily eclectic radio program featuring jazz, blues, and opera, known as *The Wax Museum*.²⁰ Roble would have been known to many in the local audience from his appearances at nightclubs and his regular gig behind the piano at the Sherman Hotel, a Chicago landmark. Stracke was featured on local radio programs, including *The Wax Museum*, singing folk songs.

Terkel and Roble, in particular, had thick Chicago accents, and liked to spice their characters' dialogue with local slang. Terkel had been unable to break out of Chicago gangster roles in his radio acting because he could not bring himself to master the "accentless" midwestern speech which became standard broadcast English.²¹ Unable, or unwilling, to form the much sought-after "pear-shaped tones," Terkel had settled for being the "incursion of outside malevolence," who, along with his "smooth-talking colleagues from the big city" harassed soap opera heroines such as Ma Perkins and Helen Trent, before being rubbed out.²² Far from trying to conceal his accent on *Studs' Place*, he emphasized it, especially when he closed each show by reminding the audience that "we came to you from Shi-Kaw-Go." Chet Roble brought the lingo of the Chicago underworld to the program, which he learned from playing in mob-run music halls and night clubs during the prohibition era.²³ Terkel characterized Roble as

horsey, bluesy—his language was kind of Chicagoese, half-world. A lotta' slang. Well, he called a guy with a lotta' money 'Joe Loot.' Or you speak of a guy with books—here comes 'Joe Books' or 'Joe Einstein.'²⁴

Studs' Place constructed a semi-utopian vision of Chicago culture as a unique space in which popular and elite culture, working class and intellectual, could

meet in mutual respect. In an episode entitled "Shakespeare," Philip Lord, an aging thespian and acting teacher, awaits the return of a star pupil to Chicago. He carefully plans a dinner at Studs' Place, a "down to earth kind of place" in his estimation, for his protégé, who is en route from making a film in Hollywood to opening a Broadway play in New York. However, the young star bypasses Lord and the tavern for the swank Ambassador Hotel, where he meets with an investor in his new play. "He's no longer his own master," says Studs mournfully, "he's a valuable hunk of property now."²⁵ Win begins to sing to Lord to ease his mind. Enter Nancy, an aspiring young actress who has been seeking the star's autograph. She is disillusioned by having seen him surrounded by worshipping "teenyboppers" begging an autograph: "If that's what acting does to you, I'll never be a Bernhardt." Studs pulls her aside, offers her a volume of Shakespeare he had hoped the protégé would sign, and convinces her to ask Lord to autograph it for her instead. Lord's spirits are restored, and the dinner goes on without the star.

Studs' Place—both the tavern and the program—here stakes out a midway point between the poles of cultural power in New York and Los Angeles, an alternative space to the commercialized mass culture and star system of Hollywood and the equally money-driven Broadway stage. Chicago is also presented as a more legitimate inheritor of the thespian past, a place in which an old Shakespearean can pass along the theatrical tradition (emblemized in the volume he signs) to his legitimate offspring. Finally, it is also a place in which a classical actor and preserver of the high cultural past can mix comfortably with his "down to earth" friends and audience. Let those who see Chicago as a mere business stopover between the coasts, a place in which "a valuable hunk of property" just passes through, be damned.

THE PROBLEMATICS OF POPULAR FRONT CULTURE

"Shakespeare" is also characteristic of the surviving episodes of *Studs' Place* in its attention to dilemmas about the relationship of cultural intellectuals such as Lord to the working classes, the links between high and low culture, and the responsibilities of commercial mass cultural figures such as the protégé to the inheritance of the past. In "The Policeman's Ball," for example, Grace tours a male friend from out of town through the tavern, breathlessly describing the images that hang over the bar: a portrait of Mark Twain, reproductions of Picasso paintings and others at the Chicago Art Institute, Win's folk guitar, photographs of white boxer Jake LaMotta and black boxer Ezzard Charles. At the center of the bar, "in the place of honor," as Grace puts it, is a portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Last of all, Grace directs her friends's attention to an image of the Supreme Court, and the Constitution—"lest we forget" (the episode aired in 1951 or 1952, the height of McCarthyism and the first years of the blacklist in broadcasting). Grace's tour describes a map of what has been called Popular Front culture, which, like the left politics of the late 1930s and 1940s with which it was associated, attempted to bridge "European" communism and socialism with "American" populism and anti-racism.²⁶ Judging from the surviving episodes of *Studs' Place*, the program

revolved in large part around the problematics of Popular Front culture, largely because of the cast's participation in radical politics, theater and folk music during the thirties and forties, and their ability to incorporate their memories of the past into the program as they helped to script it.

Andrew Ross has summarized the American left's political shift to a Popular Front Strategy (perhaps a bit too starkly):

The change in Comintern policy that ushered in the anti-fascist Popular Front in 1935 could hardly have been more dramatic: the 'people' replaced the 'workers': nationalism replaced international socialism; reformism replaced revolution; cooperation replaced class conflict; the defense of democracy replaced the assault on capitalism. The new 'classless' rhetoric against fascism was an open appeal to all Americans, of all classes and walks of life, to loosely congregate in patriotic fraternity under Earl Browder's slogan: 'Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism.'²⁷

Whether artists and intellectuals of the 1930s saw themselves as communists, socialists, or F.D.R. democrats, they shared some common elements of a broad left culture. An ethnographic, documentary impulse focused attention on the lives of immigrants, industrial workers, and farm laborers.²⁸ Anthropologists such as Ruth Benedict and Thurmond Arnold, photographers and filmmakers with the Farm Security Administration (Margaret Bourke-White, Pare Lorentz), writers such as James Agee, John Dos Passos, and enlistees of the Federal Writers Project—all crisscrossed the country in search of American "folk" or "proletarian" culture. Folk and blues music became a particularly privileged form at left social and political gatherings, with its connotations of the "popular," its characteristic themes of slave and labor struggles, and its Romantic recollections of the newly-urbanized classes' rural past.²⁹ At the same time, intellectuals trained in the elite culture of the past were to share it with the lower classes, taking on a kind of missionary role, in the act of democratizing the arts. Cultural critic Dwight MacDonald, who worked with the Federal Writers Project at the time, later satirized this impulse to popularize the high arts as "Howtoism," which he saw as motivating the creation of institutions such as the Book-of-the-Month club and NBC's "music appreciation" broadcasts of operas and symphonies.

Terkel and Stracke, in particular, appear to have participated in this larger shift from socialist (perhaps communist) to Popular Front cultural politics. Both had acted in the radical Chicago Repertory Theater in the 1930s, which patterned itself after New York's Group Theater. Like the Group Theater, its Chicago counterpart adopted the realism of Stanislavskian acting technique and the labor politics of the Group's favored playwrights. Terkel recalls performing Clifford Odets' *Waiting For Lefty*, which dramatized taxi drivers coming to class consciousness during a strike, for striking cab drivers in Chicago. He and Stracke were also involved in labor politics in Chicago, performing songs and skits for Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) strikers at soup kitchens, at the formation of the Newspaper Guild, and at a local tavern where steel workers union members gathered after the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937, when a workers picnic was broken up by police gunfire. After World War II, Terkel was signing petitions for rent and price controls, and for civil rights for African-Americans, but class consciousness was not as central to his cultural practice as it had been in the thirties. His acting was limited to playing Chicago gangsters in radio serials, and he characterizes his radio commentaries as "pro-F.D.R." His most significant work was

now his regular radio show, *The Wax Museum*, remarkable for the equal respect it paid to opera, folk, jazz, and blues, and its celebration of African-American music and musicians. Stracke now made a living as a soloist in church choirs, appearing in folk concerts, and in local radio programs (including *The Wax Museum*.)³⁰ Beverly Younger, who had acted with the Federal Theater Project in Chicago, distinguishes herself from her colleagues' radicalism in the thirties, but recalls "always being a political animal," and maintaining a taste for playwrights Odets and William Saroyan. In the forties, she too was acting in radio, early television programs, and stock theater companies.³¹

Popular Front culture bequeathed a set of dilemmas to its former practitioners and its critics in the early years of the Cold War, especially over the relationship of elite, mass, and popular culture. Andrew Ross argues that, even in the Popular Front era, left intellectuals

could still see themselves as missionaries, offering the masses an alternative folk culture (or, through the good agency of Hollywood Popular Fronters, a 'progressive' film culture) that was more germane to their interests than what was seen as the debilitating political effects of commercial popular culture (49)

After the war, that belief was less widely shared. In a strenuous and public debate over culture, held chiefly in journals such as *Partisan Review*, *Commentary*, and *Dissent*, most liberal intellectuals attacked those who would popularize high culture and celebrate the popular, and identified them with the legacy of the thirties. Irving Howe, for example, blamed the united front strategies for the decline of American culture. Its symptoms were visible

in the Hollywood and TV drama, where stress upon the amiable fumbblings of 'the little man' constituted a simple displacement of social consciousness; in musical comedies, where the exploitation of regional 'folk' quaintness replaced social satire ... in the cult of city-made folk dancing and singing; and perhaps most important, in a quivering folksy, and insinuating style—*vibrato intime*—which came to favor in the Popular Front press ... and has since become a national affliction.³²

For Howe and others, this cultural inheritance was neither authentically "popular" nor sufficiently (high) cultural, failing to express genuinely the lives and interests of the working classes, and absolving them of the hard work of concentrated reception demanded by elite culture. Instead, unified front strategies merely leveled taste, betraying a naively egalitarian fear of difference, which had to be homogenized in a single mass culture. The specter of homogenization led critics such as Dwight MacDonald, an alumnus of the Federal Writers Project in the thirties, to conclude that it would be more desirable to preserve a hierarchy of taste cultures since this was the only way to preserve "difference."

Ross notes that these Cold War liberals rejected middlebrow mass culture and Stalinism in the same terms, attributing the spread of both to Popular Front politics' marriage with the commercial culture industries.³³ Employing the rhetoric of containment that characterized U.S. postwar foreign policy toward communism, they described "midcult" as a "spreading ooze" or "virus" that must be quarantined.³⁴ The purveyors of middlebrow, who had mistakenly attempted to bridge the gap between high and low, had "Stalinized" taste, threatening all culture with rote standardization and homogeneity.³⁵ At their worst, these attacks helped to blame the blacklisted for their own victimization at the hands of Cold War

anti-communists by linking their cultural practice with Stalinism. In their more benign form, the assaults on "midcult" helped to legitimate liberal cultural critics' vision of a hegemonic postwar consensus, since evidence of the continued existence of separate cultures (often schematized as "high," "popular," and "folk") in the face of creeping middlebrow could be viewed as proof of America's ability to maintain a pluralist society in which conflicting class cultures could be preserved and balanced.³⁶

A common target of the Cold War liberal attack on middlebrow was its presumably lower middle class audience. Leslie Fiedler, for one, railed against the "Stalinized petty-bourgeois mind," gripped by a "sentimental egalitarianism" in all matters cultural, that was said to favor middlebrow.³⁷ Fiedler constructed the middle as engaged in a "two-front class war" against the culture of the working class (schematized as "populist-authoritarianism" or "brutal-populist") and the upper class ("aristocratic-authoritarianism" or "ironical-aristocratic.")³⁸ Symptomatic of the "sentimental egalitarian" middle was its ready acceptance of convention, its inability to distinguish genuine cultural excellence, and its awkward pretensions to high culture.

Against the background of these debates, *Studs' Place* appears as a semi-utopian venue for negotiating the coexistence of high and low culture, without the resulting homogenization feared by Cold War liberals. In one of the cast's favorite episodes Studs returns from a night at the opera and regales his friends with the story of his foray into the cultural firmament. Win, Chet, and Grace welcome him back from the opera house to the working class tavern by singing: "Here he comes now / marching through the door / welcome back home / where there's sawdust on the floor." But Studs is still lost in his fantasies of upward cultural mobility, as he re-enacts his entrance to the theater ("We strolled down the aisle, the Mrs. and Me—to the manor born"), and notes that he was seated next to the Chairman of the Board of a national bank. Terkel translates the plot of Wagner's "*Ta-Noyzer*" for his friends (and, perhaps, for much of his audience) as being about "a kid who goes to town singing—a sort of transient Bing Crosby". At the same time, his attempts to describe the events in an accessible, contemporary language also serve to satirize Studs' cultural aspirations, since his knowledge of opera, it turns out, is based on a book of libretti he carries with him and studies surreptitiously whenever he is alone. (Terkel recalls the book was a popular guide written by Milton Cross, announcer for Saturday afternoon broadcasts of the Metropolitan Opera from 1931 to 1974, and a representative of the kind of cultural "Howtoism" scorned by MacDonald.³⁹)

However, the episode does not merely satirize Studs' awkward cultural strivings, but presents an alternative vision of linking the elite and the popular. When a British opera singer whom Studs has met in the audience calls to accept his invitation to lunch, Studs turns on his friends, forbidding Win and Chet to play their "honky-tonk" music for his guest, a certain Cedric Seton-Seton. But Studs is brought gently back to earth when the singer confesses he came to hear Chet and Win play, since "folk music is the basis of all music." Studs cringes as Win begins a folk ballad, but Seton-Seton reassures his host: "That's *his* music." What could be a saccharine tale of Seton-Seton stopping in to validate the popular, and a naive characterization of Win as "authentically" folk, takes a different turn as Win segues

effortlessly into a lieder from *Tannhäuser*. "Where'd you learn that?" asks Studs, stunned. Win explains that he studied opera before the Depression, then "things got tough and I had to earn my living other ways." In contrast to Studs' temporary inability to resolve the dilemmas of high and low, and the comic cultural snobbery which results, the folkish handyman and the opera singer are reconciled by paying their respects to each other's cultural differences. But perhaps the more intriguing gesture is the deconstruction of Win's identity as the popular, self-taught musician. His vocal training and credible operatic style allow him to possess both high and low cultural competencies—an impossible position for critics such as Fiedler, for whom taste was an inescapable and natural expression of class position. In contrast, Win's singing possesses a bit of the carnivalesque, that moment at which, as in early modern Mardi Gras celebrations, the lower classes expertly mimic their "superiors," turning the social structure on its head, and reminding both classes that their social identities are made, not natural and given.⁴⁰

The mixing of elite and popular culture on *Studs' Place*, especially in relation to music, came in part from Terkel's local radio program, *The Wax Museum*. Despite Terkel's character's momentary concern for conventional hierarchies of musical taste in "The Opera" episode,⁴¹ on the radio he reveled in mixing operatic recordings with the gospel of Mahalia Jackson, the folk tunes of Woody Guthrie and Burl Ives, and the jazz and blues of Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, and Billie Holliday. As in his summary of "Ta-Noyzer," here too he engaged in acts of translating beloved high culture while deflating its aura, as he described arias for those more comfortable at the race track than at the opera house. Summarizing the libretti in slang, he would read them

like a race-horse tout, y'know? Long shot Sylvester is telling the story of *Carmen*, see, about a tomato who loved not too wisely but too often ... and then I'd play ... the lieberstolt from *Tristan*. That's after Tristan sees Isolde. Y'know his love—that forbidden love. So he says 'Isolde, Isolde, I smolder and smolder.' Y'know, I'd do it in that vein.⁴²

Similarly, when Terkel left *Studs' Place* to collaborate on *Sounds of the City*, a local radio documentary program, he mixed opera with an early version of today's "reality-based" programming. Driving around the city at night, Terkel and a partner interviewed people at crime scenes, fires, and bars, concluding with some appropriate music. Terkel tells of interviewing a currency exchange manager who foiled a robbery, then playing *Hat man nicht auch Geld beineben*, from *Fidelio*: "Rough translation: Without dough, you're nothing."⁴³

Drawing on the language of the race track to describe opera, or opera to comment on an attempted robbery, Terkel celebrated a comic heteroglossia more than a homogenization of different cultural codes. For Mikhail Bakhtin, heteroglossia described the situation of the human subject surrounded by a multiplicity of social languages and discourses pressing themselves upon him or her, demanding expression at any given moment⁴⁴—somewhat like a disc jockey sitting in a particularly well-stocked and eclectic music library, struggling to decide what to play next. Bakhtin admired the novel most among literary forms for its ability to admit the full diversity of social languages and ideologies into itself through its thematic and stylistic strategies (especially through parody and the hybridization of different genres). The novel, for him, embraced the full polyphony of voices

and languages of an historical moment, not to create cacophony, but dialogue; not to drown out their differences, but to articulate them; not to rank them, but to question their hierarchization. If there is a thread that runs through *The Wax Museum*, *Studs' Place*, *Sounds of the City*, and Terkel's later oral histories, it is a respect for heteroglossia.

Studs' Place personnel constructed, and addressed themselves to, an audience that spanned a broad social strata and array of taste cultures. Terkel recalled warm letters from "professionals, academics, truck drivers, scrub women ... because they recognized respect for their intelligence. The program never ever played down."⁴⁵ Dan Petrie, who embarked on a long career as a television director after directing the program, recalled the "intelligence of the letter writers" from across the socio-economic spectrum, and believed the response to the show was "deeper than any other show I worked on."⁴⁶ Whether the audience represented here by Petrie and Terkel was indeed different from that of other network programs at the time, the cast's construction of a diverse viewership helped to maintain the broad range of cultural references in the face of resistance from writer-producer Charlie Andrews ("My grandmother doesn't understand that, Studs. My grandmother's got to understand everything."⁴⁷). This vision of the audience helped Terkel, in particular, to resist Andrews' attempts to remove references to high culture, and to jazz and blues (deemed inaccessible for a white audience).⁴⁸

In retrospect, it is easy to point out the limitations of the program's Popular Front cultural strategies, circumscribed as they were by the anti-communism, sexism, and racism of the fifties. While African-Americans such as Mahalia Jackson might occasionally appear as guest stars at a time when they were largely invisible on television, the program retained the white Chet Roble as its resident jazzman, and was unable to delve into the hard questions of cultural appropriation and exploitation raised by his role. While Stracke and Terkel felt that Grace "revolutionized the role of the waitress—before her all waitresses were dumb blond types," she always fetched coffee for the boys.⁴⁹ While she could reprimand Studs by comparing his arrogance to that of General Motors, the show generally avoided the politics Terkel and Stracke had been involved with outside the studio. It could indulge in Popular Front sentimentality and adoration of "Great Americans," such as Lincoln, whose image adorned the back wall.⁵⁰ Terkel acknowledged the program's naiveté later:

We had imagined an Eden. It was a place of trust and worth and unforgivable innocence. Brecht would have roared. The Fall, after all, had occurred some time ago ... Little pleasures were offered; no terrors, no fears, no rage; merely the sunny side of our nature was touched.⁵¹

On the whole, however, *Studs' Place* dismantled cultural hierarchies far more sophisticatedly, and presented a richer portrait of working people and intellectuals, than most television at the time. That becomes more evident when the program is compared with other working class sitcoms of the period.

MUTUALITY AND WORKING CLASS LIFE

Compared with most television actors, the cast of *Studs' Place* enjoyed greater control over the program's material, which allowed them to propose rather

different solutions to working class problems than appeared on comparable programs. *Studs' Place* belongs to a curious subgenre of early television—the urban working class situation comedy of the 1950s. In his study of *The Honeymooners*, (*I Remember*) *Mama*, *The Goldbergs*, *Life of Riley*, *Life with Luigi*, *Amos and Andy* and *Hey Jeannie*, George Lipsitz argues that these programs reflected and contributed to the decline of post-war working class and ethnic consciousness, shifting the terrain of social identity to the nuclear family and commodity consumption. While these programs' attempts to legitimize themselves as authentic portrayals of working class life made it impossible for them to ignore entirely the social histories and class resentments of their characters, they

bore only a superficial resemblance to the historical American working class. Stripped of essential icons of ethnicity and class, interpreted through perspectives most relevant to a consuming middle class, and pictured in isolation from the social connections that gave purpose and meaning to working class lives, the televised blue-collar family summoned up only the vaguest contours of its historical counterpart...⁵²

Lipsitz argues that this subgenre—by privileging the bonds of the nuclear family, the trials of domestic life, the lures of embourgeoisement, and the lust for competitive consumerism—embodied values which served the expanding consumer economy and the post-war “compromise” between labor and capital. Hence, *Mama* Hansen learned how to buy on credit to satisfy her family's needs (*Mama*), Alice Kramden skewered her husband, Ralph, for his inability to provide for them through failed get-rich-quick schemes (*The Honeymooners*), and Molly Goldberg learned how to move from the Bronx and adjust to life in the suburbs.

By contrast, *Studs' Place* was markedly out of synch with the times. The principal characters were not linked by family (or ethnic) ties, but by the bonds of work, cultural predilections, and friendship. The show was based entirely in the tavern, not in the home, although it was a tavern largely without customers, and, therefore, not in the home, although it was a tavern largely without customers, and, therefore, without much work. Instead, the tavern was a space in which problems of social, economic, and cultural status were explored by working class waitresses and truck drivers, lower middle class shopkeepers and salesmen, and local cultural figures—the old Popular Front constituency. When the solutions to these problems did not depend upon reconciling respect for elite and popular culture (as in “The Opera”), they involved re-establishing ties of economic cooperation and mutualism among friends and co-workers.

In a sense, the program preserved the values, if not the institutions, of mutual aid networks based on kinship or ethnic ties. Traditionally, such networks have helped immigrant and working class communities survive fluctuations in the flow of meager incomes by acting as employment agencies, credit associations, mediators, and social organizations.⁵³ By trading services, money, food, and so forth, members of mutual aid networks create future obligations which can be called in when they are needed, helping all members of the network survive.⁵⁴ Lipsitz notes that while these networks are referred to in the ethnic lodges and fraternal orders represented in other working class sitcoms of the fifties, they are generally satirized as anachronistic institutions that compete with male obligations to spend time with, and money on, the family.⁵⁵

On *Studs' Place*, however, the tavern itself often becomes a mutual aid society. In "The Piggy Bank," for example, an angry unemployed young man walks out on his check, leaving Grace an old coin—the only money he has—and a note promising to pay the bill when he can. She drops it in the piggy bank she uses for saving her tips. Studs thinks it may be a valuable rare coin, and the men all encourage her to break open the piggy bank so she can sell the coin and spend the money on clothes for herself. Grace resists, both because she is reluctant to sell her customer's keepsake before giving him a chance to come back and pay the bill, and because she prefers to save than buy new things. Win is reminded of how his teenage savings were wiped out when his bank failed during the Depression. "That's the nice thing about *my* bank," says Grace, "it ain't gonna' close." When the men finally convince her to break the bank so she can return her customer's coin, they fear that she will be disappointed at how little money she has saved. As Studs stuffs a few more dollars into the bank, Win distracts Grace by serenading her with "We're in the Money," the quintessential popular celebration of the Depression's end and call to circulate money again ("Come lend it! Spend it! Roll it Along!")⁵⁶ The coin turns out to be worthless, but the young man returns to pay the bill and tip Grace. She rewards him by passing Studs' money on to him, then vows to buy a new piggy bank and save twice as much as before. The references to Depression scarcity and instability (both in the figure of the jobless young man and Win's memory) call for mutual support (from Studs to Grace, and Grace to her out-of-work customer). Despite the urgings of her friends, Grace's savings are never spent on new clothes, but put back in the piggy bank.

The exchange network is also the solution to the problem posed by "Grace's Speech and Hat," in which the men fear that Grace's social status is threatened by her dowdy wardrobe. As she nervously prepares her treasurer's report to the Near Northwest Side Boosters Club the men learn that the social climbing club president plans to prevent Grace from speaking to the meeting, to be attended by local bigwigs, because of the waitress's modest attire. The men pitch in to buy her an expensive new hat—the magic commodity that they imagine will guarantee her success. But Grace refuses it, and returns to work on her speech, which she considers more important to the club. In the end, Chet strikes a deal with the club president. Exploiting his local contacts, he is able to deliver a much-needed public address system at the last minute in exchange for a promise that Grace will speak first at the meeting. As in "The Piggy Bank," her male friends attempt to "protect" Grace by aiding her behind her back (this time their gentle paternalism is better rewarded), and by mediating between her and the club president.

Studs' Place tended to abstract the values of mutual assistance from the working class institutions through which collective aid generally flowed—not only ethnic lodges and fraternal orders, but women's organizations, and, most of all, unions. In doing so, it may be said to have offered individualist solutions to collective problems. Yet it is possible that working class audiences recognized the values of mutualism in the program, and connected them to institutional struggles. Terkel likes to tell the story of how waitresses responded to the low-intensity class conflict between Grace and himself:

We'd sit down, y'know, to have lunch somewhere between rehearsals, at a little restaurant near there. The waitress'd come over and say, 'Don't let that guy talk to you that way,' because of some run-in

we'd had on the show. 'Don't take that crap. By the way, do you belong to the union?' And of course (Grace) wore a button from then on, y'know—we didn't tell NBC that—when she wore the button of the waitresses' union.⁵⁷

BLACKLISTING CHICAGO STYLE

By the early fifties Chicago was increasingly becoming a thoroughfare for programming originated on the coasts, produced under the aegis of television advertisers and networks (emphatically not concerned with mutual aid). Like the theatrical protégé in the "Shakespeare" episode, television was becoming bicoastal.⁵⁸ However, when *Studs' Place* was canceled in 1952, several people associated with the show raised another reason for its demise: the blacklist. Terkel believes NBC dropped the program in 1950 because of concerns about his political activities, and he and Stracke both suspected pressure from ABC's New York office was a factor in closing the show for good in 1952.⁵⁹ Chicago's ABC station manager, Sterling "Red" Quinlan, told of phone calls from the network suggesting that he take Terkel off the air, and claims to have shielded the cast from this pressure for some time.⁶⁰ However, it is unclear whether Quinlan received these calls before *Studs' Place* was canceled or afterwards, when he continued to employ Terkel in a local radio show (*Sounds of the City*) and a few short-lived television projects for the local ABC station.⁶¹ Similarly, when Terkel went to write for Mahalia Jackson's CBS network radio program, Jackson successfully protected him from network pressures to sign a loyalty oath by threatening to leave with him if he was fired.⁶²

Blacklisting in Chicago appeared to be less virulent than on the coasts, a point little remarked on in histories of anti-communism in broadcasting.⁶³ Although Terkel was named before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) as having been a Communist Party member in the 1930s, the committee did not pursue the charges, and he was able to continue working fitfully.⁶⁴ Stracke, who Terkel says was also questioned by his broadcast employers about his political past, continued to appear on Chicago-originated network television in his own children's show, *Animal Playtime*, and the soap opera *Hawkins Falls*. Recalling his and Stracke's experiences, Terkel has written that "the blacklist in Chicago was not like the blacklist in New York or Hollywood. There were only a couple of guys here—I called us the Chicago Two."⁶⁵ He does not remember any other Chicago broadcasters losing work for their political activities.⁶⁶ He has expressed his "disappointment" at finding that he was not listed in *Red Channels*, the blacklists' bible for the entertainment world, albeit with tongue in cheek:

It was all so nebulous, so unimportant out East; a Chicago happening. Naturally, I was affronted ... Though I didn't feel my name, like Abou Ben Adhem's, should lead all the rest, I did feel that I, by virtue of so much voluntarism, belonged there. Again, my ego was bruised. I chalked it up to New York parochialism.⁶⁷

Terkel also felt that the Chicago media were easier on him than the New York or Los Angeles media would have been.⁶⁸

Blacklisting may have been less powerful in Chicago because of the more decentralized structure of the broadcast industry in its early years, and the absence of highly-organized local forces bent on punishing left cultural figures. George Sokolsky, the Hearst Newspaper columnist, complained that early broadcasting was harder for anti-communists like himself to monitor than the Hollywood film industry:

(T)he motion picture industry is well organized, with comparatively few companies, headed by men of direct responsibility. Radio and television is [sic] a vast arena of networks, local stations, advertising agencies, producing companies, with participants who come and go and about whom one learns only long after the event. I therefore felt that while it was possible to do a constructive job in motion pictures, it was practically impossible to do anything constructive in radio and television.⁶⁹

In addition, while the FBI kept tabs on Terkel throughout the 1950s, his main nemesis was Ed Clamage, an irascible florist who led the American Legion's Anti-Subversive Committee in the Chicago area. Clamage appears to have waged a largely personal crusade, firing off letters to anyone who thought of employing Terkel and other "subversive" performers, and he does not seem to have been particularly successful in this. Terkel notes that while Clamage cost him a number of disc jockeying jobs and speaking engagements, the Legionnaire's tactics sometimes backfired, inspiring groups to raise Terkel's speaking fees in response to the letters. (Terkel gleefully sent his tormentor notes informing him whenever this happened.⁷⁰) Nor was Clamage able to convince ABC President Robert Kintner to cancel a 1950 appearance by comedienne and stripper Gypsy Rose Lee on the network radio program *What Makes You Tick?*⁷¹ And when Philip Loeb, a blacklist victim dropped from *The Goldbergs*, came to Chicago to tour in *Time Out for Ginger*, he was able to run for ten months despite Clamage's attempts to mount a boycott of the show.⁷²

UTOPIA OUT OF PLACE

Studs' Place points to the rather unique conditions of the Chicago Style of Television, and how they counterbalanced network and sponsor control in the early days of the medium. An improvisational mode of production permitted the cast to create a working class situation comedy grounded in their local experiences of Chicago culture. Out of their sense of cultural place—between New York and Los Angeles, and the popular and elite—they created a somewhat utopian tavern in which reciprocal aid networks could be maintained, and respect for cultural difference could be achieved. It was indeed Edenic, since the Popular Front coalition which they recalled and addressed was largely dissolving under the pressures of anti-communism, rising working class incomes, suburbanization, and the professionalization of intellectuals. Edenic indeed, since network and sponsor power rarely countenanced such local control over casting and scripting a national program thereafter. Yet it is helpful to return to *Studs' Place* to remind us of how television might have been different, if only to recognize that the dominant image of the working class in fifties sitcoms need not have been a buffoonish bus driver from Brooklyn.

NOTES

1. My thanks to Peg Wander and Hank DeZutter for their help in contacting Studs Terkel, to William and Emily Leider for biographical information on Win Stracke, to Charlie Andrews and the surviving cast members for agreeing to be interviewed, and to Mark Williams for shepherding this article from start to finish.
2. Ted Nielsen, "Television: Chicago Style," *Journal of Broadcasting* 9, no. 4 (1965), pp. 305–312; Joel Sternberg, "A Descriptive History and Critical Analysis of the Chicago School of Television—Chicago Network Programming in the Chicago Style from 1948 to 1954" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1973); Joel Sternberg, "Television Town," *Chicago History* 4, no. 2 (1975), pp. 108–117.
3. I draw my conclusions about *Studs' Place* from oral histories conducted with program personnel by myself and others (cited below), from the seven existing episodes housed at the Museum of Broadcast Communications in Chicago, IL, and from the fragmentary literature about the program.
4. Tino Balio, ed., *Hollywood in the Age of Television* (Cambridge, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1990); Erik Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); William Boddy, *Fifties Television: the Industry and its Critics* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Christopher Sterling and John Kittross, *Stay Tuned* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, 1990).
5. Terkel's books include *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* (New York: Pantheon, 1970); an oral history of labor, entitled *Working* (New York: Pantheon, 1974); a personal history of his city, *Chicago* (New York: Pantheon, 1985); an autobiography, *Talking to Myself* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); a collection of biographies of his favorite musicians, *Giants of Jazz* (New York: Crowell, 1975); two books on race, *Division Street America* (New York: Pantheon, 1967) and *Race: How Blacks and Whites Think and Feel About the American Obsession* (New York: New Press, 1992).
6. Information in this paragraph is drawn from John James Powers, "Studs Terkel: A Free Spirit of Mass Media. A Case History and Analysis of the Mass Media Career of Studs Terkel," (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1975), pp. 70–84.
7. *Studs' Place Reunion* (Chicago: Museum of Broadcast Communication, 1989), videotaped seminar with *Studs' Place* personnel.
8. Powers, "Studs Terkel," p. 73. It is worth noting that Stracke's character specifically harked back to the Wobblies (Industrial Workers of the world), since the labor organization was not only founded in Chicago (in 1905), but may have represented a particularly Midwestern radicalism, favoring spontaneous strikes, a reputation for militance, an impatience with political struggle, and a focus on organizing unskilled and transient workers. Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, sharp critics of the IWW to be sure, characterized the Wobblies as "the embodiment of the fierce yet innocent radicalism of the American West" (Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party: A Critical History, 1919–1957* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1957], p. 13).
9. Terkel in *Studs' Place Reunion*.
10. Charlie Andrews, interview by author, November 16, 1994.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Andrews in *Studs' Place Reunion*.
13. Boddy, p. 87.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 88–9.
15. Terkel, interview by author, Nov. 15, 1994.
16. Sternberg, p. 108.
17. Andrews, interview by author, Nov. 16, 1994.
18. "The Opera," (Chicago: Museum of Broadcast Communication), kinescope on tape.
19. The Back of the Yards is also well-known among union and tenant organizers as one of the first neighborhoods organized by left social activist Saul Alinsky in the 1930s. Alinsky described his first impression of the area, in less glowing terms than Win's song, in an oral history taken by Terkel: "It was the nadir of all the slums of America, worse than Harlem is today. You had this dingy, gray mile-by-two-miles of track, south of the big slaughterhouses. Clapboard frame houses, one behind the other. Many of them with outhouses. The neighborhood was practically all Catholic. You never saw so many churches. It made Rome look like a Protestant Gothic town" (Terkel, *Hard Times*, pp. 351–52).

20. Terkel has continued to build his cultural identity around the city, as host of a nationally-syndicated jazz and blues show originated from Chicago's WFMT-FM, as a chronicler of Chicago's history, and as an oral historian. He was an early supporter of the civil rights movement in Chicago in the 1950s, and of the anti-war movement in the 1960s, and sat behind Harold Washington, the city's first black mayor, at his inaugural in the 1980s. As a gangster character actor, a purveyor of blues, and a labor writer, there is little associated with Chicago culture that he has not built his identity around, and contributed to shaping. He now represents the city to the national media when they need a "Chicago point of view."
21. James T. Baker, *Studs Terkel* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), p. 16.
22. Terkel, *Talking With Myself*, p. 151.
23. Powers, p. 73.
24. Terkel, interview by author, Nov. 15, 1994.
25. Terkel recalls NBC executives reminding him that he was "a valuable piece of property" when they visited Chicago to persuade him to renounce his political activities or risk blacklisting (see note 59). This episode, shown on ABC, would have aired after Terkel's meeting with the NBC executives.
26. That it was Lincoln's portrait which held center stage in the tavern points both to the celebration of the author of the Emancipation Proclamation among the Popular Front, as well as the cast's ability to integrate local heroes into the program. Stracke had a particular interest in Lincoln, and was a regular performer at the annual Lincoln's Birthday dinners in Springfield, IL (Ray M. Lawless, *Folksingers and Folksongs in America* [New York: Duell, Sloane and Pearce, 1960], p. 219).
27. Andrew Ross, *No Respect: Intellectuals and Popular Culture* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), p. 21.
28. William Stott, *Documentary Expression and Thirties America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).
29. See R. Serge Denisoff and Richard Peterson, eds., *Sounds of Social Change* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1972); R. Serge Denisoff, *Sing a Song of Social Significance* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Press, 1983).
30. Stracke was also playing a role in bringing folk music from the field and the picket line into academia. Starting in 1948, he began touring the university circuit with "I Come For To Sing," a quartet that also included Terkel as narrator, Big Bill Broonzy singing blues, and Larry Lane delivering Elizabethan ballads. The group was first sponsored by the Renaissance Society of the University of Chicago. In 1957, he founded Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, calling it "America's only school for the study of folk songs." Information on Terkel and Stracke in this paragraph from Terkel, interview, and Lawless, pp. 218-19.
31. Beverly Younger, interview by author, November 17, 1994.
32. Irving Howe and Lewis Coser, *The American Communist Party: A Critical History, 1919-1957* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), p. 353.
33. Ross, pp. 42-47.
34. These metaphors of containment were deployed by critics such as Harold Rosenberg, Louis Kronenberger, Irving Howe, David Riesman, and Dwight MacDonald. See Ross, p. 46.
35. The epithet of "Stalinized" taste is from Leslie Fiedler, "Afterthoughts on the Rosenbergs," *The End of Innocence: Essays on Culture and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 26.
36. See, for example, Arthur Schlesinger's comments in the symposium "Our Country and Our Culture," *Partisan Review* 19, no. 2-5 (1952); Dwight MacDonald, "Masscult and Midcult," in *Against the American Grain: Essays on the Effects of Mass Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1962).
37. Fiedler, "Afterthoughts," p. 26.
38. Leslie Fiedler, "The Middle Against Both Ends" (1955) in Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White, eds., *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America* (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. 545.
39. Terkel, interview by author, Nov. 15, 1994.
40. Bakhtin writes that carnival "brings together, unifies, weds, and combines the sacred with the profane, the lofty with the low, the great with the insignificant, the wise with the stupid" (Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, Caryl Emerson, ed. and trans. [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984], p. 123). His most extended treatment of the carnivalesque is *Rabelais and His World*, Hélène Iswolsky, trans. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968).

41. The "Opera" episode seems to present Terkel's character in an uncharacteristic light, briefly abandoning his friends' music, and his own usually eclectic tastes. In another episode, Stracke commends Terkel: "Y'know, Studs, that's what I like about you. You're interested in all kinds of music—the classical, folk music, jazz... You have no barriers between these different aspects of music." "Will Power," (Museum of Broadcast Communications, Chicago, IL).
42. Terkel, interview by author, Nov. 15, 1994.
43. Terkel, *Talking to Myself*, p. 52.
44. Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, Michael Holquist, ed., Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).
45. Terkel, *Studs' Place Reunion*; Powers, p. 80.
46. Dan Petrie, *Studs' Place Reunion*.
47. Powers, p. 75.
48. Terkel, interview by author, Nov. 15, 1994. The Popular Front cultural politics of the program occasionally extended to race as well. Gospel singer Mahalia Jackson was a guest star, at a time when African-Americans were rarely visible on television. There is no record of the program, but Terkel recalls Jackson giving advice to a soldier and his girlfriend. He also remembers an African-American playing a band leader who offered Chet Roble a job playing piano for him—"there was this guy who was going to hire a white guy" (Terkel, interview). I touch on the limits of the program's ability to address racial issues below.
49. Powers, p. 73.
50. In the episode entitled "Will Power," for example, Lincoln's portrait plays an important role in achieving a simple consensus among the characters. Studs, who has offended the vegetable dealer Zabysco by insulting his wares, takes up his friends' bet that he cannot remain silent for fifteen minutes. The cultural critic may be forgiven for seeing a loose allegory of the intellectual in the time of the blacklist in this test. Studs is repeatedly cast as the resident know-it-all, crowing proudly that he called Zabysco a "brigand...he didn't know what it meant." His friends flatter him as "an authority on the arts and sciences," peppering him with questions to lure him into speaking ("Do you think television is going to have an effect on the institutions of higher learning?") Zabysco enters to exact revenge, and attacks Studs for "always talkin' big stuff—art, music, books." As he begins to denigrate the pictures on the back wall, Studs pulls him up to the portrait of Lincoln. Zabysco is paralyzed at the thought of criticizing the American hero. Removing his hat, he admits "he's a great man, a wonderful man," and apologizes profusely to all in the tavern. Both in narrative and political terms, this consensus seems rather forced.
51. Studs Terkel, "We Imagined an Eden," *New York Times*, January 3, 1971, Section 2, p. 15.
52. George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. 62.
53. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, *Beyond the Melting Pot* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1963).
54. Carol B. Stack, *All Our Kin* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974).
55. Lipsitz, p. 60–61.
56. "We're in the money/We're in the money/Old Man Depression fare thee well, you done us wrong/You'll never see headlines about breadlines today/And when you meet the landlord, you can look that guy right in the eye/We're in the money/We're in the money/Come spend it! Lend it! Roll it along!"
57. Terkel interview by author, Nov. 15, 1994.
58. Many reasons have been offered for the decline of the Chicago School of television. Nielsen summarizes them as declining ratings; the exodus of key personnel to the coasts; the desire of advertising agencies, largely based in New York and Hollywood, to exert closer control over production; competition from telefilmed series; even the example for producing low-budget local television set by the Chicago School itself, which was emulated elsewhere, rendering Chicago programming less attractive. See Nielsen, pp. 310–311.
59. Powers, p. 88. Terkel recalls a meeting with NBC executives who came to Chicago to convince him to recant his past support for "radical" causes: "I was horsing around. They were serious. I was scared. I'm not gonna lie and say I wasn't scared, of course I was. But they were saying, 'All you gotta say is you were duped,' y'know? But people misunderstand me on that. They think that I was heroic. I wasn't that at all. I was scared stiff. But it was my ego. 'What do you mean I

was duped? You mean I'm dumb?' Because I signed a petition for rent control or price control or friendship with the Soviet Union—they were our allies during World War II. And they said 'Didn't you know Communists started that petition?' Which may be true, it may have. What's that got to do with me? Is it good or not? And that's when I got cute. There was a couple of semi-big shots that were around, saying, 'You're a valuable piece of property.' That's what they call you."

60. Quinlan has said that he "fought my bosses in New York and fought 'em real hard, and I refused to take (Terkel) off. And I said, 'If you take him off, you'll have to fire me first.'" Red Quinlan, videotaped oral history.
61. Quinlan has also said that the pressure began after *Studs' Place* ended: "Studs worked for me for a few years after *Studs' Place* left the air and then I got some political pressure" (Powers, p. 87). Terkel returned to television in 1953, with *Studs and Chet*, a talk show which paired him again with Chet Roble, as well as other short-lived programs.
62. Terkel, *Talking to Myself*, pp. 44–45.
63. John Cogley, *Report on Blacklisting II: Radio and Television* (New York: Fund for the Republic, 1956); Karen Sue Foley, *The Political Blacklist in the Broadcast Industry: The Decade of the 1950s* (New York: Arno, 1979); Stefan Kanfer, *A Journal of the Plague Years* (New York: Atheneum, 1973); Victor Navasky, *Naming Names* (New York: Viking, 1980); Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1991).
64. Owen Vincent testified on October 10, 1952, just about the time that *Studs' Place* was cancelled, that Terkel had invited him to join the Communist Party in the thirties (Baker, p. 23).
65. Powers, p. 97.
66. A scheduled appearance by Pete Seeger and The Weavers on *Garroway at Large* was cancelled in 1951 because of a handful of complaints about their leftism (Kanfer, p. 150). However, I have found no record of regular cast members in other Chicago programs losing jobs because of political pressure.
67. Terkel, *Talking to Myself*, p. 45. Years later, Terkel was able to exclaim "Long Live the Blacklist!" because it sealed off any thoughts of pursuing a talk show in New York (Baker, pp. 26–7).
68. Baker, p. 26.
69. Foley, p. 218.
70. Baker, pp. 24–5; Terkel, *Talking to Myself*, pp. 42–3.
71. Cogley, p. 24n; Kanfer, p. 114.
72. Cogley, p. 37.